

152  
1.52

Library of the Theological Seminary.

PRINCETON, N. J.

Division.....

Section.....

Shelf.....

Number.....

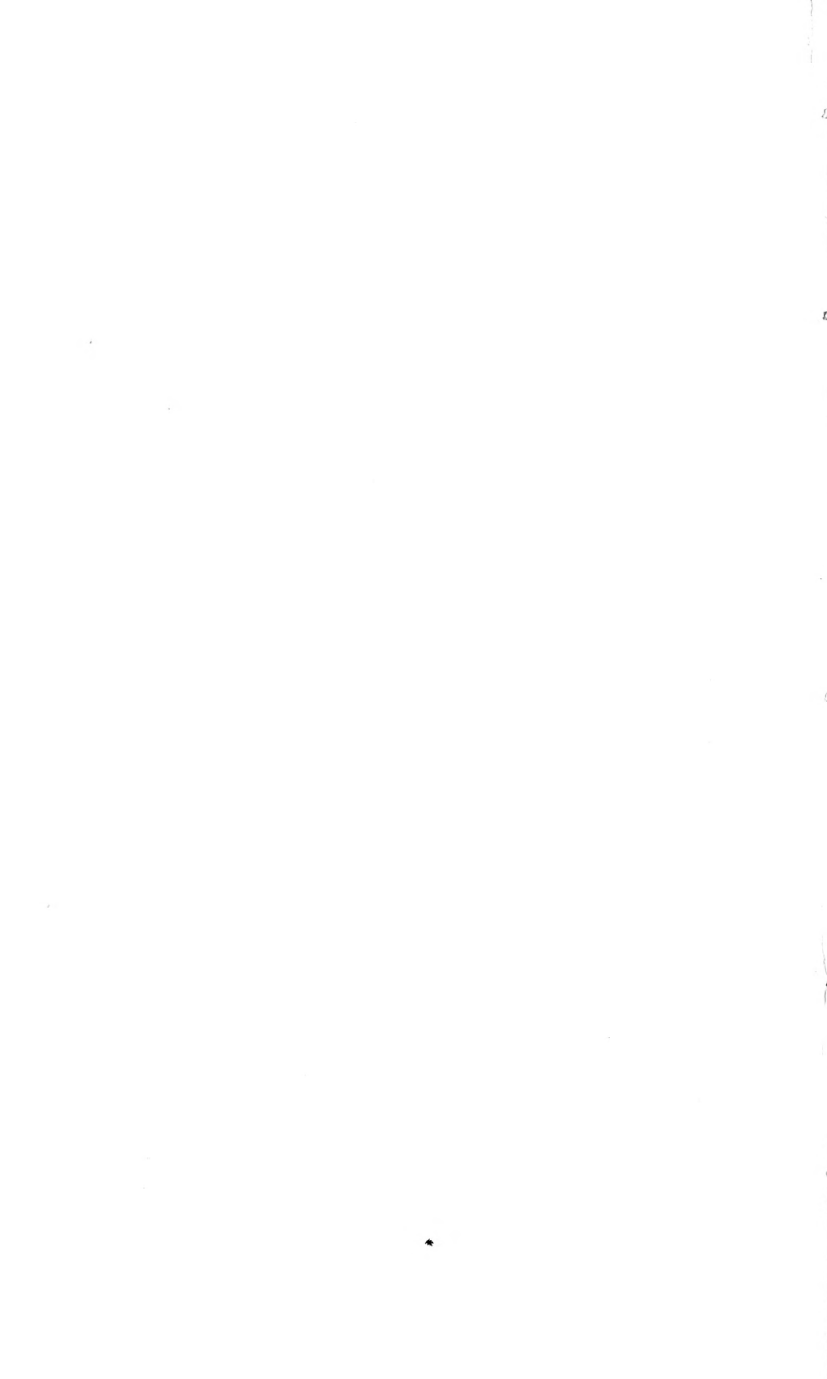


1570





THE WORD OF LIFE.





# THE WORD OF LIFE

BEING

SELECTIONS FROM THE WORK OF  
A MINISTRY

BY

CHARLES J. BROWN, D.D.,

EDINBURGH.

NEW YORK :

ROBERT CARTER & BROTHERS, 530 BROADWAY.

---

1874.

EDINBURGH :  
PRINTED BY JOHN GREIG AND SON.

TO  
THE CONGREGATION  
OF  
FREE NEW NORTH CHURCH,  
EDINBURGH,

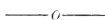
TO WHOM IT HAS BEEN FOR THIRTY-SIX YEARS, AND STILL IS,  
HIS PRIVILEGE TO MINISTER THE WORD OF LIFE,  
THESE MEMORIAL SELECTIONS ARE AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED  
BY THEIR FRIEND AND PASTOR,

CHAS. J. BROWN.

“ I WILL ENDEAVOUR THAT YE MAY BE ABLE AFTER MY  
DECEASE TO HAVE THESE THINGS ALWAYS IN REMEMBRANCE.”  
- 2 PETER i. 15.



## PREFATORY NOTE.



It has long seemed to me that the style proper to the pulpit—and especially for Discourses not read—differs considerably from what has usually been thought the fittest for the press. Certainly many sermons that were listened to with deep and solemn interest, delivered with the freedom of manner befitting the pulpit, may be apt to appear comparatively tame when reproduced in the pages of a book. Great words of Scripture, for instance, which, uttered with the warm living voice, formed a large and important part of the preaching, may wear an aspect not a little different when read in a printed page; and many a word of fervent appeal, entreaty, expostulation, thrown in extemporaneously in the progress of a Discourse, may scarce admit of being reproduced at all. Hence, in part, a difficulty I have long felt in complying with the wishes of friends as to publishing some selections from the work of a long ministry. My mode also of studying for the pulpit, together with the state of my manuscripts, bearing a close relation to it, has repeatedly stopped me in the attempt to prepare a series of Discourses for the press. Having at length, so far at least, overcome these difficulties, I desire humbly to commit the present volume to the gracious Lord, beseeching Him that He will vouchsafe to use it to His own glory.

C. J. B.

EDINBURGH, *24th November* 1873.



# CONTENTS.

— o —

## I.

### THE EXPULSION—ITS CHARACTER AND LESSONS.

	PAGE
“So he drove out the man.”—GENESIS iii. 24, . . . . .	1

## II.

### THE MAN OF SORROWS BROUGHT FORTH TO THE PEOPLE.

“Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!”—JOHN xix. 5, . . . . .	16
--	----

## III.

### INCREDULITY REBUKED.

“Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?”—JOHN xi. 40, . . . . .	26
--	----

IV.

JEHOVAH-JIREH.

	PAGE
“ And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh : as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen.”—GENESIS xxii. 14, . . . . .	38

V.

THE HEART OF JESUS—HIS AFFECTION FOR THE LITTLE ONES.

“ And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them ; and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not : for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.”—MARK x. 13-16, . . . . .	50
---	----

VI.

THE DOOM OF MEROZ.

“ Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord ; curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof ; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.”—JUDGES v. 23, . . . . .	63
--	----

VII.

LYING ON JESUS' BREAST.

“ Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. He then lying on Jesus' breast, saith unto him, Lord, who is it? ”—JOHN xiii. 23-25. <i>Text</i> —“ He lying on Jesus' breast,” . . . . .	75
--	----



VIII.

A COMMUNION SABBATH'S SERVICES.

1. *Morning Sermon :*

CHRIST'S OWN ACCOUNT OF HIS BLOOD-SHEDDING.

	PAGE
“ This is my blood of the new testament [covenant], which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”— MATTHEW xxvi. 28, . . . . .	86

2. <i>Pulpit Address before Communion,</i> . . . . .	98
--	----

3. <i>Communion Table Address,</i> . . . . .	101
--	-----

4. *Evening Sermon :*

THE BRIDEGROOM'S CALL TO THE BRIDE.

“ Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear ; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house ; so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty : for he is thy Lord, and worship thou him.”—PSALM xlv. 10, 11, . . . . .	107
---	-----

IX.

CHIEF END OF MAN.

“ This people have I formed for myself ; they shall shew forth my praise.” —ISAIAH xliii. 21, . . . . .	119
--	-----

X.

JESUS ONLY.

“ And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them : and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here : if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles ; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them : and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased ; hear ye him. And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.”— MATTHEW xvii. 1-8. <i>Text</i> —“ And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only,” . . . . .	121
--	-----

## XI.

## YOUTH RENEWED.

PAGE

- “ Bless the Lord, O my soul ; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits : who forgiveth all thine iniquities ; who healeth all thy diseases ; who redeemeth thy life from destruction ; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies ; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things ; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s.”—PSALM ciii.  
1-5. *Text*—“ Thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s,” . . . . . 141

## XII.

## THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

- “ This is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.”—JEREMIAH xxiii. 6, . . . . . 154

## XIII.

## SELF-DEDICATION TO GOD.

- “ O Lord, truly I am thy servant ; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid : thou hast loosed my bonds.”—PSALM cxvi. 16, . . . . . 168

## XIV.

## THE SICKNESS—THE PHYSICIAN.

- “ And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners ? But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.”—MATTHEW ix. 10-12. *Text*—“ But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick,” . . . . . 181

XV.

PARABLE OF THE MARRIAGE FEAST—*LECTURE.*

	PAGE
“The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready; come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: and the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all, as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding-garment: and he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding-garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen.”—MATTHEW xxii. 2-14, . . . . .	189

XVI.

CHRIST MADE A CURSE.

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.”—GALATIANS iii. 13. <i>Text</i> —“Christ . . . made a curse for us,” . . .	205
--	-----

XVII.

WAITING FOR THE PROMISE OF THE FATHER.

“And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.”—ACTS i. 4. <i>Text</i> —“He commanded them that they . . . should wait for the promise of the Father,” . . . . .	219
--	-----

## XVIII.

## A COMMUNION SABBATHS SERVICES.

1. *Morning Sermon :*

## THE SAVIOUR—HIS ERRAND INTO THE WORLD.

	PAGE
“The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”— LUKE xix. 10, . . . . .	233

2. <i>Pulpit Address before Communion,</i> . . . . .	245
--	-----

3. <i>Communion Table Address,</i> . . . . .	249
--	-----

4. *Evening Sermon :*

## FEAR AND FAITH.

“And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee : I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant ; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands. Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau : for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children. And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.”—GENESIS xxxii. 9-12. <i>Text</i> — “I fear him . . . And thou saidst,” . . . . .	254
---	-----

## XIX.

THE NATURAL HEART UNVEILED IN THE GREAT  
ACCOUNT.

“And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin : for I feared thee, because thou art an austere man ; thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.”—LUKE xix. 20, 21. <i>Text</i> —“For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man,” . . . . .	267
--	-----

## XX.

## THE COVENANT—ITS DEATHLESS LIFE AND HOPE.

“In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.”—TITUS i. 2, . . . . .	282
--	-----

## XXI.

## THE GOLDEN SAYING.

	PAGE
“ I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, IT IS MORE BLESSED TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE.”—ACTS xx. 35, . . . . .	293

## XXII.

## THE DYING SUBSTITUTE AND KEEPER OF ISRAEL.

“ Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he. If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way : that the saying might be fulfilled which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.”—JOHN xviii. 8, 9, . . . . .	306
--	-----

## XXIII.

## THE CROWNING PETITION OF THE INTERCESSORY PRAYER.

“ Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am ; that they may behold my glory.”—JOHN xvii. 24, . . . . .	318
--	-----



## I.

### THE EXPULSION—ITS CHARACTER AND LESSONS.

“*So he drove out the man.*”—GEN. III. 24.

A SHORT text, but a weighty one, forming a very material part of a chapter replete with the most solemn, awful, and yet blessed, interest to our fallen race—*So he drove out the man.* Whether is this judgment, or is it mercy? I believe that it is both judgment and mercy, and both in nearly equal degree; although the mercy will be found, indeed, wonderfully rejoicing against the judgment.

I. First, it is a word this OF SOLEMN DIVINE JUDGMENT. “He drove out the man.” It was a divine expulsion from the primeval paradise. In the previous verse this had been expressed in more general terms, “The Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden.” Now, more specifically, He *drove* him out. Nor was this divine expulsion one from the delights merely, the endlessly varied beauties and satisfactions, of that choicest part of a world which, everywhere, God had himself pronounced to be very good. It *was* this, indeed; and in this judgment of course appeared. When the man was driven forth from the paradise of earth,—from all those outward, material objects which had been to him the source of far more than sinless enjoyment, since they had led him up in adoring gratitude and admiration to the glorious God—herein did the divine judgment against sin so far appear; the wrath of God was revealed from heaven against the ungodliness and unrighteousness of man. It

was as if the Lord had said, Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord; for my creature hath committed two evils: he hath forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed him out cisterns, broken cisterns, which can hold no water. Know, therefore, and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of hosts—*So he drove out the man.*

But there was a great deal more of judgment in the expulsion than this. Principally it was judgment, in that it was the final shutting out of the man, and in him, as we are too well assured, *of man*, our whole race fallen, from all possibility of life by the law,—by the first covenant of the law. For God had entered into covenant with man. God who, apart from some such transaction, could be under no kind of obligation to his own creature, had condescended to bring himself under the obligation of a covenant,—of a promise, on condition only of that obedience which is alike the duty and the privilege of the creature in all possible circumstances—a promise of everlasting life and blessedness, of which the *tree of life* in the midst of the garden was, as it were, the sacramental symbol and pledge, giving to man the happy assurance, as often as he ate of it, of the glorious, covenanted, higher, indestructible life, which was to be the fruit and reward of his loyal obedience. But man transgressed the covenant,—violated the law, and, instead of the promised life, incurred the terrible death of that sentence, “In the day thou eatest thereof, dying thou shalt die.” And now I pray you to observe the bearing of the “driving forth of the man,” as it comes out in the remarkable words of the twenty-second verse, “And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us”—as, at least, he hath aspired to think—“to know good and evil: and now, lest he put



forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life"—in which no longer he hath any part—"and eat and live for ever"—as it were, and according to the original import and character of that divine pledge—"therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden. . . . *So he drove out the man.*" It tells of the forfeiture of the whole covenanted life. He drove the man out now even from the very symbol of the life. It was a holy, judicial expulsion from all possibility of eternal life by the first covenant, by all deeds of the law, by anything which man can himself do. The entire verse is in these words, "So he drove out the man: and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."

II. But now, if there was judgment thus, many ways, in the "driving out of the man," there was also GLORIOUS MERCY in it—not simply notwithstanding of it, but *in* it—mercy along with the judgment, and divinely rejoicing against the judgment. To this second view of the text I am anxious a little more particularly to invite your attention.

And here the foundation of all lies in the promise of that new covenant which already, previous to the expulsion, had been revealed to man—which covenant, made properly with the eternal Son, the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, from everlasting, had been made known to our first parents immediately on the fall,—in an astonishing interview held by the Lord God with them, an interview which, on a first view of it, might seem to have been but the summoning of criminals to the bar, to receive their doom. But on a closer examination it turns out that, while it *was* such, indeed, in one aspect of it, in another and still deeper it was glorious mercy throughout, as well as judgment,—mercy strangely embedded in the very heart of judgment, and destined, in respect of all the heirs

of this second covenant, everlastingly to rejoice against judgment. Into the details of the interview, however, I do not now enter. Limiting ourselves to the text, and only bearing in mind that the promise had been already given, of the Seed of the woman, that should bruise the head of the serpent, and so effect a glorious victory for our fallen family over Satan, and sin with its whole fearful effects and consequences, observe now the immense, varied mercy of the “driving out of the man.”

1. For, first, what was it but the gracious *shutting of him out from now delusive, vain, and ruinous hopes of life by the way of the law*—a thing this of the very last moment in reference to any possibility of his being saved by grace. “He drove out the man, and placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.” In one or other of two cases, it had, indeed, been no mercy to shut the man out from the hope of life by the law: either first, if there had still remained a possibility of life by that way; or, second, if there had been no other revealed method of life and salvation. In this latter case, better certainly to be let dream on, and somewhat pleasantly deceive and delude oneself with hope, than be awakened from sleep only to exchange dreams for hopeless despair. Or in the other case,—if there had been still a possibility of life by the law, by man’s own obedience to God, it had been of course no mercy to shut him out from cherishing the hope of it by that way. But then, so very far otherwise was it,—so very far from our obedience being now of the slightest avail for obtaining life, the violated law, on the contrary, consigns us to the death which is the wages of sin, as it is written, “The law worketh wrath—By the law is the knowledge of sin—Whatsoever things the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God—Cursed is every one that

continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them—By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight—I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died; and the commandment which was ordained to life I found to be unto death.”

Oh, so long as men cling to false and delusive hopes of life by a law which in reality condemns them to eternal death,—so long as they are not *driven out* from all such hopes,—in vain shall any method of life be pressed upon them, wretched, indeed, they, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, but in their own eyes rich, and increased with goods, and having need of nothing. See what mercy was in that word, “Lest he put forth his hand and take of the tree of life, . . . so he drove out the man.” What mercy in the shutting of him out now from even the symbol of life in the broken covenant, since the reality of life could no longer be found in connection with the symbol! Now the sign should have been but a delusive phantom; and it was just as if the Lord had said, That he may be in mercy shut out from all such ruinous hopes as the symbol might beget, I will drive him out even from the view of it—“therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden . . . he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden, cherubim, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.”

How often do we see men among us, let me say, utter strangers to Christ, still lying under the sentence of death in the law, yet sitting down at communion tables, only to delude themselves with the signs and symbols of life, apart altogether from the truth and reality of it! Would God they were but driven out by any means into despair of life by all obedience of their own! Some man, whose affairs are in a state of inextricable disorder, and who must one day become bankrupt, contrives, by

means of dishonourable concealments, to put off the evil day, and go on for a season, things of course growing every day worse with him. It were mercy to such a man at once to plunge him so much deeper into difficulties, that he should have no alternative but to lay his ruin open, and declare himself insolvent. What mercy, I repeat, to *the man*, was the driving of him out from all hopes of life by a covenant which now could avail only for his destruction! What mercy that flaming sword placed at the east of the garden, debarring his entrance any more where life no more was to be found—telling of wrath, indeed, but so telling graciously of it, as to shut out from now vain and destructive hopes, on the one hand, and *shut in* to the promise of the new covenant of grace, upon the other!

2. But thus I observe, secondly, that the driving out of the man was rich mercy, in that *it was in effect the shutting of him now also in to Christ*, the one name given under heaven among men fallen whereby we must be saved. I have observed already that, on supposition of no other way of life having been revealed besides the law, it had been better to be let alone, and not to be driven out before the time from even delusive dreams of life. But, blessed be God, as the Seed of the woman had been proclaimed before this hour to our first parents, so we are now permitted to listen to such glorious words as these: “I am the resurrection and the life—I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me—We have seen, and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world—I am the door; by me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture—The life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.” What mercy to be now, even in the most terrible ways, driven forth from lying

refuges, and shut up to such a Saviour, and such a Salvation! “He drove out the man”—as if he had said to him in the act, No longer thou canst find life now in that first paradise; thou mayest find it, driven from it, and from all hopes of life connected with it, in Him who shall bruise the head of the serpent, and open a new and living way to a yet better tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God!

Thus is it that there is not even one among all the darkest and most terrible things written in the Scriptures, which has not an aspect of richest mercy in it, as designed and fitted to drive us out of our security, our fatal slumbers, our delusive hopes, on the one hand, and to shut us in, on the other, to the Lamb of God,—to Him who came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ, not by water only, but by water and blood. Do you discern the flaming sword turning every way in such words as these—“God is jealous, and the Lord revengeth; the Lord revengeth, and is furious—Their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched—Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels—Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly”? But this sword, shutting you out from all hopes of life by the law, is but the shutting of you up and in to the faith of Him who was made under the law, made a curse,—who bared his bosom to the stroke of that very sword, the surety and substitute of the guilty, while the eternal Father said, Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts, smite the shepherd—so that now the voice is heard, “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly—Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us—God so loved the world, that he

gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

3. But we have not yet reached by any means the full mercy which was in the driving out of the man. So far we have seen its gracious design and tendency, more *doctrinally*, as it were, under the grace of the Holy Ghost to shut out from delusive hopes of life, and shut in to Him who is the eternal life,—the way, and the truth, and the life. And this truly was of unspeakable importance. How very large a portion of the Bible bears one way or other towards this double design! It might be said to be the grand scope and drift of it, doctrinally, from first to last. But then, the text opens up at least another class of *means* altogether for effecting the design. For, practically, what is it that to a very large extent holds us back from Christ, and prevails with us to leave Him and his salvation neglected and despised? Is it not some dream of finding a portion, a good, a happiness, in this world—in the lust of the flesh, or the lust of the eye, or the pride of life—for the sake of which we are prepared to run the risk of losing our never-dying souls? But now behold the still further import of the driving out of the man. See how it was just a kind of summary, in effect, of that whole *providential discipline* which the Lord is administering from age to age in our fallen world, in connection with his Word, towards the same great end of driving us out from our vain delusive hopes of life and blessedness, on the one side, and shutting us in to the faith and love and obedience and enjoyment of the Lord Jesus Christ, upon the other.

For observe, first, what it was the Lord drove out the man *from*. It was from the paradise of earth, as from a scene now no longer suited to his state,—which, however profitable as well as pleasant before, when all earthly comforts did but raise his soul in love and thankfulness to God, could now have proved but a deadly snare to

him,—a show of heaven without the reality of it, in all possible forms presenting to his now weakened and broken soul the very temptations to which he had at the first fallen a prey, when “the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise; and she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also to her husband with her, and he did eat.” Hence, in rich mercy as well as judgment, “he drove out the man”—as if he should say, Outside that paradise of earth, away from its delights, now unfit for thee, thou mayest be shut in to desire a better country, even an heavenly. And just thus it is that the Lord is driving forth his children still from their Edens of earth, withering their gourds, teaching them painfully that

“They build too low who build beneath the skies,”—

in driving them out, only shutting them in to Him who is their alone life, and in whom they are yet to reach a better Eden than the primeval one.

But what, further, did God drive out the man *to*? To till the ground now by the hard toil of his hands and the sweat of his brow—“In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground.” And, in addition, to endure many a hardship and profound sorrow—“Cursed is the ground for thy sake, in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life: thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee.” And “unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children.” Ah, it is judgment, indeed, but at least as much, mercy. “Driven out” thus we are to a lot of toil and sorrow. But it is a lot only the more in keeping, *because* sorrowful, with our state here, as at the best sorrowfully sinful—ever ready we, even after having tasted that the Lord is gracious, to depart from the living God, and take up our rest here, and put some

idol in the place of God, and worship the creature more than the Creator, and prefer the things which are seen and temporal to the things unseen and eternal. How merciful the "driving out of the man"! How wisely gracious the shutting of him up, not only more doctrinally as it were, but in all possible ways also practically and providentially,—not only by the Word, but by the trials and changes and fast approaching death of this world, to lay hold of and cling to the hope set before him,—to cleave with purpose of heart to the Resurrection and the Life! What, in this last aspect of it, was the driving out of the man but the opening of that whole course of providential dealing of which we read in numberless words such as these: "I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried—Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth—I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and will make a wall, that she shall not find her paths—I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and will speak comfortably unto her—Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law—Here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come—Refuge failed me: I cried unto thee, O Lord; I said, Thou art my refuge, and my portion in the land of the living—Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." *So he drove out the man.*

In closing, let me address a sentence or two to those among us who are still under the first broken covenant of the law, and thus necessarily under its curse, as Paul writes, "As many as are of the works of the law are under



the curse; for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." Oh, that covenant, that law, cannot save you. On the contrary, it condemns and consigns you to eternal death. It is but a sinking ship you are in. Fain you would abide in it because the idols and lusts you love are there. But soon they and you must go together to the bottom. Escape for thy life. All that a man hath will he give for his life—*this* is the life of thy never-dying soul. What shall it profit thee, if thou gain the whole world, and lose thyself, thy soul? Be content to be driven out to Christ, too thankful to find such a refuge prepared for thee. As to trials, you must have them anyhow. No longer we are in an Eden now, whether with Christ or without Him. But how terrible to miss both paradises! How fearful to have been driven out from the earthly one to the toils and trials of the wilderness, and to miss the gracious design too, miss the better country, miss Christ, and awake in the second death! Awake now, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation; he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

Believers on Christ, heirs of the covenant sealed in His blood, all ye that have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before you, see that you live by faith, remembering what is written, "If by grace, then it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace—Ye are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." Come up from the wilderness leaning on the Beloved. Expect no Eden upon earth. Arise and depart, for this is not your rest, it is polluted. Lay your account with trials and afflictions. See judgment, sin, in them. But see also

rich mercy. Say with David, I will sing of mercy and of judgment. It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes. And anticipate the holy, everlasting blessedness of which it is written, "He shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life. . . . And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him; and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads."

## II.

### THE MAN OF SORROWS BROUGHT FORTH TO THE PEOPLE.

*“Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!”—JOHN XIX. 5.*

It was the morning of the crucifixion day. The previous night had been an astonishing one truly—the guest-chamber, the last supper, the discourses, the prayers; the garden, with its mysterious agonies; the apprehension of the Saviour there; the hurrying of him bound from tribunal to tribunal,—the ecclesiastical one first, Annas, and Caiaphas the high priest; the sentence of death pronounced in his palace, but which the Jews had not the power to execute; and then, the judgment hall of Pilate the governor.

Jesus was there, let it be observed,—in Pilate’s judgment-hall, at the opening of this chapter. The Jews were not there; for, in the twenty-eighth verse of the previous chapter, we read, “Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment-hall, lest they should be defiled”—these *holy* men, by touching a heathen floor!—“but that they might eat the pass-over.” And now, at the hour of our text, Pilate has already “taken Jesus,” as we read at the beginning of the chapter, “and scourged him; and the soldiers have platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and put on him a purple robe, and said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they have smitten him with their hands.” Pilate,

however, was desirous to effect his release. He knew the entire charge of treason against him to be a baseless one, belied by the whole tenor of his actions and life. And although he had not the courage and the justice to interpose his authority for his release, if the Jews should persist in their demand for his crucifixion, yet he would do every thing for the purpose short of that. And there can be very little doubt that even the *scourging*, while it was partly the usual preparatory step before the crucifying of a criminal, had also in part been inflicted by Pilate in the hope of appeasing the anger of the Jews, and satisfying their clamours—"Pilate therefore went forth again," says the Evangelist (4th ver.), "and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him. THEN CAME JESUS FORTH, WEARING THE CROWN OF THORNS, AND THE PURPLE ROBE. AND PILATE SAITH UNTO THEM, BEHOLD THE MAN!" But now let us fix our thoughts on these deeply solemn words, in the two parts, intimately connected, of which they consist.

I. And first, *Jesus coming forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe.*

The crown, the purple robe. They tell so far of the King. For although it was a crown of thorns, and a purple robe of mockery, and a voice of derision, Hail, King of the Jews, yet the mockery was founded on the claim to a Kingdom—on that claim, "Thou sayest that I am a King—My Kingdom is not of this world." And besides, what had any other crown been on that blessed head,—what had been any such crown, or purple robe, on the Lord Jesus, as the kings of this world are accustomed to wear, but a mockery, methinks, still deeper, of a Kingdom like His—of the majesty of the King of kings, and Lord of lords? And, above all, it is to be recollected as to these strange insignia of royalty, that suffering and ignominy were laying the basis, were even now laying the foundations, of the Kingdom of Christ, as it is written,

“He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; *wherefore* God also hath highly exalted him.” Ah, the crown of thorns and the robe of mockery were the fittest insignia, after all, and at such an hour especially, of His wondrous dominion!

But thus you will easily perceive that, if we have the King here, still more have we the Priest, the glorious High Priest of the Church. Manifestly the theme here is mainly *the sufferings of that High Priest*, now conducting him on by rapid steps to his crown,—to the glory of the everlasting Mediatorial kingdom. Let us, accordingly, try to look at these sufferings of his for a little, as they come out to view under the double aspect of pain and shame,—the crown of thorns, and the purple robe of mockery—*pain, shame.*

1. And first, *pain.* For it is a crown of *thorns.* They have platted elaborately a crown of sharp thorns, and put it on his head. Of course, if their object had only been to deride him, they might have accomplished that even better, by placing on his head a crown of straw. But there was rage, hatred, in their breasts, as well as contempt. While they put the purple robe on him, and a reed, as the other Evangelists tell us, in his right hand for a mock sceptre, and bent the knee in derision before him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews, they “smote him also with their hands;” and having prepared, platted elaborately, as I said, this crown of thorns, they placed it on his head, to torture his body with pain as well as his soul with mockery. And, what is well worthy to be noted, the evangelists Matthew and Mark tell us that it was on the head they struck him—*on the head*, using for the purpose the reed which they had first placed in his right hand, doubtless with the design of forcing down the points of the thorns into his temples and forehead, and so occasioning the more severe pain, with effusion of blood, to the body which already was bleeding from the lashes of the scourge.

But I pray you to remember that every incident in the cross,—in the last sufferings of Emmanuel, was of special Divine ordering. And so, beyond doubt, this crown of thorns, of pain—all voluntary, criminal, vile, as it was on the part of man—was of the special ordination of the adorable God. For *pain is the principal part of the whole punishment of sin*, as it is written, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire—Their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched—Send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.” Well, but here was the great High Priest and Lamb, not wearing this crown of thorns more truly than *bearing our very sins*, believers, at that hour; standing, not so much at the bar of Pilate, as at the bar of the Divine justice; arraigned and condemned there, because he had been “made sin for us,”—because the Lord, with his own most free consent, had “laid on him the iniquity of us all.” Oh, thus did it mysteriously befit and behove him—I speak it with deepest reverence—to wear the crown of thorns,—to give his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair.

Only, that we are thus at once led to regard the thorns, and the smiting, and the scourge,—all the pains of that sacred body together, as little more than the *indices*, the affecting exterior symbols, of a deeper pain and anguish within, even that of which we read, and never weary reading, “Being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground—My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; tarry ye here, and watch with me—Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.” Beloved, we have not reached the meaning of the crown of thorns till we have found it *there*, “He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied:

by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities"—*Jesus came forth wearing the crown of thorns!* "On his head," John writes in the Apocalypse, "were many crowns"—*many crowns*. Is there among them all a crown more glorious in the eyes of the whole ransomed Church, and in the eyes of the Saviour himself, than this one of thorns? Not, certainly, that there is or can be any glory in such a crown considered in itself. But, somewhat as in music the divinest harmonies are those brought out of dissonances resolved, so does this crown appear very glorious, lovely, when *resolved*, so to speak, in its issues and designs, "With his stripes we are healed—We see Jesus, who for the suffering of death was made a little lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honour—He redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." All-glorious is this crown in the eyes of the whole ransomed Church—as witness Moses and Elias singling out the cruel "decease accomplished at Jerusalem," for their theme of converse on the Mount: or witness it the central theme of the hallelujahs of heaven, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain," and of the Church's deepest communion upon earth, "Ye do shew the Lord's *death* till he come." And as for the Saviour's own estimate of this crown, behold him bringing up from the grave with him the "print of the nails" uneffaced,—the uneffaced marks of the same cruel death, and carrying them with him to the heaven of heavens, "a Lamb, as it had been slain, in the midst of the throne"! "Jesus came forth," says our text, "*came forth*," most voluntarily—no kind of compulsion needed. Unashamed, yea, glorying in his sufferings for our sake, "Jesus came forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe."

2. But that is the other element in the sufferings here, *shame*—the crown of thorns and the purple robe of mockery. The same distinction in the elements of suffering we have

in the great words, "He endured the cross, despising the shame"—so here, the crown of thorns, and the purple robe—*the shame*. For, sin, my dear hearers, is a shameful thing also, ignominious as well as accursed, base as well as evil and bitter. It is an affront, an infamy, as well as a crime, a rebellion. It casts foul indignity on the blessed God. And hence *an essential part of the punishment of it is disgrace, shame*—ah, those are terrible words in the book of Daniel, "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake. . . . to shame and everlasting contempt." Well, it thus mysteriously befitted and behoved our Lord Jesus to take the *shame* of our sin, as well as the *pain* of it,—to wear the purple robe of mockery, as well as the crown of thorns,—to hide not his face from shame and spitting, as well as to give his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair,—to bear affront, contumely, derision, as well as pain, torture, anguish,—to despise the shame as well as endure the cross. What expressions we find as to this in the Word! Thus, "When they had blindfolded him, they struck him on the face, saying, Prophecy, who is it that smote thee—Herod and his men of war set him at nought—I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people: all they that see me laugh me to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head." Oh, *they spat on him!* Mark says, "They clothed him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his head, and began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews! And they smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing their knees, worshipped him. And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him." Dear brethren, when the Lord Jesus endured all these elaborated mockeries in silence, unbroken and un murmuring silence, it was indeed a transcendent patience and meekness. But it was more. There was a



deeper element still in that silence. He well knew himself standing at a bar, another bar than Pilate's, where he *had nothing to speak*,—nothing to answer, save the answer of his vicarious, silent, willingly endured, suffering and shame—“Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe.”

II. But now, what is this in the second part of our text? “AND PILATE SAITH UNTO THEM, BEHOLD THE MAN!” Viewing this simply as the voice of Pilate, and with reference to his mind, his meaning and design, in the uttering of it, I think there can be no doubt that, when he brought Jesus forth to the multitude, and bade them behold him in the crown of thorns and the purple robe, his object was to awaken, if possible, some relentings of compassion within their breasts—as if he should say, Behold the man! you may be satisfied now? Not that in Pilate's own breast there was any feeling much worthy to be called even pity for the sufferings of Jesus. Here that word of the Messianic Psalm held quite good, “I looked for some to take pity, but there was none: and for comforters, but I found none.” Pilate's feeling was rather one of haughty disdain, as if he had said, Behold him low enough now surely! A royal-like person this truly,—a formidable rival to Cæsar! See him in the crown and the purple robe! Behold the man! Is it not enough now?

But then, as I said a little ago, every incident in the cross, in the last sufferings of Emmanuel, was of special Divine ordination. We never think of confining ourselves to Pilate's mind in the inscription, for example, which he placed on the cross, “Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews.” We never think of limiting ourselves to the mind of the soldier who pierced his side, and “forthwith came thereout blood and water;” nor to the mind of the Jews, when they crucified him between the thieves, and when they proclaimed in mockery the all-

precious truth, "He saved others; himself he cannot save." And so here, I cannot hesitate to regard this voice, "Behold the man!" taken in connection with the unparalleled circumstances, Jesus coming forth wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe—to regard it as an invitation *from God*,—not merely bursting irresistibly, as it were, from those circumstances, but coming to us from God himself—a Divine invitation to us all to behold, standing at the judgment-seat of Pilate, in the crown of thorns and the purple robe, the Man of whom all the prophets had borne witness from the beginning; the Man who alone of all that ever trod this earth was sinless, and yet was the pre-eminent sufferer on it, and at God's immediate hand too; the Man of whom we find, as we trace him back over the pages of the history, that he was none other than the God-man; in a word, *the Man* by pre-eminence, the second man, the substitute man, the head of the new creation,—the representative, type also, model-man, of that whole creation—*Behold the man!*

1. We are invited, I say, to behold here the Man of whom all the prophets had borne witness from the beginning—the man that wrestled with Jacob at Peniel till the breaking of the day; David's man of God's right hand, Son of man whom he made strong for himself; Isaiah's man of sorrows—man who should be as an hiding-place from the wind, and covert from the tempest, and shadow of a great rock in a weary land; and Daniel's Son of man coming with the clouds of heaven; and Zechariah's man whose name is the Branch; and Micah's man who shall be our peace; the Seed of the woman, the Seed of Abraham, around whom all the prophecies had gathered from the commencement of them to the close—Behold the man!

2. And we are invited to behold here the Man who alone of all that ever trod this earth was sinless, and yet pre-eminent in suffering, and at God's immediate hand

too. The only sinless man. Job abhors himself. Isaiah cries out, I am undone. Abraham is a sinner; Moses a sinner; David is miserably sinful. *Jesus* saith, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." Even the unrighteous judge is made to testify again and again, "I find no fault in him—take ye him, and crucify him." Judas, who knew his most secret and sacred hours and places of resort, "I have betrayed the innocent blood," said he. The eternal Father bears him witness, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And yet it *pleased that Father* to bruise him, and to put him to grief. Oh, I think he wore a crown of thorns all his life through! Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow. Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts; smite the shepherd—Behold the man!

3. And we are invited to behold here the Man of whom, as we trace him back over the pages of the history, we find that he was none other than the God-man. We turn but a page back from the text, and he claims equality with the Father, saying, "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him" (WE, GOD AND I, will come unto him!) "and make our abode with him." A page or two more, and when Martha says of her brother, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day," he answers, "I am the resurrection and the life." Another page or two, "I and my Father are one"—"Before Abraham was, I AM." A few pages more, and, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us," EMMANUEL, Jehovah—Behold the Man!

4. And we are invited to behold here *the* Man by pre-eminence, the second man, the substitute man,—the head, representative, type also, model man, of the whole new

creation—Him of whom it is written, “Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead :” of whom it is written, “There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time:” of whom it is written, “As by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous:” of whom it is written, “The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” Substitute, first, then type, image, model—Behold the Man!

But then, as it is not any and every eye that can behold this glorious One,—as it is not the bodily, nor even the natural mental eye that can see Him, but the inward, spiritual, Spirit-opened eye alone, so neither is it any and every *kind of beholding* of the man to which we are invited here. But it is the beholding of him with lively, appropriating faith; with profound self-abasement; with admiring, adoring, obedient love.

With *lively, appropriating faith*. For when, not Pilate now, but the eternal Father brings him forth to us, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, he sets him forth a propitiation through faith in his blood,—a hiding place, covert from the tempest, shadow of a great rock in a weary land,—the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. And it is for each one of us to answer, *My* hiding place, O Lord, *my* propitiation, Lamb, covert, rock—I flee unto thee to hide me—I am crucified with Christ—Lord, to whom shall I go? I believe, Lord, help thou mine unbelief!

And we are to behold the man with *profound self-abasement*. Indeed, when we read of Pilate’s taking Jesus and

scourging him, and the soldiers plating the crown of thorns, and putting it on his head, and smiting him with their hands, perhaps the first feeling apt to arise in our breasts may be a certain indignation against the more immediate authors of his sufferings. But it is necessary that this be exchanged for other feelings altogether,—for the self-abhorrence of those who know that their own iniquities were the true scourge, and crown of thorns, and robe of mockery, of that judgment-hall,—the self-abasement of her who stood of old at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head,—the godly sorrow of the Divine promise, “They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him—Ye shall loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities, and for your abominations.”

And he is to be beheld by us with *admiring, adoring, obedient love*. Not with pity, not with commiseration any more, “Daughters of Jerusalem,” said he, “weep not for me.” Oh, if the indignation is to be exchanged for self-abhorrence, the pity must be swallowed up in an adoration like Thomas’s, “My Lord and my God,”—in a love like hers who, having washed his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head, kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment,—in a holy, obedient love—for we see Jesus, who for the suffering of death was made a little lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honour, that at his name every knee should bow of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth. Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? O Lord Jesus, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid; thou hast loosed my bonds!

And thus, in conclusion, I think that the child of God may easily gather what kind of improvement it behoves him to make of this whole subject. I will now turn aside, let him say, and see this great

sight. Fain, Lord, would I every day, with contrition and faith and adoring affection, see thee wearing a crown of thorns that I might be for ever blessed, arrayed in a robe of mockery that I might be clad in a robe of righteousness,—in the garments of salvation. Lord Jesus, I am thy sin (as Luther was wont to speak), thy curse, thy death, thy wrath of God, thy hell; and, contrariwise, thou art my righteousness, my life, my blessing, my grace of God, and my heaven. Entreat me not to leave thee. Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm. And, since thou art the image and model, as well as substitute, wilt thou fashion me according to thine own likeness? Teach me to copy after the pattern of thy patience, gentleness, meekness, purity, love! Once thou didst wear a crown of thorns for *me*. Let me set the crown of my supreme affection on Thee henceforth and for ever. Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing!

A closing sentence to those who are out of Christ, impenitent and unbelieving. You read in the verse following the text, that “when the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him.” So far, it seems, from any relencings of compassion having been awakened in their breasts, the very sight of the blood streaming down from that countenance so marred more than any man, only inflamed them with a deeper rage, and they cried out, Crucify him. Perhaps this seems strange to you. Ah! there is a stranger thing transacted, I fear, in this house to-day—even the crucifying of the Son of God afresh, and putting him to an open shame. As for those immediate authors of the sufferings of Jesus, they have long known whom they scorned. But now it is no more Pilate who bids you behold the man. It is the eternal

Father that invites you to behold the God-man, the Just One dying for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. How can you escape, neglecting so great salvation? If these things were done in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry? If the Son of God must wear a crown of thorns, and a robe of mockery and shame, for other men's sins imputed to him, what pain and shame must be the portion of those that shall die under the weight of a whole lifetime of sins, their own, unrepented of and unpardoned, aggravated by the rejection of the only Saviour? Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven. Behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Behold, behold the man! Hasten into this hiding-place, this covert from the tempest. Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

### III.

#### INCREDULITY REBUKED.

*“Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?”—JOHN xi. 40.*

THE Lord Jesus was about to raise Lazarus from the dead. He had arrived at his burying place, and had desired the bystanders to take away the stone from the mouth of it—for “it was a cave, and a stone lay on it”—when an obstacle was interposed from a quarter whence it was very little to have been looked for. “Martha,” we read in the middle of the thirty-ninth verse, “the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead” (or rather, in the grave) “four days.” It was in answer to this that our Lord addressed Martha in the words of the text, “Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?”

You observe, however, that our Lord points in the text to what he had before said to Martha. But when we go back to his interview with her, recorded in the previous part of the chapter, we do not find at least these express words, “*If thou wouldest believe* (Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that), *if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?*” It is just possible that he might have addressed other words to Martha besides those which John has related. I do not think it necessary, however, to have recourse to this supposition. I



apprehend that our Lord's words in the text are just the brief gathering up of the sum,—of the spirit and soul, of all his previous words to Martha—that is to say, first, his reply to the message of the two sisters, in the fourth verse of the chapter, “When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby:” and second, his words to Martha in the twenty-third verse, “Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again:” and finally, his glorious words to her in the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth verses, “Jesus said unto 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?”—*Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?* I think that our Lord there gathers up briefly the sum, the soul and spirit, of all these previous words; and it will perhaps come out further, as we advance, with what wisdom and grace he gathers it up in this particular form, “*Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?*”

But now let us look a little more narrowly at the words in the *matter* of them,—in the leading particulars of which they consist.

I. And first, they tell of a grand evil among us, the source of other and endless evils, together with the appropriate remedy for it—the evil, namely, of losing sight of the words of Christ, and following, in place of them, our own fancies, and vain and incredulous conjectures, and reasonings, and speculations, “*Said I not unto thee?*” In that short word, Jesus indicates at once the evil, and the remedy.

(1.) *The evil.* For whence Martha's difficulty about removing the stone from her brother's grave? She had lost sight of the words of her Lord, and had fixed her eye

down, withdrawn from them, upon the darkness and corruption of the tomb. Hence mournful unbelief; and hence, along with it, the strange and unnatural interposing of an obstacle in the way even of a brother's resurrection, "Martha, *the sister* of him that was dead, saith unto him." See how John emphatically marks the relationship, as if he should say, Strange! "Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh; for he hath been in the grave four days." Why, it seemed as if the very fountains of natural affection had been for the time closed up. Whence? I ask again. Martha had lost sight of the words of her Lord, and was running adrift among her own groundless fancies and reasonings. A grand evil this among us indeed; nor were it easy to tell either the wide sphere of the operation of it, or the mischiefs which arise out of it.

There, for example, is a desponding, fearful one, who will have it that there is no hope and no help for him even in God,—will have it that he has sinned too long and too grievously against him—too long rejected his offered mercy,—will have it that his day of grace is in fact passed. See how thou art preferring thine own fears, fancies, opinions, before the words of Christ. Thou sayest, There is no help for me in God. God says, "Thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thine help." Thou sayest, I have too long rejected his offered mercy. Christ says, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Thou sayest, My day of grace is past. Where do you find that in Scripture? It is but an opinion at the best. Meanwhile Jesus cries, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink—This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent—Condemned *because* he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." Oh, take care lest Satan, still persuading thee to prefer thine own

fears and fancies before Christ's words, dash thee thus against the rock of a wild and reckless despair.

Or, another man deems it all but vain and hopeless to go down to some poor, neglected district of a great city, or to arise to new efforts for the evangelizing of India, China, Africa—as if he should say, “By this time it stinketh,”—the case is desperate and gone. Still the words of Christ are lost sight of, and exchanged for vain fancies and opinions: “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth—Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain—Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world—I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: and I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree; I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together; that they may see, and know, and consider, and understand together, that the hand of the Lord hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it.”

Or—a more fearful case than either—a third man is busy reasoning, conjecturing, and finally dogmatically determining, what the truths of this blessed volume *should be*, in place of finding, in the plain words of Christ, what they *are*. A rapidly downward career this, if unchecked! Christ has said, “I and my Father are one.” Christ has said, “My blood shed for remission of the sins of many.” He has said, “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 again at the last day.” But there are difficulties about the purposes of God; difficulties about the atonement; difficulties about the Deity of Christ! Behold the man fast loosening from all the moorings of a settled faith, and about to drift away, if grace prevent not, into a universal doubt and scepticism! *Said I not unto thee?*

(2.) But if we have the evil there, we have, in the same short word, the *remedy* also, "Said I not unto thee?" What is it but to come back again to the simple words of the Lord, and, in place of leaving him to address us, Said I not unto thee? rather to address him, O Lord, Saidst thou not unto me?—as Moses, for example, when he prayed, "See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight. Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way." Or, as Jacob, when he said, "O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee: I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant. . . Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he come and smite me, and the mother with the children. *And thou saidst*, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude." Or, as David, when he said, "Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope"—"God hath spoken in his holiness, I will rejoice." Or, as the persecuted disciples at Jerusalem, when they lifted up their voice to God with one accord and said, "Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is; who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things. . . . And now, Lord, behold their threatenings, and grant unto thy servants," &c. O yes, beloved brethren, let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom. Blessed it is to hear that voice, "Said I not unto thee?" It is our very pole star, *Said I not unto thee?* It is the highest *reason* to

believe him who is the Truth itself. Breathe after that spirit, "Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee—By the word of thy lips I have kept me from the path of the destroyer—If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you—Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?"

II. But hitherto in the text I have looked simply at the general principle of the expostulation, "Said I not unto thee?" without reference to the particular words to Martha which the Lord recalls to her remembrance, "*If thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God.*" Be it now remarked, secondly, what prominence the Lord gives in these words to *the Divine glory*,—how he declares it in them to be the grand object He himself has in view, and which is to be ever aimed at by us, in connection alike with his words and with his works, that we may discover and behold in them *the glory of God*. For, observe carefully his manner of speaking. "Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see"—what? not the resurrection of thy brother,—not any mere work of stupendous but passing wonder,—but "the glory of God." Of course, it is the resurrection of Lazarus to which he points; but he prefers saying, "the glory of God," which, in fact, was everything in the eye of our blessed Lord. Oh! as to the resurrection of Lazarus, Christ could look with but little complacency on the mere bringing of the good man back for a few years to a world of so much unbelief, and suffering, and sin. And, as for passing wonders, Jesus had never made much of them—"Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are these!" "Verily I say unto you, there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down." But here was a wonder destined to last to all eternity—"The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever; the Lord shall rejoice in his works." The glory of

God *in* the resurrection of Lazarus—this was that on which Christ would fix Martha's mind and ours. Here was an object for which it was worthy of the only begotten of the Father to have come from heaven into our world—"I have glorified thee on the earth," he said, telling the errand on which he came, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." Here was the object and end of all Christ's miracles together. For, "this beginning of miracles," it is written, "did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory:" and, "this sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." This was that object in the view of which our blessed Lord could break forth in a kind of rapture when Judas went out at midnight to betray him, "Now," said he, "is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him." This was that object which Jesus could set over against all his deepest agonies and sorrows—"Now is my soul troubled," he said, "and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I into this hour. Father, glorify thy name." And oh! if this was the grand object which Christ had in his eye, so is it to be the grand object also in ours—Martha, said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, *thou* shouldest see the glory of God—not see the resurrection of thy beloved brother so much (that will soon be at an end, considered simply in itself), but see that which has all good and desirable things together wrapt up and enfolded in it, *the glory of God?* Be assured, brethren, that what was God's chief and highest end in all his works and ways, is that with which our blessedness also must be inseparably bound up. And I will venture to affirm this, that if only the manifestation of the Divine glory stood out more prominently in our eye, we should rise superior to many a difficulty that now perplexes and stumbles us; and we should find far less difficulty than we do in believing, with

reference to ourselves, to our beloved children, to the world around us, that an Almighty God, *for his own glory*, both could and would “quicken the dead, and call the things which be not as though they were.” Take Martha again for an instant. How would a glimpse of this object, the glory of God, have solved all the mysteries of her brother’s case! It would have explained his sickness; explained the repeated delays; explained his death; and carried his resurrection too in its large and ample embrace. Oh that those desponding ones of whom I spoke a little ago did but realize this, the glory of God, as His highest end in saving the chief of sinners! How should they come to understand the meaning of pleadings like these, “For thy name’s sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great.” “Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name; and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy name’s sake.” “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy name give glory, for thy merey, and for thy truth’s sake!” And how should we take courage in reference to the most arduous duties and enterprises to which the Lord in his providence might call us, learning to plead with him, “Father, glorify thy name—Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever.” Saidst thou not unto us, that, if we would believe, we should see the glory of God?

III. But this brings me to notice yet another leading particular in these words of Jesus. He intimates in them, thirdly, how vitally important a place *faith* occupies in connection with this end and object of beholding the glory of God. “Said I not unto thee, that, *if thou wouldst believe*, thou shouldst see the glory of God.” *If thou wouldst believe*. Observe a moment there what the faith is of which Christ speaks. Not so much, I think, a crediting of the mere fact that Lazarus should be raised, as a holy reliance on the power and grace and faithfulness of the Lord Jesus Christ,—a faith just the reverse of the whole

spirit of Martha's incredulous despondency,—a faith answering to those previous glorious words of Jesus, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth *in me*, though he were dead, yet shall he live,"—a faith such as Martha herself, strange to say, had but a little before expressed, "Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world,"—a faith in character like Abraham's, though, of course, the measure and degree of it may vary exceedingly, "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that what he had promised, he was able also to perform."

Then, as to the vital connection between this faith and the beholding of the divine glory—"If thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God"—observe that *unbelief*, on the one hand, hinders the beholding of that glory in two different ways. For, first, it intercepts, to a fearful extent, those divine works in which it might be seen,—intercepts and cuts off the communications of the divine grace and power—as you remember it is written, "He did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief;" and again, "He could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. And he marvelled because of their unbelief." And second, even when such divine works are performed, unbelief closes the eye against the glory of God visible in them. Unbelief can see the miracles, but cannot see the glory of God even in the highest miracles. The Jews beheld all the mighty works of Christ, and did but murmur and cavil, "Is not this the carpenter's son? Whence hath this man these mighty works? And they were offended at him." Even this stupendous work of the resurrection of Lazarus they saw, and we find with what effect at the forty-sixth verse of this chapter, "But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done. Then gathered the



chief priests and Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him." But faith, on the other hand, in place of intercepting, takes hold on the divine strength,—in place of cutting off, welcomes and brings down communications of divine power and grace. And, faith has an eye for the glory of God—or rather, is itself the very eye wherewith the believer "with open face beholds, as in a glass, the glory of God"—as it is written of the first disciples, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Mere miracles, without this, avail nothing—"If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." And without miracles this is enough—"If thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God." It is to my mind very clear that these words to Martha are not the gathering up only of Christ's previous words to *her*, but the gathering up of a large part of all his teaching together,—of all such words as these, "According to your faith be it unto you—Believe ye that I am able to do this?—If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." "If thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God." Christ intimates there, in effect, that faith is the door of entrance, as it were, into the whole grace and glory of the divine promises, which God to a large extent throws out blank, to be filled up by faith. Thus, "A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh." No name there but sinner. Faith fills the name up. Faith enters into the promises. Faith "obtains the promises." Faith beholds the divine glory in the promises—"Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?"

IV. But now finally, look at these words as the language of rebuke; as the language of encouragement; and as the language of direction.

(1.) As the language of *rebuke*. “Said I not unto thee?” Ah, Martha, hast thou so soon forgotten my words—forgotten thine own, “Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, that should come into the world”? And, is this thy kindness to thy brother, “By this time he stinketh”? Oh what cause has the Lord thus also to rebuke us! How soon and miserably do we forget his words! And when he bids us remove “the stone,” as it were, from our brother’s grave,—take measures towards the conversion of the dead in trespasses and sins, is not this too much our spirit—It is of no use,—it is a hopeless task? Have we not been almost at that question of the first murderer, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” “Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been in the grave four days.”

(2.) But this is the language also of *encouragement*—if of rebuke, yet assuredly of very *gracious* rebuke, and encouragement. See how lovingly the Lord brings back his words to Martha’s remembrance, “Said I not unto thee?” And see how he so puts them—the glory of God—as to assist the weakness of her faith; for “the glory of God,” as we saw, explained all the difficulties together—the sickness, the delays, the death, the resurrection—all. And even so does the Lord encourage us also, with reference to our own souls, and our children’s, and the world around us—encourage us to plead with him, O Lord, what wilt thou not do unto thy great name? Not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy and for thy truth’s sake! Saidst thou not unto us that, if we would believe, we should see the glory of God?

(3.) But further still, this is the language, as of rebuke, and of encouragement, so also of manifold precious

*direction.* Direction, for example, first, to treasure up in our memories and hearts the words of Christ—"Said I not unto thee?"—words like these, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;" or these, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven;" or these, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel unto every creature;" or these, "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"—*Said I not unto thee?* And, secondly, direction to look more to the manifestation of the divine glory than to this or that particular issue or benefit, as the object of supreme desire. "If thou wouldest believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God." And, thirdly, direction to use all divinely appointed means, "Jesus said, Take ye away the stone." Ah! we cannot give life to the dead, but we can remove the stone. We cannot give life to the dead—that is the prerogative of Him who is "the resurrection and the life"—but we can bring this precious gospel and all the means of grace within reach of the dead in trespasses and sins: "Son of man prophecy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord"—"Go, and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life." But, fourthly, direction to use the means *in faith*,—faith of Christ's life-giving power and grace; for he does not say, If thou wouldst remove the stone simply, but if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God. And finally, direction—remembering how Christ is the author and finisher, as well as object of faith—to cry, Lord increase our faith—I believe, Lord, help thou mine unbelief. JESUS SAITH UNTO HER, SAID I NOT UNTO THEE, THAT, IF THOU WOULDST BELIEVE, THOU SHOULDST SEE THE GLORY OF GOD?

## IV.

### JEHOVAH-JIREH.

*And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen.*—GEN. xxii. 14.

It will be necessary to our getting at the meaning, and into the spirit, of these words, that we glance at one or two particulars in the previous touching narrative to which they belong. "Take now thy son," God said to Abraham, "thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." It was a great deal more this than a trial to nature,—to all the deepest and strongest feelings of nature. We must be ready to part with these for the sake of Christ. But it seemed as if Abraham were bidden part in this instance with Christ himself. For you will recollect that, long before this time, God had expressly limited the promise of Messiah to the line of Isaac—*take him now, and offer him for a burnt-offering*. Not to speak of the strange aspect of a human sacrifice—I had almost said the heathenish aspect of a human burnt-offering (for it belonged to the burnt-offering, that the victim, besides being slain, should be cut in pieces, and reduced to ashes in the fire)—God had expressly bound up the salvation of the world with the life and with the line of Isaac. And thus, I repeat, it seemed as if Abraham were called to part with salvation,—with Christ himself. And

yet one can see how some rays of light might break forth to the eye of faith out of the very darkness of the command. Thus, the expressness of the limitation to Isaac,—the closing thereby of every other door of hope,—when taken along with the equal expressness of the command to sacrifice him, might well suggest to faith that surely the Almighty God must have some way, best known to himself, of bringing the promise and the command into harmony with each other. And as to the human sacrifice, let it be remembered that all the sacrifices from the beginning had borne reference to that word, *The Seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent*. Is it improbable that Abraham, in the very darkness of the command to take Isaac, and offer him for a burnt-offering, might get some glimpse of a sacrifice yet to come, more illustrious far than that of any animal victim—even the Son of a far other Father?

At all events, we find him proceeding onwards in the solemn silent acquiescence of faith, till the trying question was put to him by Isaac, “Behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?” Then Abraham, in his reply, does not so much evade the question, as meet it by falling back on the great, immutable principles of faith, “And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering”—as if he had said, My son Isaac (at this time perhaps about twenty years of age), God, whose own institution the sacrifice of burnt-offering is, will not fail to find materials, somewhere, for the observance of it at his own command. And then, when his heart was like to burst at the thought of that *somewhere*, this further idea rises in the words—and least of all, my son, will he miss the grand final scope and end of all sacrifices, which it hath pleased him to associate with *thee*, saying, “In Isaac shall thy seed be called”—“my covenant will I establish with Isaac.” Let us go forward: fear not; God will provide

himself a lamb for a burnt-offering. "So they went both of them together," the narrative continues; "and they came to the place which God had told him of." No relief of any kind yet appeared. "And Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son"—doubtless with his own full, awful, consent—"and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife"—still striving to hope against hope, accounting that God was able to raise him up, if necessary, even from the ashes—from whence also he did receive him in a figure,—a kind of similitude of a resurrection, "And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me." Then one can conceive—or rather can scarce conceive—with what adoring gratitude, relief, holy wonder, Abraham, receiving back his son from the dead, would behold *the ram* of which we next read, caught in a thicket by his horns, and would immediately proceed to "offer him up for a burnt-offering in the stead of his son." But now I pray you to observe the words of the text, "And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh," that is to say, The LORD will provide. In the margin it is, "will see, or provide." The word signifies to *see*; then, to *see to*, or *provide*. Undoubtedly the latter is the meaning here, for the expression is the very same which Abraham had used in addressing Isaac, "God will provide a lamb"—"Abraham called the name of that place, The LORD will provide." We might have thought it would have been, *hath provided*. But no; for all Abraham's hopes were bound up—very dear as Isaac was to him—with an event yet wrapt up in the distant future. It is still a word of anticipation, The LORD

*will* provide. He just reiterates what he had said to Isaac, God will provide himself a lamb. True, he has got the ram. Still better, he has got back his son. But however thankful for both, chiefly he regards both as but blessed pledges, infallible securities and earnest, of better things yet to come. Nor have I any doubt that of all the occasions in Abraham's life, this hour was the one to which the words of our Lord Jesus had principal reference, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad"—"Abraham called the name of that place, Jehovah will provide; as it is said to this day," adds Moses, "In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen," or provided.

What I further purpose is to look at the words with you for a little, first, in their bearing on that grand central event in the world's history to which they had a prospective reference, and in which they were destined to find their full accomplishment; and then in their bearing on a great general principle of faith contained in them, intimately and inseparably connected with that event.

I. And first, we look at the words as they bear on that grand central event in the world's history to which they had a prospective reference, and in which they were destined to find their full accomplishment. For, in this same place, nearly two thousand years after,—on, or near, the spot to which Abraham gave the name of "Jehovah will provide"—Jehovah *did provide a Lamb for a burnt-offering*, whose death will be the theme of all heaven throughout eternity! But we must look at this a little more particularly.

You have noticed the words, "Get thee into the land of *Moriah*; and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." Now let us turn for a moment to second Chronicles, third chapter, at the beginning. "Then Solomon began to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem *in mount Moriah*,

where the Lord appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite." Two things are mentioned here respecting Moriah, the place where Abraham offered, and to which he gave the name, Jehovah will provide. First, that it was the place where the Lord appeared to David in the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite, and where David prepared for the after rearing of the temple; and second, that it was the place where the temple was accordingly built by Solomon. It was the place where the Lord appeared to David in the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite. Going back to first Chronicles, twenty-first chapter, we have the account there of David's sin—it was Israel's sin also in effect—in numbering the people, and of the Lord's offering to him the terrible choice of three years' famine, or three months before the sword of the enemy, or three days' pestilence,—the sword of the Lord. "And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let me fall now into the hand of the Lord; for very great are his mercies: but let me not fall into the hand of man. So the Lord sent pestilence upon Israel: and there fell of Israel seventy thousand men. . . . And the angel of the Lord stood by the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite. And David lifted up his eyes, and saw the angel of the Lord stand between the earth and the heaven, having a drawn sword in his hand stretched out over Jerusalem: and David and the elders of Israel, who were clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces. . . . Then the angel of the Lord commanded Gad to say to David, that David should go up and set up an altar unto the Lord in the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite. And David went up at the saying of Gad, which he spake in the name of the Lord." Then follows the transaction of the solemn purchase of the ground. "And David built there an altar unto the Lord, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, and called



upon the Lord; and he answered him from heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt-offering. And the Lord commanded the angel, and he put up his sword again into the sheath thereof. At that time, when David saw that the Lord had answered him in the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite, then he sacrificed there. . . . Then David said"—beyond all doubt by Divine inspiration—" *This is the house of the Lord God*"—the site of the after temple—"and this is the altar of the burnt-offering for Israel." Accordingly, there follow David's large preparations for the after rearing of the temple.

And now return we for an instant to the passage in second Chronicles, "Then Solomon began to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem in mount Moriah, where the Lord appeared unto David." On *Moriah*—in the place where Abraham offered, and to which he gave the name, *Jehovah will provide*—did Solomon build that temple which was so eminent a type of Messiah. There, during the ten hundred years that followed, were offered all those unnumbered sacrifices of which the temple with its altars was the scene. And at length, at the end of those years, —still in the same place—on one of the hills at least of the same range of Moriah (for this sacrifice behoved to be without the city as an accursed thing), there was bound to the altar a LAMB—but how shall I speak of this Lamb?

God never knew another from the beginning. I doubt not that Isaac was a divinely ordained type of Him. Was Isaac the child of the promise? The true child of the promise was Christ. Was Isaac long promised, and long waited for, before his birth? Four thousand years elapsed, of promise and longing expectation, ere Simeon took up the child Jesus in his arms, saying, "Mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Was Isaac's birth supernatural? "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the

Son of God." Did Isaac meekly submit to be bound to the altar on the wood? "He is led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." But here the resemblances seem to stop. Or, if there be anything, as I doubt not there is much, in the semblance of Isaac's death and resurrection, yet assuredly it is here *but* a shadow. For no sinner might ever die to expiate sin; and our God never would have a human sacrifice even to prefigure the true. But now behold, at last, "the Man that is God's fellow!" Behold Him, laid on the altar upon the wood, who, when they said to him, "Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?" answered, "Before Abraham was, I AM!" Behold the Lamb *for a burnt-offering*—O yes, consumed by the fire of that Divine holiness and justice of which the fire of all the burnt-offerings was but the shadow,—“My heart,” said he, “is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels—My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death—My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Behold the Lamb *of God*,—the fulfilment at length of Abraham's word, Jehovah will provide—provided of God, approved, accepted of God! Ah, when I find myself standing arraigned and trembling at the bar of the Divine justice, how sweet to hear that voice, *God's* Lamb,—fore-ordained by Him before the foundation of the world,—presented by Him at the altar,—of whom He said, “Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the shepherd!” *The* Lamb. God never knew another. This was Abel's lamb of the firstlings of the flock. This was Abraham's ram. This was the substance of all the numberless victims of the ancient economy. Why were there so many *then*? Because they were but shadows, “In those sacrifices there was a remembrance again made of sins every year; for it was not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take

away sins." Why is there but one now? Because it is enough,—“the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world”:—

Not all the blood of beasts,  
On Jewish altars slain,  
Could give the guilty conscience peace,  
Or wash away the stain.

But Christ, the heavenly Lamb,  
Takes all our guilt away;  
A sacrifice of nobler name,  
And richer blood than they.

“By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified”—“Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.”

II. “*Hath* appeared.” Abraham used the future tense, will provide. We are privileged to use the past, “*hath* appeared.” And yet there is ample room, in another aspect of the matter, for the future tense with us also—which leads into our second head, namely, the bearing of the text on a great general principle of faith contained in it, intimately and inseparably connected with the sacrifice of Christ—“Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh, The Lord will provide.”

Here let one or two things be rapidly observed as to Abraham. He knew, by express divine communications made to him, that he must die long before the appearing of the promised Seed. He also knew, by experience of the past, that there awaited him manifold trials and conflicts in the remainder of his pilgrimage. Well; if, looking through the vista of ages, he could write Jehovah-jireh in reference to the after appearing of Messiah, much more, I suppose, would he be able, in connection with it, to write the same word in reference to whatsoever perplexities, cares, conflicts, might be yet in store for him. Nor will you fail to notice that, as he had suffered manifold trials before this time, and been

brought out of them all, and now had been exposed to a more terrible one than all the rest, and been brought through it also, his faith and allegiance sustained in it throughout, so it is easy to see how his faith, now taking a kind of joyful bound, would write Jehovah-jireh, as if he should say, "Thou, Lord, who hast shewn me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and bring me up again from the depths of the earth—Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory—The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want"—*Jehovah-jireh*.

And this, accordingly, is the principle—even God's faithful, all-providing mercy, grace, on the one hand,—and faith's counterpart confidence, unreserved and unsuspecting reliance on that grace, upon the other. How inseparably connected this principle is with the sacrifice of Christ, need I say? For that sacrifice is the sole foundation of it. Take Christ's sacrifice away, and you cut down the whole ladder of communication between heaven and earth, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father"—neither cometh the Father unto any man—"but by me." And the indispensable foundation becomes also, in its turn, the infallible pledge and security. For, "He that spared not his own Son, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Here may we apply the words of the Lord to Abraham, "Now I know that thou fearest God,"—that thou wilt not withhold anything I require of thee—"seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me." Even so may the believer say, Now, O Lord, I know that thou wilt not withhold from me anything that is truly good, seeing thou hast not withheld from me thy Son, thine only Son. Only, I pray you to see how all turns thus on your having Christ. Run not away with mere groundless fancies of grace. If you want Christ, you want the foundation of all, and the pledge of all. But if you have Christ, then write, when and where you will,

Jehovah-jireh. No longer it is mount Moriah. Everywhere,—in the house and by the way,—at home, abroad,—in Britain, China, India,—in health, in sickness,—living, dying,—write this word.

Are you in deep perplexity as to your path, and fearful of taking a false step? Write Jehovah-jireh, the Lord will provide counsel. The name of this Lamb is Wonderful, Counsellor—“I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way in which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with mine eye.” Are you called to some arduous duty? Write Jehovah-jireh, the Lord will provide strength—“My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Are you straitened as to temporal provision? Write still this word, Jehovah-jireh, for “your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.” Do you anticipate painfully the conflict with the last enemy? Write Jehovah-jireh—“O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction.” And as for the eternity beyond, still write Jehovah-jireh, for “the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

Beloved hearers, are *you* Christ's? Have you beheld this Lamb? Is His blood upon you? Have you ever, in the concern of an awakened soul, exclaimed, as it were, “Behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?” Have you been convinced that you verily deserve to be consumed by the fire of the Divine justice for ever? Have you heard with wonder that God will accept a substitute-Lamb, and hath himself provided Him? Have you laid your hand on the head of that Lamb, and, confessing your sin over Him, cried, God be merciful to me a sinner—

My faith would lay her hand  
On that dear head of thine,  
While as a penitent I stand,  
And there confess my sin?

If not, at least remember that all expiation for sin centres in this Lamb. God never knew, and never will know, any other. There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins. How *can* you escape, if you neglect so great salvation?

But, on the other hand, are you Christ's? Then "you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." You are Abraham's seed, and so may look for *trials*,—else you shall be very unlike Abraham. And, as those trials are among the heaviest of all which seem to cast a shade over the Divine faithfulness, so it is a mighty thing to fall back in the midst of them on great and immutable principles, as did Abraham in his reply, "My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering," or as Peter, in that reply of his, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life; and we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." But you are heirs also according to the promise,—heirs of Abraham's God, whose name is Jehovah-jireh, and of whom his people have so often found that their extremity is his chosen opportunity. Abraham had stretched forth his hand, and taken the knife, when the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, Lay not thine hand upon the lad! It was in the fourth watch of the night that Jesus went unto the disciples walking on the sea. "It is not meet," said Jesus to the woman of Canaan, "to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table. Jesus saith unto her, O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Abraham called the name of *that place*—the place where he had to bind Isaac, and lay him on the altar upon the wood—Jehovah-jireh.

But yet again, and in a closing sentence, one might see here the reciprocal and inseparable connection there is between *faith and obedience*. Abraham's obedience sprung, in the first instance, out of his faith, as Paul writes, "By

faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac." But now the faith, in its turn, receives a mighty impulse from the obedience—Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh, The Lord will provide. Very remarkable in this view are the words that follow the text, and with the reading of which I conclude, "And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord; for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven. . . . And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." ABRAHAM CALLED THE NAME OF THAT PLACE JEHOVAH-JIREH, AS IT IS SAID TO THIS DAY, IN THE MOUNT OF THE LORD IT SHALL BE SEEN.

## V.

### THE HEART OF JESUS—HIS AFFECTION FOR THE LITTLE ONES.

*“And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them;”* and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.”—  
MARK x. 13-16.

I HAVE not read these very precious verses for the purpose of exposition, but that I may invite your thoughts for a little to two distinct bearings of them—first, their bearing on the character of Jesus,—his mind and heart,—his ineffable tenderness, grace, love, considered more in general; and second, and more specifically, the bearing of them on his affection for the little ones, with the sources and springs of it. Oh for His own blessed presence with us while we meditate together on these things!

I. And first, the verses vitally bear on the character

\* Luke has it *infants*, using a word which always means a babe,—an infant. Mark’s word here, and which Matthew also employs, points to children very young, indeed, but rather further advanced than infancy. I think the inference is, that the children brought to Jesus were of both periods—partly infants at the breast, and partly little children able to walk,—of perhaps two or three years.



of Jesus,—on his mind and heart,—his unspeakable tenderness, grace, love, considered more in general. For, have you not noticed how harsh and unkind natures never draw to little children,—how selfish, proud, austere, unloving souls have no sympathy with little children, and seem incapable of feeling interest in them. Of course I do not mean to say that even a selfish and proud man may not feel interested in his own children. But little children in general he cares not for. They are beyond the range of any sympathies of his. His thoughts are too much centred in himself to go out to them. They can do nothing for *him*, and he cannot be troubled with *them*,—takes no interest in them. True, he was a child once himself; but he cares not to think of that.

And, in truth, the repulsion is thoroughly mutual. Little children somehow shrink as by an instinct from selfish, high-minded men. I believe, brethren, that even regenerated souls, which were specially characterized by a proud selfishness before conversion, seldom come, even after it, to feel quite at home with little children. There is a certain strangeness and stiffness that may still be observed in their intercourse with them. And even their kindnesses to them are rather duties they now willingly discharge, than delights which they spontaneously desire. But behold, I pray you, the heart of our Lord Jesus, as it comes out here gloriously the reverse of all that is harsh, selfish, proud, unloving. “He took up the little children in his arms”—ah, no austerity in that heart—“he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.” Behold the Saviour’s bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, gentleness, love. Methinks I can trust my soul, even in hours of deepest darkness and despondency, in the hands of Him who bade the little children welcome when the disciples would have put them away,—took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.

But this feature in the character of Jesus is not to be seen in anything like the full excellency of it without connecting it with another, very unlike it, and which at first might even seem scarcely compatible with it—I mean the majesty, glory, greatness, of his character. Now I do not require, for illustration here, to go further back than the immediately previous verses. There we find our Lord giving forth laws respecting the marriage relation, which were destined soon to alter the face of the nations,—which in fact are moulding, stamping their character on, the whole civilised world at this hour. “The Pharisees came to him,” we read at the second verse, “and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him. And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept: but from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter. And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery. *And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them; and his disciples rebuked those that brought them.*” It seems to me that the disciples awed, overawed, by the glory of their Master, and incapable for the time of realizing in union with it a tenderness and gentleness quite as great, ventured to *think for him*, that it was enough he should have given laws for all families and parents, without being asked to concern himself with the little

children, incapable of profiting by his instructions. But see how the Master passes without an effort from the majesty of the lawgiver to the tenderness of a very nursing mother, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not—He took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them." Oh, this is He who not long before had arisen in that vessel, and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, Peace, be still, and the wind ceased, and there was a great calm—He took up the little children in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them! This is He who, on the mount, was transfigured before the three disciples, and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light; and there came a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Now he takes up little children in his arms, puts his hands upon them, and blesses them! This is He who soon will bring Lazarus out of his very grave. Yea, "the hour cometh," he said, "in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth"—He took up the little children in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them! I do not stay to remark—or to do more, at least, than simply remark, without enlargement on it—that a character like this, uniting in it such divine majesty with such unspeakable human sympathy and tenderness, must be *true*, is self-demonstrative,—that no impostor could possibly have lived it, or attempted to live it, without discovering the artifice at every step, while no false historian could have conceived it, to write, to fabricate, it. But let me rather observe, that this evidently is none other than He of whom it was written of old, "Say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God: He shall feed his flock like a shepherd, he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom." He took up the little children in his arms: He said to the sea, Peace, be still! This is none other than He of whom we sang a little

ago, "He telleth the number of the stars, he calleth them all by their names: He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." Lazarus, said he, come forth—He took up the little children in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them! O yes, let my soul be in the hands of this mighty and merciful,—glorious, gracious One. Indeed, his tenderness alone, without his majesty, could never meet the case of a soul lost as mine is. And his majesty alone, without his tenderness, would soon have given such a soul over to its deserved doom. But what a Saviour,—what a Physician, Friend, is this, who cast out the devils with a word; who raised the dead; who came to the disciples in the fourth watch of the night walking on the sea; who took up the little children in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them! He will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved—Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy upon me—My Lord and my God!—So much, briefly, for the bearing of these verses on the character of Jesus,—the light which they cast on his mind and heart,—his unspeakable tenderness, grace, love, considered more in general.

II. Now I touch on the other and more specific bearing of them, on his deep affection for the little ones, with the springs and sources of it. As to the *fact* of the deep affection, I suppose I do not require to dwell much longer in illustration of it. It shines on the face of this whole narrative. Whatever may have been the precise motive of the disciples in rebuking the parents who brought their children to Jesus, it is out of the question to suppose that they were characterized by any positive or peculiar indifference to the little children. No; but Jesus was characterized by a very peculiar, gloriously affectionate, concern for them and their welfare. You are to mark the deep contrast here between the Master and even his truest disciples. See his positive displeasure, pain of soul (the original

word is a very strong one), at their unkind rebuke. See how he hastens to assure the parents that his followers had miserably misread, misinterpreted, the mind of their Master. See his emphatic and impassioned welcome to the children in the injunction he lays on the disciples, "Suffer them to come unto me, and forbid them not." See how he takes them up in his arms, frowns on the disciples, smiles on the children, places his hands gently and lovingly upon them, and blesses them. I will only add as to the *fact*, that this is not the only place where we find Jesus taking up little children in his arms. In the previous chapter we read, "He took a child and set him in the midst of them; and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them, Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me." Again and again we find him speaking of *the little ones*—"It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish." And you may just recall to mind the following words near the close of the gospel history, "When the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple and saying, Hosannah to the son of David, they were sore displeased, and said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea, have ye never read"—behold how he welcomes the children's songs—"Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise." But what I chiefly wish here, assuming the fact of the Saviour's tender affection for the little ones, is to try and trace it up with you to its sources and springs.

1. And shall I not mention, first among them, his eternal Divinity? Shall we not trace up Christ's deep affection for the little ones, most radically and fundamentally, to his eternal Godhead? You remember those words of Jehovah to an impatient prophet of old, "Should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six score thousand persons that cannot discern be-

tween their right hand and their left hand?" Oh, this is that God—He took up the little children in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them. It is the God that *created* the little ones—shall He be indifferent to them? It is the God of whom it is written in the book of Job, "God is mighty, and despiseth not any,"—despiseth not any, just because he is so great above all. It is the God who feeds the young ravens when they cry. It is the God who clothes the lilies of the field with their surpassing beauty,—who bestows as much care on the tiniest blade or leaflet as on the planet that rolls through space; the God who declared his profound interest in Nineveh's sixty thousand little ones that knew not their right hand from their left. God is love—Jesus is God—He took up the little children in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.

2. But more immediately and specifically, Christ's tender affection for the little ones is to be traced up to the perfection of his Humanity,—has its spring and source, secondly, in the stainless purity and perfection of the human nature which, for our salvation, he took into union with the Divine. I was speaking at the outset of harshness, austerity, selfishness, pride, unlovingness. Of course these all belong to our nature as it is fallen and lost, and so could have no place in the heart of the man Christ Jesus, "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners,"—of whom the angel said to Mary, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." The selfish proud soul, I said, never draws to little children. But for the same reason, conversely, Jesus, the meek, lowly, loving One, cannot but draw to them. I reasoned before from the incident up to the character. Now I reason down from the character to the incident,—to explain the incident,—to give us the

spring and source of Christ's tender affection for the little ones—he was perfect man, as well as true and very God.

3. Then, in intimate connection with this, have we not a third source and spring of it, in the mysterious fact of his own infancy and childhood,—that he was an infant once himself at Bethlehem, a little child at Nazareth? He came not into the world, as the first Adam was brought into it, in the prime and vigour of manhood, but in the helplessness of a very babe, as it is written, “She brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger.” Ah, the proud man was once an infant; but he does not care to think of it. How would Jesus, on the contrary, love to fall back oftentimes on that first period of his humiliation! *We* think seldom of it, and perhaps not altogether unwisely, since so little has been revealed of it to us. But I think it must often have been a subject of cherished thought with the Saviour himself. And when he saw these parents bringing their little children to him, and the disciples discouraging the approach, methinks those words of the twenty-second Psalm might flash across his mind, “Thou art he that took me”—*me* also—“out of the womb; thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts”—I also was an infant. Come, come away—Suffer the little children to come unto me. He took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them!

And there was one circumstance in the infancy of Jesus which I think would not fail to lend an element of more intense tenderness to all his thoughts about his infancy, and to his affection for the little ones in connection with it. I mean the massacre,—Herod's massacre of the infants at Bethlehem, to accomplish, if possible, the death of the infant Messiah. “When they were departed,” it is written, “behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take

the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt. Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently enquired of the wise men. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not." Many years ago I came on the following touchingly beautiful paragraph, in a paper by the late J. D. Burns of Hampstead, on the Massacre and the Sojourn in Egypt:—"So these young lives were yielded up for Christ; martyrs, in a sense, we may call them, in act though not in will, taken thus early from an evil world to the life immortal, in which they always beheld the face of their Father, wearing there for ever the white vestment of an unsullied purity, washed in the blood of Him for whom their own was spilt like water on the ground. Is it extravagant to suppose that to the unfolding mind of Jesus,—to that human heart which was so finely strung, so delicately sensitive in all its natural affections, the thought of childhood was invested, on this account, with a purer and tenderer grace;—that when he took, on a later day, the little children of the hamlets in his arms, and blessed them, laying his hand for all time on the innocent golden head, there mingled with the action a remembrance of the fact, that the lives of little children were the first that had been sacrificed for his own?"

4. But fourthly I mark, among the springs and sources



of Christ's deep affection for the little ones, the place they had ever held in the Divine covenant of grace, and were still to hold in it under the new and better dispensation of the gospel. Well did Jesus know those words to Abraham, "I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee:" and those words, "I will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God:" and those, "I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring." And this place, which the children had ever held in the covenant was not to cease with the old testament,—to cease under the pre-eminently gracious dispensation of the new. Jesus intimates the contrary in the words before us, "Of such—suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God." Soon he was to commission his apostles to renew the intimation in many a form, such as, "The promise is to you and to your children"—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house"—"The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy." Well; Jesus beholds the little ones with a deeper affection and interest, because of the special place they had ever held, and were still to hold, in the covenant made in the Divine counsels of peace before the world began.

5. Which runs into a fifth source and spring of Christ's tender affection for the little ones, namely, the myriads of them in glory,—the myriads of the redeemed in heaven who entered it in the period of helpless infancy. No doubt this thought also is in the pregnant words, "Of such is the kingdom of God,"—in glory above, as well as grace below. Only remember, I beseech you, how large a proportion of our whole race die in infancy. Then, if you but suppose the children of believers, dying in infancy, to be universally saved—very

much more, of course, if you suppose the salvation of all infants, dying in infancy, without exception—what an innumerable multitude are clothed thus with white robes, and palms in their hands! How large a proportion of the jewels of the Redeemer's crown are in every age gathered from the ranks of little children! How dear must they thus be in the eyes of Jesus!

6. But I mention yet another source and spring of Christ's deep affection for the little ones. He found the chosen type of his disciple in the little child,—found the most perfect picture and pattern of the subject of his spiritual kingdom, in the child's simplicity, guilelessness, trustfulness, humility, unquestioning obedience. Was the question moved among the disciples, Who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven? "Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, 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 greatest in the kingdom of heaven." To the same purpose are the solemn and searching words of the 15th verse here, "Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein." My hearers, are you bearing this in mind? Are you bearing in mind that, except you receive the kingdom of heaven in somewhat of the simplicity, trustfulness, sincerity, lowliness, unquestioning submission, of a little child, you shall not enter therein? O Lord, wilt thou teach me the spirit of David's psalm, "Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me. Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child. Let Israel hope in the Lord from henceforth and for ever"!

I might have mentioned other sources—such as our Lord's knowing well how much should in every age depend on the childhood for the character of the manhood,—how the germs and seeds of the great future are then for the most part sown. Many a wise and godly mother remembers this,—tells of it in her tears and prayers, and travailing as in birth till Christ be formed in the heart of her child. Jesus knew it well, and knew also that, with some great exceptions, like Saul of Tarsus, those of his servants should serve him best in his kingdom who should be brought to him, united to him, in very early years. Suffice it, however, to have noted those several springs and sources of Christ's deep affection for the little ones—his Godhead; the perfection of his Manhood; his infancy and childhood; the place of little children ever in the covenant; the myriads of them in heaven; and that he found the chosen type of his disciple in the little child.

Let me for an instant revert, in closing, to the bearing of the passage on the character and heart of Jesus,—his ineffable tenderness, grace, love, considered more in general. Are there sorrowing ones here,—anxious, sin-burdened souls, ready to sink into despondency? I would affectionately commend to you Him who took up the little children in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them. Oh be encouraged to put your case into his hands,—to trust, to leave, it with him. Here is a Physician, of skill and power enough to heal your deepest wounds, but not less gentle also, and lowly, and tender, in dealing with them. Listen to his own words, “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 in heart*; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” Believers in Jesus, what a Saviour is this you have found—or rather who has found you! I think, when they ask, “What is thy beloved more than another beloved?” you may well answer,

“My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand. His head is as the most fine gold; his locks are bushy, and black as a raven. . . . His countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars.” Oh, he will raise the universal dead—He took up the little children in his arms—I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day.

How does the whole subject abound with materials of encouragement to Christian parents, to pray for their little children, to present them to the Lord in baptism, to plead with God unceasingly for them, and to plead with them, in due time, unceasingly for God! And how does the subject abound with encouragement to you also, dear children, to come to Jesus *now*, saying, O satisfy us early with thy mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days! Would that we ministers, pastors, drank deeper into the spirit of Him who yearned over the little ones with an affection so tender, and would not ascend up into glory till first he had charged Peter, in name of the universal Ministry, “Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?”—then “Feed my sheep, feed my lambs.”

## VI.

### THE DOOM OF MEROZ.\*

*“Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord; curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.”—JUDGES v. 23.*

In these deeply solemn words two things claim our attention—the sin of the inhabitants of Meroz, and the judgment of the Lord against them because of it. Let me rapidly touch on the sin; on the judgment; with one or two practical lessons arising out of both.

I. The sin of the men of Meroz is described in very remarkable terms, although we have grown so familiar with them as scarce perhaps to notice their strange character. It is said that “they came not to the help of the Lord.” Came not to the help of the Lord? Everywhere we read of the Lord’s coming to the help of man; but man coming to the help of the Lord, seems strange. Constantly we find such prayers as “Help us, O Lord our God, for we rest on thee”—“Give us help from trouble, for vain is the help of man”—“Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name.” But helpless man coming to the help of the Lord! Is He in straits, then? “Can a man be profitable unto his Maker?” Is he in difficulties, that he should require the aid of his own

\* Preached at the opening of the Free Church General Assembly, 22d May 1873.

creature? So it would seem, in some sense or other. And happily, although we have not elsewhere the exact expression in the text, we have kindred ones which let us at once into its weighty import, as for example, "I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat"—"He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye"—"Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"—Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it not to me." "They came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty."

The particular case here was this. Israel, for their idolatries,—their "choosing of new gods," as it is expressed in a previous verse, had been sold by the Lord into the hand of the Canaanites. For years they had held them down beneath a crushing oppression. At length the Lord raised up a deliverer for them in the person of Deborah, in conjunction with Barak, the son of Abinoam. Of Deborah it is written at the sixth verse of the previous chapter, that "she sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedesh-Naphtali, and said unto him, Hath not the Lord God of Israel commanded, saying, Go and draw toward Mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun? And I will draw unto thee, to the river Kishon, Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots, and his multitude; and I will deliver him into thine hand." *I* will deliver him. But the Lord employs instruments for the executing of his purposes, though he needs them not. The tribes of Israel were summoned to this war: and the inhabitants of Meroz declined the summons. Well; but God had entered into marriage covenant with Israel. The kingdom of Israel was His kingdom. The interests of Israel were His interests; and he had bound up with them the glory of his own name. Accordingly, it is not now said of the men of Meroz that they came not to Deborah's help, nor

to Barak's help, nor even to the help of Israel; but that "they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty." True, they were deeply guilty in refusing to come to the help of Israel. It was the very spirit of the first murderer, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Nay, they were guilty in refusing pusillanimously to come, if I might so speak, to their own help. For they were a part of Israel; their own interests were involved in the struggle; and men are not entitled to fling their own liberties and welfare away. But pre-eminently their sin lay in this—just where the condemnation of the final judgment will lie, "Ye did it not to me"—"They came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty."

(1.) A little more specifically, the sin of the men of Meroz had in it unbelief,—criminal distrust of the word and promise and power of the living God. No doubt it was largely cowardice that led them to refuse their aid. But whence the cowardice? They did not believe that the Canaanites could be subdued. They would keep on good terms with the oppressors to save their own heads. They "believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation." Either they did not believe that the Lord was in covenant with Israel, or, which came to much the same, they limited the Holy One of Israel, like their fathers,—they deemed his strength unequal to cope with the princes of Canaan. Their spirit was that of the spies of old, "The people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled and very great." It was the dark reverse of theirs who answered them, "They are bread for us; their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us; fear them not."

(2.) But besides criminal unbelief—that root and strength of all other iniquities—the sin of the men of Meroz had in it a vile preference of their own ease, and fancied present interest, before the authority, and honour, and interest, of

the God of Israel. Deborah had said, "Hath not the Lord God of Israel commanded, saying, Go, and draw toward mount Tabor?" And the command had doubtless been made known to the men of Meroz. But they preferred their own selfish quiet before the authority of Jehovah—treason that, of course, against the King of kings. They preferred their own ease before His honour, which was now at stake, since he had said, "I will deliver Sisera, the captain of Jabin, into thine hand." No thanks to the men of Meroz if the promise did not fail,—if the glory of the God of Israel became not the mockery of the heathen. They preferred their own ease before God's interest—for he had condescended to make Israel's interest his own. And it was just as if the adorable God had been in distress, but they cared not for it; as if he had been an hungered, but they gave him no meat; as if he had been crushed beneath the rod of the oppressor, but they refused to lift a hand for his deliverance—"They came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty."

(3.) And thus, further, their sin was nothing less than enmity, war, against the living God. Doubtless they would be fain to say, What have we done so much against him? we have but sat still in our quiet homes. Ay, and therein fought against Him. Oh, there is no possible medium between the love of the adorable God, and the hatred of him,—between willing, active service rendered to God, and hostility, war, against him—"He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." He who prefers his own ease before the honour, authority, interest, of God, fights to the utmost of his power against his Being and Life. Nor will the condemnation of the judgment-day turn on aught else than just such a negative iniquity, "They came not to the help of the Lord"—"Ye did it not to me"—"If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha."



(4.) I only add on the sin, that it is marked as a special aggravation of it that it was to “the help of the Lord *against the mighty*” they refused to come—against the mighty. Had the enemy, that is to say, been a feeble, contemptible one in numbers and strength, they might have had some plausible pretext for leaving the struggle to others. But all was in reality at stake. The existence of Israel hung in the balance. The enemy was in the last degree formidable. All available help was required. Yet, in this crisis of their country’s, and of the Church’s, history, the inhabitants of Meroz “came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.”

II. But now we look, secondly, and more briefly, at the judgment,—the judgment of the Lord against the men of Meroz for this sin: “Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord; curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.” There can be very little doubt, from the prominence given to Meroz here, that, in the days of Deborah, it must have been a place, a town, of very considerable size and importance. Yet we find no mention anywhere made of it after this time. And it is every way probable that soon after this period, in God’s righteous judgment, and in execution of this very curse, it had become the subject of some desolating infliction, that had blotted the name and remembrance of it out from under heaven, “Curse ye Meroz”—and yet “there is none good but One, that is God”—“curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord; curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.”

It is a remarkable circumstance, however, that other and very considerable sections of the Israelites seem to have been involved in the same sin, more or less, with the men of Meroz; yet we do not find the same curse denounced

against them. Thus, in the fifteenth verse, after a commendation of the tribe of Issachar, "The princes of Issachar were with Deborah; even Issachar, and also Barak: he was sent on foot into the valley," it is added, "For the divisions of Reuben there were great thoughts of heart. Why abodest thou among the sheep-folds, to hear the bleatings of the flocks? For the divisions of Reuben, there were great searchings of heart. Gilead abode beyond Jordan: and why did Dan remain in ships? Asher continued on the sea-shore, and abode in his breaches." A fine contrast follows in the eighteenth verse, "Zebulun and Naphtali were a people that jeoparded their lives unto the death in the high places of the field." I think there can be very little doubt that there must have been some special aggravation in the case of Meroz which has not been placed on record—perhaps its having been in the immediate neighbourhood of the field of action, together with some more express and emphatic treachery of dealing in its refusal of aid. At the same time I am well satisfied that the Holy Ghost does not record the case of Meroz here as some rarely exceptional one, but rather singles it out in order to place in bolder relief, by one striking example, the whole class of cases—alas! too, too numerous—to which it belongs. This much is certain, that the curse of Meroz was but the harbinger, a kind of anticipative specimen, of that wide-spreading doom,—in which the Lord grant that none of us may share!—"Then shall the King say to them on his left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick and in prison, and ye visited me not." "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha"—accursed at the coming of the Lord. "Curse ye Meroz, said the

angel of the Lord; curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.”

III. But I am thus led, finally, to touch on one or two practical lessons arising out of the whole. There are, indeed, doctrinal lessons which might have been mentioned, such as the marvellous oneness between the Lord and his people, and his rich condescension and grace, seen in the very using of words like “coming to the help of the Lord.” But I limit myself to three immediately practical lessons.

1. And first, a lesson of duty—very urgent duty. It will help to bring both the duty and the urgency of it better out, if it is borne in mind that, from the fall of our race downwards,—from the hour of the first sin, and of the first covenant promise, “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel,” the Lord has had a controversy, so to speak,—a quarrel in this fallen world,—a war with mighty adversaries, Satan, sin, the world that lieth in the wicked one—his gracious purpose having all along been in that war to call a people out of the world for the glory of his own name,—an innumerable multitude of all kindreds, and peoples, and tongues, to be “washed, and sanctified, and justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God.” Just glance at those words of Deborah, describing the deep desolation of Israel, in the sixth and seventh verses, “In the days of Shamgar, the son of Anath, in the days of Jael, the highways were unoccupied, and the travellers walked through byways. The inhabitants of the villages ceased, they ceased in Israel, until” and so on. Some faint, very faint, shadow this, of the spiritual profound desolation of this world lying in wickedness, dead in trespasses and sins—the two hundred millions, for example, of India’s

heathen ; or China, with her four hundred millions ; or our own great cities, London, Glasgow, &c., with their multitudes estranged from all the decencies even, and outward observances, of religion. Well ; and God uses instruments for the saving of the lost everywhere, “Go ye, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” And although all cannot go in person to fight this battle of the Lord, all can do very much, by prayers, by pecuniary gifts, and in other ways, for the fulfilling of the commission, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” But, alas ! how often are men, of whom from their profession other things might be expected, found coolly saying, That is not our work—complacently within their hearts saying, We injure no one,—we lead a quiet and harmless life. Well ; there are different views of what injury, harm, is. God has his view of this, and men have theirs. But be it so. Yet, if the blessed God has condescended to make the reclaiming of those multitudes at home, and millions upon millions abroad, his peculiar battle, and you refuse to bear your share in it ; if he has condescended to espouse this as his own quarrel and cause, and, using instrumentality, has sent forth commands which have reached to *you*, laying you and your means and prayers and services all under tribute, then is your duty just as plain as was that of the inhabitants of Meroz. Then must you needs share in their guilt and in their doom, refusing to give yourselves to the discharge of it. Then the same criminal distrust of God, the same vile preference of your own ease to his honour, authority, interest ; the same enmity to Him, the same aggravated refusal to come to his help against the mighty, and the same curse, or a bitterer one, must rest on your heads as rested on theirs. Oh, how vain and hollow all the pleas which men are fain to set up for themselves in this matter ! At

best they run up into the first murderer's question. But, supposing it conceded that you are not your brother's keeper, at least you are the subjects and servants of the living God; and the fearful charge he brings here against those I now address is this, that "they have not come to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty." It was to small purpose that the unprofitable servant said, "I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth; lo, there thou hast that is thine"—I have harmed no one—God had no need of my poor services. "Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest"—didst thou?—"that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not strawed. Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Cast ye the unprofitable servant"—not the profligate, the thief, the drunkard, but the unprofitable servant—"into outer darkness." How replete with duty, in short,—urgent paramount duty, are these words, "Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord; curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty"!

2. But observe a second lesson of a different character, one of precious and varied encouragement, to all such as are disposed, humbly, yet resolutely and prayerfully, to offer themselves to the help of the Lord against the mighty. See, for example, how he will condescend to receive and welcome your aid. Read the ninth verse of this song of Deborah, "My heart"—ah, what was the heart of Deborah but a shadow of the heart of God?—"My heart is toward the governors of Israel, that offered themselves willingly among the people. Bless ye the Lord": and the second verse, "Praise ye the Lord for the avenging of Israel, when the people willingly offered themselves." And see the grateful mention, if I might so speak with reverence,

which God makes of particular services. Ver. 14. "Out of Ephraim was there a root of them against Amalek; after thee, Benjamin, among thy people: out of Machir (Manasseh) came down governors, and out of Zebulun they that handle the pen of the writer." It seems that, besides the services which were common to all, each could offer something special to himself—"out of Zebulun they that handle the pen of the writer. And the princes of Issachar were with Deborah. . . . Zebulun and Naphtali were a people that jeopardded their lives unto the death in the high places of the field." But the grand encouragement here lies in this same expression, "the help of the Lord,"—"coming to the help of the Lord," which tells of the guilt and doom of those who refuse to come to it. Oh, is it to the help of the Almighty God you seek to come, dear brethren? Then you may well, I think, thank God, and take courage. Then, be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's—there be more with you than with them. Then may you pray, and give, and labour, in the happy confiding spirit of those words, "God hath spoken in his holiness, I will rejoice,"—"Arise, O God, plead thine own cause,"—"Lord it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many or with them that have no power; help us O Lord our God, for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O Lord, thou art our God; let not man prevail against THEE." Is it to the help of the Lord you seek to come? Then are you permitted even to anticipate a glorious reward of services, which might well, indeed, be their own sufficient reward. But the Lord, in his matchless grace, is pleased to crown them with an everlasting blessedness and glory, "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 an hungered, 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 . . . inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me."

3. But once more we have a lesson here of solemn warning—duty, encouragement, *warning*. I expressed the persuasion a little ago, that the Spirit of God does not set down the case of Meroz here as some rarely exceptional one, but rather singles it forth to place in bolder relief, by an example, the whole class of cases to which it belongs—a class so fearfully numerous that we have cause indeed to say, each one of us, Lord, is it mine? cause to tremble lest we should be found under the guilt and doom of Meroz,—found in that vast company to whom, on his left hand, the King will say, "Ye did it not to me." For, brethren, you will not fail to observe that it is by no means any and every kind of help and service that will suffice to separate us from the class, and save us from the curse, of the inhabitants of Meroz. A man may come, for example, with a help so stinted and grudging as to make it quite manifest that it is but the covering up of a desire to be let alone altogether. Or he may come with a help not so stinted in the simple amount of it, yet not offered to the Lord himself, which is the hinge, you will carefully observe, of this whole matter, "they came not to the help of the Lord"—"Ye did it," or, "ye did it not, *to me*." How deeply solemn the thought that, if there is the richest condescension in such a mode of speech as "coming to the help of the Lord," it is a condescension which has, however, its two entirely different and opposite aspects, according as it is felt, appreciated, embraced, on the one hand, or despised and rejected, on the other! Assuredly, by how much the Lord has revealed his condescension and grace, in making offer to us of so marvellous a one—

ness of cause and interest and blessedness with Himself, by so much the more aggravated a judgment and doom must the contempt and rejection of that grace bring with it. "Curse ye Meroz"—fearful words, beloved, but very gracious ones also, considered as set down for no other end than to shut us the more up to Him who redeemeth his people from the curse of the law, having been made a curse for them,—who is made of God to as many as put their trust in him, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption—the very same Angel of the covenant, I doubt not, who is the speaker in the text, and will one day sit on the judgment-throne—CURSE YE MEROZ, SAID THE ANGEL OF THE LORD ; CURSE YE BITTERLY THE INHABITANTS THEREOF ; BECAUSE THEY CAME NOT TO THE HELP OF THE LORD, TO THE HELP OF THE LORD AGAINST THE MIGHTY.



## VII

### LYING ON JESUS' BREAST.

*“Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom he spake. He then lying on Jesus' breast, saith unto him, Lord, who is it?”—JOHN xiii. 23-25. Text —“He lying on Jesus' breast.”*

You observe that this circumstance respecting the beloved disciple is twice noted in these verses—“there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples;” “he lying on Jesus' breast, saith unto him:” and yet again towards the close of this Gospel we read, “Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?”

If we bring up before our minds that last supper, and the company which sat at that table, I think we might conceive somehow thus of the circumstance in the text. The Lord, loving John above all the others, might naturally wish him to be seated near, next, to him in that hour of sorrow and tender affection. Then John, drawn by his love to Jesus, on the one hand, and the Master's ineffable benignity of mien and discourse upon the other, might venture, all but unconsciously at first, to lay his head somewhat on the bosom of that Master; and, partly, He might condescend at such a time to place his arm more or less about the neck of the disciple seated by him

—thus in effect inviting and drawing the reclining on his breast.

I. But now, may we not be able without much difficulty to get at the state of mind and heart, on either side, of which this attitude was the expression, and out of which it came?

1. On the side of the disciple, first, surely it told of a holy, unsuspecting, childlike *trust, reliance on the Lord Jesus*—"he lying on Jesus' breast." John leans his head, in this night of deep anxiety and sorrow, on the bosom of Christ. Was it not the very embodying of that word, "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me?"—he lying on Jesus' breast. Doubtless John was tried, like the others that night, with many a difficulty,—many a painful foreboding for the future. Had any one officiously then addressed him, "Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy Master from thy head?" methinks he had been ready to answer with one of old, "Yea, I know it; hold thou thy peace." Too well he knows it. But just the more he will lean his head to-night, if permitted, on that Master's bosom. He will cast his care, as he best may, on this mighty, gracious One. "There was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved."

Ay, and who loved Jesus. For, assuredly, if there was faith,—unsuspecting confidence, trust, in the attitude, yet more plainly there was *love, intense affection* in it—he lying on Jesus' breast. Oh, it is heart drawing to heart in the hour of deep grief! John ventures to lay his head on the breast of the Lord; it is the expression, manifestly, of ardent love—springing from it, telling of it. In fact the two feelings, the reliance and the love, the trust and the affection, were intimately and inseparably connected together. It was a loving reliance; and it was a confiding affection. The "faith wrought by love;" and

the love, "casting out fear," emboldened the faith. All the blessed safety which the faith, in the face of a dark unknown future, apprehended and realized from the arm and from the heart of Jesus, drew forth a deeper love toward him; while the love would not suffer any questioning of the trustworthiness of its Object, and so upheld, in its turn, and strengthened the faith.

2. Well, but if the lying on Jesus' breast told thus of certain great feelings on the side of the disciple, it no less told of corresponding ones on the side of the glorious Master who permitted, and in effect invited, it. Did it not tell, I venture to ask, even of a certain counterpart *confidence, trust*, reposed by Christ in the disciple? Jesus suffers him to lean his head upon his bosom. Ah! this is not to be the traitor—treason never shall find an entrance within this man's soul. No doubt it is written elsewhere, "behold, he putteth no trust in his saints;" and, certainly, apart from his own grace upholding them, that must ever hold good of them all. But we find such other words in Scripture as these, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do? for I know him"—"The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant"—"If there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known to him in a vision. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house; with him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches"—"God spake to Moses as a man speaketh unto his friend." There was, I say, a certain confidence in John, implied in the Lord's permitting him to lean his head upon his bosom.

But still more obviously the permission told of Christ's *affection*, intense affection, for John. O yes, if the leaning bespoke John's affection for Jesus, at least as much it bespoke the affection of Jesus for John. You recollect that word in Nathan's touching parable. "The poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought

and nourished up ; and it grew up together with him, and with his children ; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom." Manifestly John's being permitted to lean on the bosom of Jesus told that he was eminently "the disciple whom he loved." Not that the Lord loved John with any higher love of *benevolence* than he did the other disciples. If we look to the love spoken in all such expressions as, "Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it"—"To him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood"—"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends"—we can scarce conceive this love of compassion, pity, benevolence, being other than equally great towards all the members of the ransomed Church, of every country and age. Plainly it is satisfaction,—it is delight, complacency, in John that is spoken of in the expression "the disciple whom Jesus loved," and which came out divinely in the permission to lean his head upon his bosom.

Now I do not enter here into the inquiry what the grounds and sources were of this special complacency in John. If this belonged to my purpose, it might be shewn very easily how far, very far, it was from having any faultlessness of his character for its source. We find the Evangelists recording instances of marked imperfection in this disciple,—instances, I may in passing say, peculiarly unlike that mere natural gentleness of temper which has come somehow—but it seems to me on most inadequate grounds—to be associated with John, and with the Lord's special affection for him. Without questioning at all that he was distinguished, and above all the others, for love, I am persuaded that the Lord's peculiar affection for him must have had reference to that love, however, not as connected with any mere natural gentleness of spirit, but as the result of the deeper working in his heart of those gracious, super-

natural principles which ever drew our Lord's love and admiration,—as when, for instance, he said of Mary of Bethany, “Why trouble ye the woman? She hath wrought a good work on me. Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this that this woman hath done be told for a memorial of her;” or when, marvelling at the Gentile centurion, he said of him, “I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.” Without, however, enlarging on the grounds of the peculiar affection for John, suffice it to note the fact that his leaning on Christ's bosom—as it told of the disciple's unsuspecting reliance on the Lord, and deep love to him, on the one side—assuredly told, on the other, of Christ's confidence, in a sort, and peculiar complacency, in the disciple.

II. But now, brethren, I am greatly mistaken if our text does not admit of being turned to extensive use, far beyond the case of the disciple immediately referred to in it. For, is there no such thing as leaning on the bosom of Christ still? I trust indeed there is; ay, and if not in precisely the same manner as at the last supper of old, yet not only as truly, but after a manner still more blessed and glorious. This is certain at least, that one disciple only could lean as did John on the outward bosom of the Lord. But we may now find that this is a privilege, a happiness, accessible at this hour, in the essence and soul of it, even to as many as shall truly aspire after it.

Generally here you might turn for a moment with me to a passage in the twentieth of this Gospel, at the 15th verse:—“Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say,

Master." Then observe what follows :—"Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father. I apprehend that the meaning of this is not, Touch me not,—stay not at present with me, for there will be time enough before I ascend to my Father. But rather, on the contrary, the thought is, that while Mary, in the ardour of her affection, was "holding the Lord by the feet," as another Evangelist tells us, he gently discourages it, intimating that there will be ample time and ample room after his ascension, for all possible intimacy, and familiarity of holy spiritual converse, with him—and that, too, for all genuine disciples together. "Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father"—there will be freer scope then for even leaning the weary head on my breast for ever—"touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God."

1. A little more particularly, however, and again looking, for a moment or two, at the expression, "he lying on Jesus' breast," have we found that the soul of this attitude, as on the disciple's side, first of all, lay partly in a holy, unsuspecting, child-like trust, reliance on the Lord Jesus? 'Then have we the attitude still,—in every age,—in the spirit of all such words as these, "I will go in the strength of the Lord God; I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only"—He lying on Jesus' breast. "My soul followeth hard after thee; thy right hand upholdeth me:" "Refuge failed me; I cried unto thee, O Lord; I said, Thou art my refuge, and my portion in the land of the living"—He lying on Jesus' breast. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I

live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." "Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me. Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child. Let Israel hope in the Lord from henceforth and for ever."—He lying on Jesus' breast.

But sometimes, out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, more literally, the Lord is pleased to perfect his own praise, that he may still the enemy and the avenger. Many years ago I was visiting a sick dying boy of the congregation. He lay weary on his pillow, near his end. I scarce hoped to make him understand me—he was not six years of age. But thinking I might make an attempt, after short prayer, I said to him, "Charlie, you are resting your head on the pillow; try and rest on Jesus, as you are resting on the pillow." I came away with little hope that he had even understood me. Next day his father told me that, on going up to the little crib several hours after my visit, and without making any reference to it, he said to him, "Are you resting on Jesus, dear?" He immediately answered, "Soft pillow." It was his only reply, "soft pillow!" Ah, that is it from the lips of the dying boy—unsuspecting reliance, "soft pillow"—He lying on Jesus' breast!

But then, besides the reliance, we found the soul of this attitude in the other element of love also, going along with the reliance, springing out of it, yet strengthening it in turn—each ministering to the other,—the faith the parent of the love, and the love nourishing in turn the parent, the faith, that begets it. Leaning on the breast assuredly tells of love,—leaning on the heart, as it were, the everlasting affection, of Jesus. And thus have we not the

love also, still,—in every age,—and in blessed harmony with the words to Mary, “Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father, but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father; and to my God and your God”? O yes, here it is—“Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth.” “My beloved is mine, and I am his”—faith and love hand in hand,—loving faith, confiding love. “I will seek Him whom my soul loveth.” “Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning on her beloved?”

2. But remember what we found as to John's leaning on the breast of Jesus,—how it told not only of his feelings towards the Lord, but of the Lord's also towards him. And, in like manner, is the leaning of disciples still, only in part by their faith in the Lord, and their love to him. It is by his welcoming also, just as of old,—permitting, reciprocating, their feelings towards him, in a blessed corresponding confidence, as it were, and complacency, in them. Let it not seem that here at least,—as respects Christ's special confidence and complacency, all must have been peculiar to John. No doubt Christ could offer his outward breast at the supper to only one head; and further true, that, of the eleven disciples, John was the best beloved. But may there not have been, since that time, disciples equally beloved even with John—possibly some very much unknown ones,—devoted, burning, “doing what they could” for Christ and his cause? But what chiefly has to be fixed in our minds here, is Christ's gracious special confidence and complacency in all such as, by the Holy Ghost, “following him fully,” have for their spirit the psalmist's “Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.” That he still continues to place in all such a wondrous confidence, so to speak, and to cherish towards them a peculiar complacency, he declares expressly in the following words, “He that hath my com-



mandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me ; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto him (not Iscariot), Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, 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." "How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse ! how much better is thy love than wine ! and the smell of thine ointments than all spices !" "Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse ; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck." "Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee."

I said that the "leaning" might be now not only as real as at the last supper of old, but in a manner still more blessed and glorious. For it is not simply that one only could lean there and thus ; but, in intimate connection with the spirit of the words to Mary, "touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father," remember those words to Thomas, "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed ; blessed are they"—blessed in still higher degree—"who have not seen, and yet have believed ;" or Peter's words, "Whom having not seen ye love ; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

Altogether, would you see the lying on Jesus' breast, in the very soul of it, and on both the sides together? There it is, "I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys. As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters. As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight," and his fruit was sweet to my taste. He brought me to the banqueting-house, and his banner over me was love. His left hand

is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me. I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till he please." Perhaps, in a more special manner at the Lord's Supper, still, may the lying on the breast be known and realized. Would that at the table of communion next Sabbath, it might be known in some good measure among ourselves! Yet this is not a privilege confined to any one ordinance or season. How much cause have we to mourn that it is so imperfectly enjoyed by us from day to day! Assuredly the bosom, the heart, of Jesus is large enough to receive every weary head that is but truly offered to lean on it. We are not straitened in Him. Oh that, for a recompense of the past, we might now at length be enlarged! "I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt; open thy mouth wide and I will fill it." "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full,"—He lying on Jesus' breast.

A closing word especially to the young. Remember the dying boy I spoke of,—what I said to him, "you are resting your head on the pillow; try and rest on Jesus, as you are resting on the pillow," and his answer, when his father afterwards asked him, "Are you resting on Jesus?" "Soft pillow"—leaning on Jesus, loving Jesus. You recollect those beautiful words, "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd, he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom." Carry them in his bosom? Then Jesus lets you lean on his bosom; and *you* may have the very privilege and happiness of John, the beloved disciple—He lying on Jesus' breast!

" I heard the voice of Jesus say,—  
     ' Come unto me and rest ;  
 Lay down, thou weary one, lay down  
     Thy head upon my breast.'

I came to Jesus as I was,  
Weary, and worn, and sad :  
I found in him a resting-place,  
And he has made me glad."

THE LYING ON JESUS' BREAST.

## VIII.

### A COMMUNION SABBATH'S SERVICES.

#### 1. *Morning Sermon.*

##### CHRIST'S OWN ACCOUNT OF HIS BLOOD-SHEDDING.

*“This is my blood of the new testament [covenant], which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”—*

MATT. XXVI. 28.

A VERY different account of that blood-shedding was to be given some twelve or fourteen hours later, when, after the apprehension in the garden, and the hurried mock trials of the early morning before Caiaphas and Pontius Pilate, that blood was to be shed by deadliest enemies, to make an end, if possible, of Jesus, and his claims and kingdom, for ever. How marvellous that this night in the guest chamber—although those things had yet to intervene,—the apprehension, the trials, the sentence, the crucifixion,—Jesus, in calm majesty, speaks of his blood as if already it were being shed, and shed by some party or parties wholly distinct from his murderers, and for ends unutterably remote from all their thoughts and designs, “This is my blood of the new covenant,” says he, “which is shed for many for the remission of sins!” The paschal supper had just been concluded. For the last time—legitimately at least—the lamb of the pass-over had been slain, its blood shed, its flesh partaken of. Another Lamb is now taking the place of that

and all the other victims of the law, for ever. It is this Lamb himself whose voice we hear uttering the words of the text, and inviting us—shall I not say?—to meditate for a little on them, before we shall hear them again as from his own lips at his table, “This is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”

I mean to take the words, very simply, in three questions—first, Whose was this blood? second, By whom was it shed? and, third, To what end and issue? “Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most Mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty; and in thy majesty ride prosperously for truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things!”

I. First, Whose blood was this? Or, in other words, Who is it that speaks, saying, “*My* blood, shed for many for the remission of sins”? Well; so far all is clear and simple. It is a man, of course, who sits at that table with the others. John leans on his human breast. Peter, and Thomas, and Philip, and Jude, ask questions of him, and are answered with human lips. He speaks of his blood, “*My blood.*” This is no angel, at least,—no “ministering spirit sent forth to minister for the heirs of salvation,”—but very man—bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. Shortly before he had said, “The *Son of man* came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.”

But how? “his life a ransom for many”? Had it not been written in the Psalms, “None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him”? Granted that this man, unlike all other men, was entirely sinless. But to be sinless is no more than each and every man’s duty for himself. How shall the life of a sinless man become ever a ransom-price for even one sinful brother—not to speak of a world? Oh, but turn back with me for a moment to the opening chapter of

this Gospel, and read of the birth of this Man thus, at the twenty-first verse, "She shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which, being interpreted, is, GOD WITH US." They are Isaiah's words, a chapter or two before those other words, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, THE MIGHTY GOD." Behold the answer to our question, Whose blood was this? The blood of the God-man, "Emmanuel," "The second man, the Lord from heaven," "God manifest in the flesh," "God over all, blessed for ever"!

Beloved, it has long been to my mind a deep joy to find the Divinity of the Man whose death we are to celebrate to day, not written more expressly in such words as we have read from the first chapter of this Gospel, than taken palpably for granted in all the after ones—affirmed in some respects more strongly by being assumed and presupposed, everywhere—as, for instance, when John the Baptist in an early chapter says of him, "He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes' latchet I am not worthy to unloose; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: whose fan is in his hand,"—the Judge of the world—"and he will thoroughly purge his floor,"—*his* floor,—the whole visible Church, it seems, is his property—"and he will gather the wheat into his garner,"—heaven also is his,—*his* garner—"but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire,"—and hell also is his,—his breath it is that shall kindle it—THE LIVING GOD!

It were endless, however, to pursue this inviting field

—to notice how, in one chapter, Jesus claims for himself that supreme love of our hearts which is due to God alone, saying, “He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of me;” how, in the chapter following, he invites a whole world to come to him for what the Almighty God alone can give to a single soul, saying, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;” how (to take but another instance), in the chapter before that in which the text lies, he in effect proclaims himself at once God and man, saying, “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a 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”—you know the rest. He, the Judge of quick and dead, appoints, administers, the everlasting destinies of the righteous and the wicked, respectively. “Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me,” FROM ME, “ye cursed, into everlasting fire; for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat.” Oh, our eternity not only is in his hands, but turns, it seems, for weal or for woe, on our regard or our disregard for HIM—“ye did it,” or “ye did it not, TO ME.” This is He who in the guest chamber says, “This is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” And observe the “my,” “*my* blood”—one only person,—not a God and a man, but the two infinitely diverse natures inseparably united in one Christ,—one person, “I,” “My”—so that the things which were done and suffered by him in the human nature were verily done and suffered by the adorable One,—the God-man—as it is elsewhere written, “God purchased the Church with his own blood.” “Ye killed the Prince of life.” “I

am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore!" Rest assured, beloved, that a sight of the Person of the Saviour to day, shall transform all our thoughts of his Death,—shall throw an unutterable glory over the entire grace and saving virtue of the blood-shedding itself, which is now more immediately to engage our attention.

II. Our second question is, By whom was this blood shed? Now, there was one party that had a large and dreadful share in the shedding of it, of whom Jesus makes no mention here. He passes by Caiaphas and Pilate,—the chief priests and Pharisees,—the Jewish people, and the Gentile governor and soldiers. And with reference to them, I will but ask you to note in passing this eternal wonder, that the same "crucifying of the Lord of glory," which, on man's part, was the crowning act of human wickedness, was, on the part of God, mysteriously, and from everlasting had been predestined to be, the purchase of man's redemption, and the crowning exercise and manifestation of the Divine love, and all other perfections—"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" "The stone which the builders refused is become the headstone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes!" Leaving, however, the Jews, and the other more immediate authors of this blood-shedding, I mark three distinct parties, who, doubtless, were all in the eye of our Lord when he said, "This is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

1. And first, Himself—to speak with deepest reverence. Jesus shed his own blood,—was the Offerer, as well as the sacrifice, the offering,—most freely and voluntarily laid down his life, even as we found him a little ago saying, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but



to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." The disciples were his guests at this supper; and I suppose he had poured out the wine into the cup for their use. When he now says, "This is my blood shed" for you, it is as if he had said—the blood which I no less freely and voluntarily pour forth for remission of your sins. The Father, five hundred years before, had said of him, "I will divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he hath poured out his soul unto death." At length his voice was heard on the earth, saying, "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep . . . No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." Thus it was that, until "his hour was come" (as the Scripture expression so often is), all the malice and schemes of his enemies were in vain to accomplish his death. But when this his last passover was drawing near, you recollect how he said to the disciples, when in a place of comparative retirement, "Let us go into Judea again." And when they ventured to remonstrate with him, saying, "Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?" he refused to be dissuaded. And then, more immediately, after the agony in the garden, you remember how John tells us that, when the band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, under the leading of the traitor, "came thither with lanterns and torches and weapons," as in search of some reluctant criminal, Jesus, "knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he!"—

" The Saviour, what a noble flame  
 Was kindled in his breast,  
 When, hasting to Jerusalem,  
 He marched before the rest !

Goodwill to men, and zeal for God,  
His every thought engross ;  
He longs to be baptized with blood,  
He pants to reach the cross."

First, I say, Jesus shed his own blood,—was the High priest, as well as the victim, the lamb, the sacrifice,—freely and voluntarily laid down his life for his sheep.

2. Then observe a second, and in some respects the principal, party in this mysterious blood-shedding—even the Father,—the holy, righteous, loving, Father,—as it is written, "God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all." You remember that, after those words, "No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again," Jesus added, "This commandment have I received of my Father." For, although he was one with the Father essentially and eternally,—true and very God,—yet, in the whole work of our redemption, the Father sustained the place, the rights, the majesty, of the Godhead; while the Son condescended to be the servant of the Father, as it is written in the great words, "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Hence those words we sang at the opening of our service, "My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and *thou hast brought me into the dust of death.*" "About the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" "It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief." "It became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." O yes, brethren, if

Jesus was ever to bear for us the penalty, the curse, of the Divine law, it behoved the supreme Lawgiver and Judge himself, as such, to inflict it,—to give commission to the sword to awake and descend on this all-unlikely One—“The cup,” said he, “which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?” “Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts; smite the Shepherd.” How solemn, and yet how blessed, to behold the Father and the Son,—God and his Christ,—together acting in a perfect harmony of love, about that blood-shedding which we are to celebrate to day!

3. Ay, *we*, believers in Jesus. For now there meets us a third, and in some respects the chief, party in the shedding of this blood—I mean ourselves,—all the sinners who shall be saved by this death to the end, as it is written, “They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him.” O Lamb of God, which takest away the sin of the world, *I* shed thy blood,—I pierced thee,—nailed thee to the accursed tree! Caiaphas and Pilate,—the chief priests, the soldiers,—were but the voluntary instruments. My sins were the guilty, procuring, cause, but for which, never could they have imbrued their hands in thy blood, nor hadst thou ever had to say, “I lay down my life for my sheep;” nor the righteous, loving, Father to commission the sword to awake against thee. My ungodliness, unrighteousness, pride, covetousness, licentiousness—iniquities numberless as the sand by the seashore—shed thy most precious blood! Well, well, may I “mourn for thee”—and yet rejoice also, exult, amid the sorrow. For now—

III. Thirdly, our last question comes into view, To what end and issue was this blood-shedding? We have seen whose blood it was, and by whom shed. Now, thirdly, to what end and issue? “This is my blood of the new covenant,” says Jesus, “which is shed for many

for the remission of sins." FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS? Then let the believer in Jesus break forth at once, "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; thy youth is renewed like the eagle's." But we must look at this, of course, a little more particularly—"My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Let me mention here a circumstance in the last days of the distinguished Lord Chancellor Lyndhurst,\* who, at an extreme age, but in full possession of all his rare mental powers, was brought to the knowledge of the Saviour. He said, "I never used to be able to understand what these good people meant when they spoke so much of the *blood*, the *blood*. But I understand it now; it's just Substitution!" Ay, that is it, in one word, Substitution—"my blood shed for many for the remission of sins,"—Christ's blood instead of ours,—Christ's death for our eternal death,—Christ "made a curse, that we might be redeemed from the curse of the law." Once in conversation, my beloved friend Dr Duncan expressed it thus in his terse way, "A religion of blood is God's appointed religion for a sinner, for the wages of sin is death."

The Unitarians tell us—and it were easy to shew how the various Broad Church theories run up into the very same—that the meaning of our text simply is, that Jesus designed, by the example,—by the happy moral influence,—of his martyr-death, his blood, to make us better people, purifying us from our *sinfulness*. What! example,—happy moral influence,—the meaning of these words,

\* I had it from the late excellent Earl of Roden, who knew intimately the Chancellor and his family.

“My *blood* shed for many *for the remission of sins*”? words recalling at once the great words in which Paul writes the motto of all the sacrificial victims of the law, “Without the shedding of blood is no remission.” Was that happy moral influence, example? Nay, nay; but, as the law said, “It is the blood which maketh atonement for the soul.” Example, moral influence? Why, then all the good and holy men whose lives have come down to us are our Saviours by their example, as well as Jesus. Then, too, assuredly it ought to have been the example of his *life*, rather than, specifically and emphatically, his *death*, his *blood*—and much the more, inasmuch as the example of this death becomes one of very questionable character indeed, so soon as you have removed the element of substitution—of Christ’s bearing our curse, and so, under the hidings of his Father’s countenance, enduring a “travail of soul,”—an inward sorrow,—altogether unique and unparalleled. For now the question at once arises—whence all the *shrinking from* the death? Was it so very terrible a thing to endure crucifixion for the truth? Whence that recoil, “Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour?” Whence the prayer in the garden, thrice repeated, “If it be possible, let this cup pass from me”? Whence that cry of weakness on the cross, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”—with reference to a death very much less dreadful than thousands of martyrs have endured even with joy and triumph? But enough. The text speaks with a quite unmistakable voice—as do many other such words of Scripture as these:—“Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many.” “Who his ownself bear our sins in his own body on the tree.” “He hath made him who knew no sin to be sin for us.” “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.” “To him that loved us, and washed us

from our sins in his own blood.”—“This is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”

Let it be observed that our Lord singles out, from all the benefits of his redemption, the remission of sins, not only because it is that which stands most immediately related to his blood-shedding—the penalty of the law borne by the Surety, and thus removed from the sinner—but because it is the fundamental benefit of all, carrying the others along with it by necessary consequence, as you may see in that great summary of the promises of the covenant (Jer. xxxi. 33-34), “I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people; and they shall all know me from the least to the greatest, saith the Lord; for—*for*—I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” O most blessed REMISSION OF SINS! The men of this world conceive of nothing in the least resembling it. What they dream of—alas! it is but a dream—is simply God’s not dealing very strictly with them about their sins,—passing them, without much difficulty, by—or, in plainer language, winking, conniving, at them. But *this* is the Judge of all the earth saying from his throne, “Deliver from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom”—“Son, daughter, thy sins are forgiven thee!” This is a forgiveness as righteous as it is absolutely gracious—full also, irrevocable, eternal, as it is written, “As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.” “Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.” “I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.”—“This is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”

You will recollect that our third question was, to what end *and issue* was this blood-shedding,—to what effect and result, as well as end and design? For both are in the

words of Jesus, "This is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for," or unto, "the remission of sins." In other words, this is no precarious, contingent, forgiveness, but one infallibly, sooner or later, made good. And to this belong the two other expressions—into which, however, I do not enter—"my blood of the new covenant," "which is shed *for many*." Doubtless the reference is to the "many,"—the countless seed,—that were given to Christ in the everlasting covenant, as it is written, "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed." "By the knowledge of him shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities." True—and how unspeakably precious a truth!—the pardon is freely offered to all without exception. But it becomes, in due time, the actual possession of each soul of the "many"—as will gloriously appear in the day of that word of the Apocalypse, "I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. . . . These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

A closing word to those still out of Christ among us,—who still prefer the world and their sins to his holy salvation. Be assured, dear hearers, that had there been

any possible way of saving the lost, other than this blood, it had never been shed. And be further assured, that the shedding of it can avail you nothing, unless it be accepted by you,—believed in by you,—sprinkled on your individual souls by a true and living faith. Without that, better for you it had never been shed, or you had never been born. Oh, this blood must either be your salvation, or your unspeakably aggravated ruin. Deceive not yourselves with imagining that you can simply stand aloof from it,—avoid all dealing with it. It lies in your path. It meets you to day, and must be dealt with by you somehow. To *neglect* it, is to *reject* it; to prefer anything in the world before it, is to trample it under foot, and crucify the Son of God afresh. “He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?” “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?” But, blessed be God, if the living faith of this blood alone can save you, THERE IS NOTHING EXCEPT THE REFUSAL OF IT BY UNBELIEF THAT CAN HINDER YOUR BEING SAVED. “Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him, all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.” “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” “Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him!”

## 2. *Pulpit Address before Communion.*

We have been hearing the Saviour’s own account of his blood-shedding. Dear brethren, what is the account



*you* have to give of it—I do not mean in words, or in your creed, but practically, and in your inmost soul? Jesus has been saying to us, “This is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” Oh, are you ready to respond, with the whole ransomed Church, “He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities?” Alas! “He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid”—*we* also once—“hid as it were our faces from him: he was despised, and *we* esteemed him not.” But we have changed our minds for ever! “He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.” I pray you to observe that that account of the Saviour’s blood-shedding, in the fifty-third of Isaiah, is no statement of doctrine simply. It is a life,—it is an inward experience,—it is the contrite, believing, utterance of renewed hearts. It is like that word elsewhere, “I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself;” and that other word, “The publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.” In like manner exclaims the ransomed Church here—is her experience yours, beloved? “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.”

You recollect how Paul writes to the Hebrew Christians, “Ye are come unto mount Zion; and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem; and to an innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven; and to God the Judge of all; and to the spirits of just men made perfect; and to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant; and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.” “The blood of sprinkling”—

put last, you observe, not because least, but because lying at the foundation of all the other benefits together. "Ye are come," wrote the apostle to those Christians, "to the blood of sprinkling." Are *ye* come to it, my dear hearers? It has come many a time to *you* in the offers of the Gospel; have you come to *it* by the living acceptance of them?—come to "the blood of *sprinkling*"? Is it verily sprinkled upon your souls by a living faith? Remember how God said by Moses in Egypt, "Ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the bason, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the bason; for the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and *when he seeth the blood* upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you." Know you, in very deed, what that means? Is the blood of God's Lamb upon your soul? Does God "see" it there? If so, then be assured that Jesus lovingly bids you welcome to celebrate his wondrous blood-shedding at his table to day. But if otherwise, and you shall nevertheless take your place there, I fear it must be with you as the Lord spake in his parable of old, "When the King came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment; and he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment? and he was speechless." On the other hand, however, "We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him; for he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust." "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." "O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in

the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance; let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely!" Amen.

### 3. *Communion Table Address.*

#### BEFORE THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE ELEMENTS.

It is the Saviour's voice, communicants, as truly to day,—at this table,—as ever it was at the first communion table that night in the upper chamber at Jerusalem—"This is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Shall we not respond to the voice in *contrition*, in *faith*, in *love*?

In contrition shall we not respond to it, "looking upon him whom we pierced, and mourning for him?" O Lord Jesus, but for my terrible sins, thine enemies had never crucified thee between the thieves. Never, but for my sins, hadst thou had to "pour out thy soul unto death;" nor thy Father to say, "Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow; smite the Shepherd." How does thy death tell of my desert of everlasting death! How does thy blood shed for remission of sins tell that I was ready to go down to the pit, when thou saidst, "Deliver; for I have found a ransom!" Oh for a broken spirit to day,—the spirit of her who of old stood at thy feet behind thee weeping, and washed thy feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head!

But again I hear thy voice, "This is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Shall I not respond to it in faith,—lively, appropriating, faith,—exclaiming with the ransomed Church, "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities" ?—

I lay my sins on Jesus,  
 The spotless Lamb of God ;  
 He bears them all, and frees us  
 From th' accursed load.

I bring my guilt to Jesus,  
 To wash my crimson stains  
 White in his blood most precious,  
 Till not a spot remains.

True, thy death tells of my desert of everlasting death. But, yet more expressly, it tells of my death swallowed up in thine,—of my curse endured and exhausted in thine. True, there is nothing but thy blood between me, at this hour, and hell. But is it not enough? O Jesus, I take Thee this day, at the Father's hand, instead of hell,—Christ free, instead of hell deserved. I will say with Luther, "Lord Jesus, I am thy sin, thy curse, thy death, thy wrath of God, thy hell; and contrariwise, Thou art my righteousness, my life, my blessing, my grace of God, and my heaven." I believe, Lord, help thou mine unbelief! I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

But yet again I hear thy voice, "This is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Shall I not respond to it in love, in ardent affection, exclaiming, "It is the voice of my beloved"—echoing that word of an early martyr, "My love was crucified?" Oh, didst thou so love me while I was at enmity with thee,—so love me as to die that death for me, when I was all unlovely—foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating? Then, Lord, "Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm; for love is strong as death, jealousy is cruel as the grave; many waters cannot quench love,

neither can the floods drown it." "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon." "My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand." "Behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment." Contrition, faith, love—the very soul of our communion this day!

One other word, before putting the elements into your hands. "My blood of the new covenant," says Jesus—of *the new covenant*. It is well worthy to be noticed that this expression is found nowhere in the Old Testament, save in those great words of Jeremiah, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make *a new covenant* with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. . . . This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people; and they shall all know me, from the least to the greatest; for I will forgive their iniquity, and will remember their sin no more." Thus it has long seemed to me that our Lord very probably had this passage in his eye,—this most precious summary of the promises of the covenant,—when, taking the cup into his hands, he gave it to the disciples, saying, "This is my blood of the new covenant"—"This is the new covenant in my blood,"—the seal and pledge of it, that is to say, with all its exceeding great and precious promises. What an encouragement to us, when Jesus shall put the cup into our hands, believers, uttering the same words, to plead those promises,—to mingle prayers and supplications with our thanksgivings

and praises,—to beseech him that he will make good to us, according to our various circumstances and necessities, the promises of the everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure! “The Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and gave it to the disciples, saying, Take, eat; this is my body which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also, he took the cup when he had supped, saying, This is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. Drink ye all of it.”

AFTER THE PARTAKING OF THE ELEMENTS.

Two words of Scripture let me leave with you before you rise from the table. The first is that one, “Know ye what I have done unto you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.” *I have given you an example.* O yes, do not suppose that I intended to depreciate the example of our Lord Jesus, when I said in the Discourse that it breaks utterly down if the foundation be once taken from beneath it, of the atonement, the substitution. Of that, indeed, I entertain no doubt whatever. But, on the other hand, let the example rise from this grand foundation, and then, what an example, and how precious and blessed, is it! “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.” “He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also to walk even as he walked.” “Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps; who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; who, when he was reviled, reviled not again;

when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." "If I have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet; for I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you."

I long to be like Jesus,  
Meek, loving, lowly, mild;  
I long to be like Jesus,  
The Father's holy child!

The other word of Scripture I leave with you is that one in the Psalms, "The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy;" or, as we have it in another psalm, "Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy." Two grand features of character, observe,— "fearing the Lord," "hoping in his mercy"—standing related to each other as a sort of counterparts, and thus invested with the higher both strength and beauty—much as it is with the two sides of an arch, by mutual antagonist pressure—godly fear, and lively hope,—reverential awe, and childlike "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

And see how each feature stands related, very intimately, to the blood shed for remission of sins. The godly fear—"Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear; forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." "There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared." "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken me in thy way!" And still more manifestly, if possible, does the lively hope of mercy stand intimately related to the blood whence alone flow all our hopes, rising to an exultant joy, as it is written, "We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." "Being

justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God"—“The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, in those that hope in his mercy.” Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever! Let us, after the example of the Lord and his first disciples, close our communion service by singing praise (Ps. ciii. 1-4):—

O thou my soul, bless God the Lord;  
 And all that in me is  
 Be stirred up his holy name  
 To magnify and bless. |  
 Bless, O my soul, the Lord thy God,  
 And not forgetful be  
 Of all his gracious benefits  
 He hath bestow'd on thee.

All thine iniquities who doth  
 Most graciously forgive:  
 Who thy diseases all and pains  
 Doth heal, and thee relieve.  
 Who doth redeem thy life, that thou  
 To death may'st not go down;  
 Who thee with loving-kindness doth  
 And tender mercies crown.



4. *Evening Sermon.*

## THE BRIDEGROOM'S CALL TO THE BRIDE.

*"Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord, and worship thou him."—*  
Ps. xlv. 10, 11.

It is certain that Christ and his Church are the subject of this noble psalm. Long it has seemed to me beyond doubt that this is the *only* subject of it—that here, as in the Song of Solomon, we have not an example of what are called double senses,—a type and an antitype,—Solomon and Christ,—an earthly marriage and an heavenly one—but Christ and his Bride alone, set forth only with allusion, more or less, in the language to Solomon and a marriage of earth. That this is Christ exclusively is manifest, for example, from the great words of the sixth verse, which are thus cited by the apostle to the Hebrews, "Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom." And thus it is not difficult to see who the parties are in the tenth and eleventh verses, "Hearken, O daughter,"—the ransomed Church of God—"and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the King"—Messiah, King of Zion, King of kings, and Lord of lords—"greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord, and worship thou him." First, I will touch on the

exhortation of the tenth verse, "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house." Then I will notice the enforcement of it by the wondrous promise of the eleventh verse, "so"—complying with that exhortation—"shall the king greatly desire thy beauty." And, finally, I will glance at the further exhortation, with the enforcement of it, "for he is thy Lord, and worship thou him." The Lord vouchsafe his own presence with us while we meditate together on these things!

I. And, first, notice the exhortation of the tenth verse, "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house." It is the ransomed Church, as I have said, that is addressed here. And so it were perhaps not strictly accurate if I should refer, for a parallel, to that call addressed to sinners lost,—dead in trespasses and sins,—"Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live"—although, indeed, I should not thus go far aside from sound exposition, inasmuch as the Church was once the world,—once dead in sins,—once "foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating." And this is certain, blessed be God, that tonight the Lord is saying to every Christless one in this assembly—Oh that they would but listen to the voice!—"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good. Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live: and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." Still, as I have said, it is the ransomed, regenerated Church,—gathered out of the world, that is addressed in the exhortation, "Forget thine own people,

and thy father's house." And thus is it rather a call to a higher holiness,—to higher attainments in faith, and love, and humility, and self-consecration,—having its parallel in such words as, "Come out from among them—what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people: wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house." It is deeply interesting here to mark the figure,—the similitude, "thine own people—forget thine own people, and thy father's house." It is a figure; and the substantial idea is just the world, and the renunciation of the world, which lieth in the wicked one. But it is well worth while to mark the figure, which, I have no doubt, is that of earthly marriage, and with specific allusion to that primeval word, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave unto his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh." The figure is the interesting thought or fact, that in marriage, either spouse, for the higher love of the other, is well content to leave father, mother, brothers, sisters—all the intimacies and endearments of a former home. And thus, observe, there is a point at which the figure and the thing figured by it,—the earthly marriage and the heavenly one, meet and coincide. See it there—in God's call to the father of the faithful, "The Lord said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee." Or see it in that word which Moses

wrote of Levi,—the tribe of Levi, “Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children; for they have observed thy word, and kept thy covenant.” Or see it in the solemn words of the glorious Husband himself, “He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me:” “If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.” “Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father’s house.” Still, as I said, the substance here,—the great general idea, is the renunciation of the world,—its spirit and habits and maxims and ways—“forget thine own people, and thy father’s house.” It is as if the Lord should say, “No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.” Or, more sweetly, “Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away”—away to a higher and nobler life—“for, lo! the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come; and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land. The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs; and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.” It is as if he should say, “I beseech you, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service; and be not conformed to this world”—“forget thine own people and thy father’s house.” See the exhortation exemplified divinely in Paul’s words, “What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which

are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house."

Beloved brethren, endless are the arguments by which I might this night press the exhortation upon you. As, for example, when you took that bread and that cup into your hands to day, and partook of them, what was their language to you but "forget thine own people, and thy father's house?" What else was it you engaged yourselves to this day, before God, and angels, and men? Or, what but treachery,—unfaithfulness to the glorious Husband, were anything else? for, "for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh"—"he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." Or, for what else but this was it that Jesus did not shrink from the accursed death you were celebrating to-day—what but that we who now live by that death "should not henceforth live unto ourselves, but unto him which died for us, and rose again?"

II. Suffice it, however, to press the exhortation by the one enforcement of it which forms our second head, even the wondrous promise of the eleventh verse, "so shall the king — Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so," complying with that exhortation, "shall the king greatly desire thy beauty." Amazing words! Thy beauty. Of course the beauty spoken of is a purely spiritual one,—the beauty of holiness. With only some distant allusion to outward beauty, fairness, beauty of person, the reference is to the spiritual loveliness of a soul on which the king has begun to stamp the impress of his own beauty, even as the "desire" of the king towards it—"so shall the king greatly desire thy

beauty"—is expressed in one word,—a verb importing the ardency of a passion; but the idea is just Christ's holy delight, complacency, in his people's advancing "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance"—"so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty."

Ah! but I think I hear some poor believer saying here, Then, I fear this is not I, or such as I. Alas, my beauty? My leanness, my leanness! I can understand, indeed, that other word, "the King in his beauty;" and that one, "How great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty!" And I hope I know somewhat of David's "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that I may behold the beauty of the Lord." But, my beauty! Look not upon me, for I am black. At the best of me, the good that I would I do not; and the evil that I would not that I do. O wretched that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? Well, well, but do you not perceive that your very lamentation is in the language in which Paul the apostle describes himself? Do you remember that word of the Lord in one of the prophets, "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself thus"—and it is sweetest music in mine ears—"I have surely heard"—literally, hearing I have heard,—complacency, delight? Can you not conceive how a beauty all imperfect as yet, but which Christ gave his life to obtain, may appear in his eye as if already in all the perfection it is destined surely to reach—much as some skilful painter can, in the first rough dashes of his brush, or touches of his pencil, see the finished picture—as it already, in fact, is painted on the table of his soul, his fancy? And do you forget how the Lord Jesus casts the mantle of his own perfect righteousness over the imperfect beauty of his people, so that of that bride who had just said (as you are saying), "Look not upon me, for I am black," he soon after says, "Behold, thou art fair

my love; behold thou art fair;" yea, "Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee?"—very much, I have long thought, as in the wondrous intercessory prayer in the seventeenth of John, not a word is heard of the things he had so often rebuked in the disciples—their little faith, their hardness of heart, their folly—but it is as if they were faultless, "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things, whatsoever thou hast given me, are of thee: for I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. . . . O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." "So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty."

But perhaps an example or two may cast the most satisfying light over this promise,—over both the beauty—what it is, in at least some of its leading lines, and the desire of the King towards it,—his delight in it—what that is. Thus, you remember that word, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord help me!" Ah, that is beauty in the eyes of the Lord Jesus—"then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord help me! But he answered and said, It is not meet to take children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." "So shall the King greatly desire thy beauty"—faith, hard in hand with deep humility and self-

abasement. Or, recall that word, "A certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die. And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant. And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this: for he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue. Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself; for I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof: wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." "So shall the King greatly desire thy beauty" — faith, still hand in hand with deep humility, and working by love to God and to men. Or, remember that word, "Behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster-box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. . . . Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore, I say unto thee,



Her sins, which are many, are forgiven. . . . Woman, thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." "So shall the King greatly desire thy beauty." One other example. "Being in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman," (we know it was Mary of Bethany, the sister of Martha) "having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard, very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head. And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her. And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me. . . . Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." "So shall the King greatly desire thy beauty." "Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck." "How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! How much better is thy love than wine, and the smell of thine ointments than all spices!" "O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely." "As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee." "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save; he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love; he will joy over thee with singing." "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house: so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty."

III. And now, finally, we have the further exhortation here, with the enforcement of it, "for he is thy Lord, and

worship thou him." He is thy Lord. May it not be that partly this comes in here as a kind of counterpoise, balance, over against the deep condescension of the previous words, "so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty." He is thy Lord. For there is a certain parity begotten of marriage—"they shall be one flesh;" "he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." Hence the amazing words in the Song, "He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love—His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me." But then, never for a moment to be forgotten is the unutterable disparity of rank between the parties in this marriage. He is thy Lord—not only as he is thy Husband, to whom thus thou owest loyal obedience, even as Sarah is said to have obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord,—but such a Husband as is thy very Maker—"thy Maker is thine Husband; the Lord of hosts is his name"—such a Husband as had before been addressed in the psalm, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever"—such a Husband as is not only *thy* Lord, but "Lord of all,"—"Lord both of the dead and living,"—whose voice is heard from his throne of glory, saying, "I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and of death." "He is thy Lord, and *worship thou him.*" O yes, let your love be, indeed, nothing less than deepest personal attachment, expressing itself thus, "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth"—"Him whom my soul loveth." But let the attachment be worship also, adoration. Let it be the attachment of Thomas's, "My Lord and my God." Let it be the attachment of the song of heaven, "To him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, be glory and dominion for ever and ever." Let it be the attachment of the song of the ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, of holy angels, who sing, "Worthy is the

Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." "He is thy Lord; and worship thou him."

Only remember what I say, let the *attachment* be worship,—not only let the attachment be *worship*, but let the attachment be itself worship. For if it be true,—if the love be indeed supreme, then it is worship already. Oh, ye who are attached to the world, and supremely love it, that is your object of worship,—that is your god—no matter though you never bend the knee before it, if you give your heart to it. Oh, I think that is worship, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and soul, and mind, and strength." And that is worship which Christ claims for himself, "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me." And so observe how this second exhortation runs back, in fact, into the previous one, "Forget thine own people, and thy father's house." "Worship him," is the filling of that up, as it were. That is the negative. This is the positive. That is the leaving, in the marriage, of father and mother. This is the cleaving to the glorious Maker-husband in a supreme affection. "He is thy Lord; and worship thou Him," giving thy heart to him—thy trust, confidence, love, adoration,—thyself, thy all, saying, "Entreat me not to leave thee, nor to return from following after thee." "My soul followeth hard after thee; thy right hand upholdeth me." "Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon; for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions?" "Set me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death: jealousy is cruel as the grave: many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned." "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also

thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord, and worship thou him."

A closing word about heaven. In reading the promise, "so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty," one is reminded of another promise, "Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty; they shall behold the land that is very far off." Now there is one thing, or rather there are two things, in which earth and heaven agree,—the spiritual marriage here and there. Here as well as there, there is a beauty about the Church, the believer, which the King, at least, can behold. And, much more easily than the believer can see any beauty about himself, he can, even here, see the beauty of the King,—see the King in his beauty, by faith at least. But then, here the one beauty is imperfect, and the other beauty is veiled. Here the beauty of the believer is all imperfect; and the beauty of the King is at best seen through a glass darkly,—seen through many a cloud. But there the one beauty shall be perfect, and the other shall be unveiled. The beauty of the believer shall be that of the "glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but holy and without blemish." And there, face to face "thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty." "His servants shall serve him; and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there: and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign for ever and ever." Both beauties—the believer's perfected and the King's seen face to face—meet in that blessed word, "we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." I have done. O ye that are yet of the world,—that have your portion only in this life, "we are journeying to the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you: come with us, and we will do you good; for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel."

## IX.

### CHIEF END OF MAN.

*“This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise.”—ISAIAH xliii. 21.\**

I HAVE not read these words so much for a text, in the usual sense of that word, as because they sound the keynote of the subject on which I am to speak to you, namely, the Chief End of Man,—that is to say, the purpose, design, use, of his existence—your existence and mine—in the world.

And, first, let me first say a word or two, more in general, respecting the ends, designs, uses of things. If you look to the lower creatures, for example, you find that each of them has some special use,—some manifest special design or end of its existence—as the bee to make its wondrous cell, and fill it with honey; the horse to carry its rider; the sheep to furnish materials of clothing from its fleece, and so on. And these creatures all *do* the things which they were made for, though without knowing anything of designs or uses. They all answer, fulfil, the several ends of their being. But they know nothing, and are incapable of knowing anything, of uses or ends. It is peculiar to man,—it forms our high and solemn prerogative, as distinguished from all the lower creatures, to be able to understand about

\* This Discourse was addressed to Young Men.

the ends, the uses, of things. Hence it is I am speaking to you to-night. And it is very noticeable, accordingly, that one of the earliest subjects of interest and inquiry with our youngest children is the use of this thing, and the design of that other. But there is one thing, strange to say, and it too the thing we have necessarily most of all to do with, about the use of which it is the rarest thing in the world for either young or old to make any serious inquiry—and that is *ourselves*,—what is the use of ourselves,—what the special distinctive design or end of our existence in the world. Assuredly God, who made all the lower creatures for some manifest special use, did not make man, and endue him with these wondrous powers of reason, and will, and conscience, and fancy, and memory, and intelligent speech, without some grand distinctive design or end, worthy of Himself and of them. And yet it is certain, and surely very strange, that men everywhere can live, and do live on, their twenty, thirty, forty, seventy years, without once asking seriously after the end of their being,—what it is they are in this world chiefly *for*.

Possibly you are ready to say, that I may have suggested the solution of the mystery, when saying that the inferior creatures, without asking or knowing anything of uses or ends, yet do the things they were severally made for. May it not be so with us also? May it not be that men sufficiently do what they were made for without any anxious inquiry about it? I might answer, that this is at least very improbable,—in the last degree unlikely. Because the lower creatures all act in this matter by the power of resistless instincts; whereas we are as far inferior to them in instinct as we are superior to them in intellect. And it is surely a most unlikely thing that, by the power of our far inferior instincts, and failing to use that intellect which God has given us, we should stumble, as by a mere happy accident, on the

true end of our being. But it is needless reasoning on the matter. You have only to ask what the thing is for which men everywhere,—for which we all,—do naturally, actually, chiefly, live, to see that it neither is nor can be the end for which the all-wise God designed us. What is it? Why, putting it broadly and generally, it is just that we may get somewhat pleasantly and comfortably through the world,—enjoy as much as may be the various things of this present fleeting life. Well, there is one supposition, but only one, on which this might be the thing we were made for. I mean the supposition that death is to be the end of us,—that, like the brutes, we are to be annihilated when we die, and there is to be no more of us. In this case, probably enough the highest end of our being might be to enjoy as much as possible the things of this world. And all that one could say is, that it were a very wretched design and end of faculties so noble; and that, destined to perish like the brutes, they were to be exceedingly envied by us, since they know nothing beforehand of their approaching death; but we, knowing well its sure and near approach, behaved to be more and more like him of old who was set down to his feast with a drawn sword suspended over his head by a single hair. But perhaps I ought to apologize for even putting the case for a moment, that we are to be annihilated at death. You know that we are to survive death,—to live after it as long as God lives,—to live a whole eternity. And thus it cannot possibly be that the all-wise God should have made us to exist for the things of this first short stage of our being, leaving the after eternity, unprovided for, to take its chance.

Does any one feel disposed still to say, that, when I state the thing men everywhere live for as being to enjoy as much as possible the things of this present life, I state it too *Epicureanly*, and forget that there

is the higher and better end, of the cultivating of our mental powers by the pursuits of literature and science? Nay, I do not forget this. I simply include it among the things of this present world; because it is not pretended that literature and science, as such, have to do with aught beyond this present life—although, as to the high cultivating of the mental powers, I might have added that it cannot possibly be the chief end of *man*, inasmuch as a handful only of men can pursue it; and further, that it is but a miserable result, as to any real satisfaction of soul, that comes of it even to that handful. Witness the illustrious Goethe, that German of Germans as to genius, highly cultivated intellect,—accomplishment of every kind. Writing in his seventy-fifth year, he says in one of his letters:—"I have often been praised as an especial favourite of fortune; and I will not myself complain. But at the bottom there has been nothing but trouble and labour; and I can well say, that in my whole five-and-seventy years I have not had four weeks of real pleasure. It was the eternal rolling of a stone, that had always to be lifted up again for a new start." Appalling utterance! And this is the world at the very best of it,—the world, with the genius, literature, friends, fame, fortune—without God!

Thus, then, we have found, I think, these three things—first, that God, who made all the lower creatures for some special use, assuredly did not make man, and endue him with those noble powers, without a grand distinctive design or end worthy of Himself and them; second, that this end cannot possibly be anything bounded by this transitory life; and thus, third, that the end for which chiefly we were made must needs be that which the Scriptures tell of in all such words as I read with you at the outset, "This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise,"—even to know the ever blessed God; to serve God; to honour, love God; to enjoy God;



and to be everlastingly happy and blessed in the knowledge, service, love, and enjoyment of Him.

Many things I might say to you about this end. As, for example, that it is a very high and noble one,—that, as it is considered a high honour by our chief nobility to serve about the person of the Queen, unspeakably more honourable and noble it must needs be to serve the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings. And I might say that it is a most reasonable and righteous end,—altogether righteous and reasonable that, since God made us, sustains us, “gives us life and breath and all things,” we should serve and honour him. But I will content myself with saying only this, that it is a necessary and indispensable end,—that, as it is the end which God actually made us for, it is altogether indispensable that we follow and fulfil it, unless we are to live in a terrible conflict, war, with our Maker, and so inevitably perish. For, if God made us to serve and honour him, and we do it not, then, to put it at the very lowest, we are useless and unprofitable on God’s earth; and you know that we are accustomed to cast away from us things useless for the thing they were designed for. But then, most things of this world which are useless do not on that account require to be positively hurtful,—might be useless without being mischievous. But it is otherwise with us. If God made us to serve and honour him, and we pay no regard to this end, then, necessarily, we dishonour God, despise God, treat Him with high indignity and contempt. If we do not the thing we were made for, we must do the opposite of it. If we serve not God, we must serve the devil. If we serve not the true God, we must serve false gods,—creatures of all kinds, to which we give the regard, affection, trust, that are due to God, and so unavoidably fall, ten thousand times, under the sentence of the law of His moral government, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die”—“Those mine enemies,

who would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me"—“Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.”

But, blessed be God, this volume has not come to us only to tell the end or use we were made for, but to tell also how we may fulfil it—ay we,—how we now, after having failed to live for the end,—after twenty years, it may be, of a wasted, vile, God-dishonouring life,—how we, guilty and accursed, may yet know, and serve, and love, and everlastingly enjoy, God. Let me say earnestly to you here, that the whole Bible may, as to this vital matter, be summed up in one grand word—Christ, Christ. For, if we get Christ, we get three things—his Blood, his Spirit, his Love. We get his atoning Blood. Till then, we cannot serve God, and for this reason among others, that, until then, our case is like that of some criminal in prison under sentence of death, who might dream while asleep of serving his sovereign and his country, but, alas! can only now serve them—unless, at least, the sentence can be in some way cancelled—by his execution according to the country’s law. But so soon as we get Christ and his blood, our sentence of death falls off from us. Christ’s blood has gone for ours,—his death for ours. We are “redeemed from the curse of the law” by Christ “made a curse for us.” And further, when we get Christ, we get his Spirit, his renewing Spirit, turning the whole course and current of our affections and desires from sin to God, from earth to heaven. And further still (and here I would affectionately crave your close attention), when we get Christ we get his Love, his wondrous constraining love—constraining, I mean, not as by some painful necessity imposed from without, but by a blessed and loved constraint acknowledged willingly from within—constraining us to live to God,—to live to Him who redeemed us to God with his blood. Let

me illustrate this by an incident. A gentleman was passing through a city of the Southern States of America in the old days of slavery, and went to see its slave-market. He was attracted by one of a group put up for sale. The rest looked unconcerned, and careless of their fate: but a young woman, of sweet and modest appearance, trembled from head to foot, and wept. Asking the reason of the great difference, he was told that the others had come from ordinary masters, and were not afraid of getting worse; but this girl had been carefully reared, and was afraid by whom she might be bought. The gentleman asked her price; he hesitated at the sum, but paid it down. When he told her that she was free, she did not cease to weep. She had always been a slave, and did not know what the word meant. She looked at her purchaser with fear, and wept over the paper of sale which he gave her to make it plain. It was only when she saw him prepare to leave the place, and bid her farewell, that she comprehended it. Clinging to him, she said, "I will follow him, I will serve him all my days;" and to every objection, she only said, He redeemed me; he redeemed me; he redeemed me. She was taken home; and when, through long years of devoted service, strangers coming to her master's dwelling would remark her willingness, and anticipation of every wish, and, saying that they had never seen a servant so eager and untiring in her labour, would ask her why? she had but one reply to give as at the first—He redeemed me; he redeemed me; he redeemed me!

Or take another illustration, from ancient story. During the wars of Cyrus of Persia, he took captive Tigranes, son of the King of Armenia, with his wife. Tigranes offered to purchase his wife's freedom with his life. Cyrus, struck with the generosity of the offer, set them both at liberty. Upon which the courtiers began to praise the clemency and magnanimity of the conqueror. One

praised this quality of Cyrus, and another that. The wife of Tigranes having been asked what she most admired in him, replied, "I was not thinking of him." "Of whom, then?" they asked. "Of him," she answered, "who said that he would purchase my liberty with the price of his life." Ah yes—He redeemed me; he redeemed me; he redeemed me! "The love of Christ constraineth us," Paul says, "because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then all died"—died in him, that is to say,—endured the law's penalty in his death—"and that he died for all, that they who live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him who died for them, and rose again."

Very dear friends, I am now, of course, very far from being a young man; and it may be allowed me to say a word to the young men whom I address, respecting myself. When I was a young man, and, as it happened, a student for the bar in Edinburgh, I was given up wholly to the world. I had no thought or desire beyond it, and would have reckoned life worth little indeed without theatres, and such like amusements. When it pleased God to open my eyes, at the age of twenty, to behold Christ crucified, and to see my whole previous ungodly life nailed, as it were, to his cross, and made an end of there, I never once dreamed more of such satisfactions and enjoyments. I had found angels' food, and could part easily with ashes,—had found unsearchable riches, and no more cared for dust. It cost no sacrifice to part with such things. They were not given up as by any violent effort, but simply "dropped off," to use the words of a modern writer, "as the dead leaves fall off from the tree, when propelled by the new blossoms and buds that are forcing their way through from behind, or as some one gathering poor pebbles on the sea-shore would let them unconsciously drop, if one were offering him jewels and precious stones in their stead." I have long admired a few words of old

Augustine, who, writing fourteen hundred years ago of his conversion, and referring to certain pleasures he had long indulged, and felt it impossible for him to abandon, says, "How sweet did it at once become to me to want the sweetnesses of those toys! and what I feared to be parted *from* was now a joy to part *with*. For Thou didst cast them forth from me, thou true and highest sweetness. Thou castedst them forth, and, for them, enteredst in thyself, sweeter than all pleasure." It is as our Lord Jesus says, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and FOR JOY THEREOF goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field."

My theme, then, has been the Chief End of man. Noble theme indeed,—grand question of questions, what we are in this world chiefly for. Hence does it form the opening question of our country's Catechism. And I may be allowed, before closing, to indicate the mighty practical bearing of that question by two incidents, belonging respectively to the opposite extremes of social life. The one refers to a lady of rank who lived about a century ago, and whose name is still known in this city from one of its churches which bears her title, "Lady Glenorchy's Church." Her husband was the only son, and of course heir (but died in early life), of the Earl of Breadalbane. Lady Glenorchy, up to the age of twenty, was a gay and thoughtless creature—of high accomplishment, but entirely devoted to the world,—its follies, amusements, ways. When staying at Taymouth Castle in the summer of 1765 (as she tells us in a Diary she afterwards kept), she was seized with a fever that threatened to end her life. In the course of it, she tells us, the first question of the Shorter Catechism was brought to her remembrance, as if some one had asked it, "What is the chief end of man?" When she thought of the answer, "To glorify God, and to enjoy

him for ever," she was at once overwhelmed with confusion and dismay. She felt that she had never sought to glorify God in all her life; and she had no idea of what was even meant by enjoying him for ever. It issued in her finding the adorable Saviour, and in her entire consecration to God. She closes the entry in her Diary with the following words:—"I now beseech thee, O Lord, to accept of my soul, body, reputation, property, influence, —everything that is called mine, and to do with them whatever seemeth good in thy sight. I desire neither ease, health, nor prosperity, any further than may be useful to promote thy glory. Let thy blessed will be done in me, and by me, from this day forth. Let thy grace be sufficient for me, and enable me to overcome the world. And to thee be ascribed the honour and glory now and for evermore. Amen." Soon after, Lady Glenorchy built the church in Edinburgh for the preaching of the glorious gospel, which bears her name.

The other incident is from the very opposite extreme of social life, relating to a man of the savage tribe of the Bechuanas in Africa. I had it from the distinguished African missionary, Dr Moffat, father-in-law of Livingstone, the traveller. Moffat had almost *made* a language for this savage tribe, and had translated the Shorter Catechism into it. He told me that one of the most intelligent and consistent of all the converts of his mission had become a changed man by means of the same first question of the Catechism, and precisely as in the case of Lady Glenorchy. One day, when thinking of the question, "What is the chief end of man?" and of the answer, "To glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever," he felt that if this was indeed what he was made for, then he was a lost man—his whole life had been a crime,—one continued course of sin. He found no rest till he found it in the blood of Christ the Saviour.

And now I have done. It is for you all a choice be-

tween two things. One is, the very beasts rising in judgment against you—the beasts, that know nothing of the uses of things, and yet do the things for which God made them,—against you who are able to understand what God made you for, but refuse to do it. One is, your going through the world without knowing for what—reeling to and fro, and staggering as a drunken man—or like some ship on the ocean without rudder or compass. One is your living for the first brief stage of your being, and leaving the long eternity to take its chance. The other is, your coming to the Lord Jesus; getting his Blood, his Spirit, his Love; and thus learning to live for that noble, righteous, indispensable, end for which you were made—even to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever,—enjoy him, in some good measure even here below (and in him, and with him, none the less, but very much the more, the literature, science, recreations,—all the lawful things of this life), and more fully enjoy him in the mansions of the Father's house above. Look on that picture, and on this. On that picture. Says the same Gœthe, “Alas! that *there* is never *here*.” And look on this picture. The German Christian Professor Tholuck, with reference to that utterance of Gœthe, exclaims, “In Christ *there* will be *here*.” Look on that picture. “The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?” And look on this picture. “O Lord, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid; thou hast

loosed my bonds." "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." "Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." "What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."



## JESUS ONLY.

*“And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.”—MATTHEW xvii. 1-8.*

Text—*“And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.”*

If I am not greatly mistaken, we have much more here than a simple fact or incident. We have a fact, embodying also a principle,—a fact suggesting, and which I cannot doubt was designed by the Holy Ghost to suggest and to embody, a principle of wide and vital application. Let me invite your attention, shortly, first to the fact, “When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only;” then to the principle, which may be

indicated perhaps by reading the last two words by themselves, "Jesus only."

I. *The fact* belongs, as you perceive, to that great and central event in the Saviour's life, his Transfiguration, when, for a very brief space—not probably for above an hour at the utmost—"his visage so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men," became strangely altered,—when the body of his humiliation underwent, for a little space, a change of a very peculiar character, and things were seen and heard by those disciples which they were charged to tell, and did tell, to no man till the Lord was risen from the dead. Jesus, taking with him Peter and James and John, went up into a high mountain—"to pray," as Luke tells us; "and as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening." Matthew says here, "He was transfigured before them; and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light"—"became shining," are the words of Mark, "exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them." Let me just say as to this, that, however wonderful it is apt to seem to us, and in many respects of course was, yet the greatest wonder lay in a quite different direction,—was not so much that that face did, for a very little while, "shine as the sun," but rather that it ever was otherwise with Him who was the very "Sun of Righteousness,"—"the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person,"—from everlasting the fellow and equal of the Lord of hosts! What, after all, was the transfiguration, but the withdrawing, for a brief hour, of the veil which, in the Incarnation—that true wonder of wonders—had fallen down over the glory of the only begotten of the Father? Much less wonderful, surely, the withdrawing of the veil for a moment, than that it should ever have existed; or that, after its

momentary withdrawal, it should again have fallen down in a deeper darkness than ever,—the darkness of the cross and of the grave!

Doubtless it was in the view of that approaching deeper darkness, that the whole event of the transfiguration took place. For the more immediate connection of it was this. At the twenty-first verse of the previous chapter we read, "From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples"—to tell them in express and unmistakable language—"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." Killed? So unprepared were the disciples for this, that we actually read in the next verse, "Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee." Well; Jesus was not content with meeting the presumption of his apostle, as it required to be met, very sharply and decidedly, "turning and saying to him," as it follows, "Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence unto me, for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." It pleased him graciously, and it pleased the Father, that about a week after, there should be granted to the three disciples such a discovery of the unutterable glory of Christ, lying hid beneath the veil of the flesh with its sufferings, as might well prepare and fortify them against whatever shock the approaching events might give to their faith. To the same end it evidently was, that, simultaneously with the change on the Saviour's body and on his raiment, "behold," as we read in the third verse, "there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him"—"who appeared in glory," Luke says, "and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." Moses and Elias, the representatives of the Church of the old testament, and, respectively, the representatives of the law and of the

prophets, appeared with Jesus, to bear witness before these disciples, and through them ultimately to the Church in every age, that this was He of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write,—the Messiah promised to the fathers; to bear witness to the perfect, glorious harmony of the old testament and the new, together the one covenant of Jehovah's grace; and, more specifically, as to that death which at the first was to seem so dreadful to these disciples, to bear witness to it as in fact the grand event of the universe; the theme of heaven's highest praises; and the centre of the whole harmony of the old covenant and the new, in which the righteousness of the one, and the grace and peace of the other, were for ever to meet and embrace each other.

But it was to come out at once, what a contrast there was as yet between the two glorified men,—“just men made perfect,”—and the three poor disciples still in the flesh, now oppressed with fatigue, heavy with sleep, filled also with alarm, mingling with admiration of the glorious things passing before their eyes. It was under the influence of these mingled feelings that Peter addressed to Jesus the strange words we read in the fourth verse, “Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.” Strange words indeed! Well might one evangelist add, “not knowing what he said,” and another, “for he wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid.” “Three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias”! How does Peter lose sight, for the moment, of the deep line of separation between the Master and the servants, the Saviour and the saved,—between the two stars, and the glorious Sun beside them, whence they derived all their lustre! No doubt he puts Jesus first, “one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.” But it is very much

as we say, *primus inter pares*,—first among equals,—in place of standing quite alone among ever so many, in unapproached grace and glory.

But the dream is quickly broken up. “While he yet spake,” the evangelist continues, “behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.” Hear *him*,—not Moses, nor Elias, but Him *by* whom they spake, *of* whom they spake. “And when the disciples heard it” (6th verse), “they fell on their face, and were sore afraid.” Ah, even had Moses and Elias remained on the mountain, they could have done nothing for them in this their deep weakness and fear. It was now with them very much as with one of their own number at an after period in Patmos—“When I saw him,” said John, “I fell at his feet as dead.” Well it was for them that the same Saviour who then laid his right hand on John, saying to him, “Fear not; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore; and have the keys of hell and of death,” was with them now, by a word to reassure, and by a touch to restore, them. “And Jesus came” (7th verse), “and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid.” O marvellous words! Jesus, nowise elated by the splendours of that scene—calm and tranquil in the midst of them, as if nothing extraordinary had happened,—as one to whom splendour was nowise strange,—was in fact his native element—Jesus, with an unutterable majesty and tenderness united, “came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid.” The evangelist adds, “And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.” As I said, even had Moses and Elias been still present, they could have done nothing for them. But they were gone. The dream was broken up not only by “the voice from the excellent glory,” but by the departure of the heavenly

visitants—"When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only."

II. And thus are we brought to the principle,—from the fact to the principle which it embodies, and which might be expressed thus—that, however high a subordinate place may be occupied by holy men, whether on earth or in heaven, Jesus is to be seen ever, standing quite alone among them—the one Prophet, Teacher, Priest, King, Lord, Husband, Hope, Joy, very Heaven, of his Church; and that the clearer the eye of faith, the more shall he be thus seen alone, even as it is in the darkness of the night, or the dim twilight, that the stars are visible, but when the sun arises they disappear, "When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only." Let me try to illustrate the principle rapidly, in its application to these particulars—Jesus only in the saving of our souls; Jesus only in all the Scriptures; Jesus only in the ministry and preaching of the word; Jesus only in our heart's trust, affection, worship; Jesus only in the valley of the shadow of death; Jesus only in the everlasting blessedness and glory of heaven.

1. First, I have said, *Jesus only in the saving of our souls.* Ah! Moses and Elias were now in glory for the sake of "Jesus only." Yea, they were out of hell, only for the sake of that "decease" of Jesus of which they spake,—which he was about to "accomplish at Jerusalem," when he should tread the wine-press alone, and of the people none should be with him—alone in the salvation of our souls! Why is it that the Church of the great apostasy is so anxious to make out—of course, it is but a dream—that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was sinless,—immaculate even in the womb of her own mother,—but because they will have her a co-Saviour with Jesus; and she could not well save others, having any sin of her own? But, as the

Immaculate Conception is a dream, so the co-Saviourship is a blasphemy, abhorred by none more than by Mary herself, who also is out of hell, only for the sake of Jesus, and his blood—"Neither" (as Peter spake at an after period) "is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

2. Secondly, I said, *Jesus only in all the Scriptures*—the only author of them, the only subject, theme, of them. The only author of the Scriptures, Jesus. "Hear *him*," was the voice from the eternal Father,—not Moses, nor Elias,—not Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel. For, "the prophets," as Peter afterwards wrote, "inquired and searched diligently, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify." And as for the New Testament, it is not—according to the favourite Socinian manner of citing it—Paul, James, *Jesus*, John. O no. "I Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ." "Ye have not so learned Christ; if so be that ye have heard *him*, and have been taught by *him*, as the truth is in Jesus." Yes, "learned *Christ*,"—"the truth as it is in Jesus." For He is the only subject, theme, as well as author, of the Scriptures. All their lines meet in this centre. "They are they," said he, "which testify of me." "Beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself."

3. Thirdly, I said, *Jesus only in the ministry and preaching of the Word*. Take two preachers. Paul—"I determined," he says, "not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ." "I am jealous over you with godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." And John the Baptist. You recollect his memorable reply to some of his disciples, who came to him, saying, "Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom

thou bearest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him." "Ye yourselves," said he, "bear me witness that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. *He that hath the bride is the bridegroom*"—as if he had said, who but the bridegroom should have the heart of the bride?—"but the friend of the bridegroom"—that is my place—"which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease . . . He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

4. And thus, fourthly, I said, *Jesus only in our heart's trust, affection, worship*. Trust. It is the necessary counterpart of Jesus only in the saving of our souls. If he is alone in our salvation, he must needs be alone in our trust for it. I well know, indeed, that this were but palpable blasphemy, if the Socinians were right, that Jesus is a mere creature, for, "cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord." But among the endless proofs that Jesus is the living God-man, this is one, that we are everywhere bidden commit this blasphemy, if blasphemy it were—in the Old Testament, "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little: blessed are all they that put their trust in him." And in the New, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved"—"I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." And in our heart's affection,—Jesus only in our affection, love. For it is husband and wife. No room for a divided affection here. "He that hath the Bride is the Bridegroom." "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me." And in our heart's worship—Jesus only,



as in our trust and our affection, so also in our heart's worship. Indeed, the same apostate Church that makes Mary a co-Saviour with Jesus, makes her also, and unavoidably, a joint object of worship with him. But it is just another blasphemy. It is Antichrist. This is Christianity, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever!"

5. Fifthly, I said, *Jesus only in the valley of the shadow of death*. Methinks it is peculiarly affecting here. For, very much as Moses and Elias were no more with the disciples in the hour of their deepest weakness and fear, so in this valley none can be with us—no Moses nor Elias,—no minister,—no friend, relative, however dear. It must be a frightful solitude here without Jesus only. Happy, thrice happy, if here it shall be with us as Mark speaks, in his parallel words to the text, "Suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves."

6. Once more I said, *Jesus only in the everlasting blessedness and glory of heaven*. O yes, Jesus only our way to heaven—but our heaven also itself,—the heaven of our heaven! "To depart, and be with Christ," writes Paul—"Absent from the body, present with the Lord." "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory." They often ask, anxiously, shall we know our friends in heaven? I have no doubt that we shall. Moses and Elias had not lost their individuality, it seems, in glory. But I suspect that in the anxiety with which the question is often asked, there is too much of Peter's "Three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." Oh, it will not then be—one for thee, and one for wife, and one for daughter, but, "Whom have I in heaven but *Thee*?" Then the text will have found a new

and very glorious meaning and application, "When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only."

Three words, and I have done.

(1.) First, see why it is that so very much is made in Scripture of believing,—of faith. It is not for any peculiar excellence in faith, as it is our act. But faith is the counterpart of "Jesus only." Faith, in its distinctive nature, answers to "Jesus only,"—is the empty hand wherewith we receive, the eye with which we behold, "Jesus only."

2. And thus, second, see what an emphasis the whole subject gives to those words of Scripture, "Shut up unto the faith"—"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" For there are not two Saviours. How shall we, can we, escape, if we miss "Jesus only"—who also is alone just because he is so glorious, all-sufficient? "How shall we escape, if we neglect so *great* salvation?" "Shut up unto the faith"!

3. Finally, believers in Jesus, seek to have this word graven on your inmost hearts, "Jesus only"—only in the saving of our souls; only in all the Scriptures; only in the ministry and preaching of the word; only in our heart's trust, affection, worship; only in the valley of the shadow of death; only in the everlasting blessedness and glory of heaven!

"Lord, I believe thou hast prepared  
 (Unworthy though I be),  
 For me a blood-bought free reward,  
 A golden harp for me!

'Tis strung, and tuned for endless years,  
 And form'd by power divine,  
 To sound in God the Father's ears  
 No other name but Thine."

**JESUS ONLY! JESUS ONLY!**

## XI.

### YOUTH RENEWED.

*“ Bless the Lord, O my soul ; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits : who forgiveth all thine iniquities ; who healeth all thy diseases ; who redeemeth thy life from destruction ; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies ; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things ; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s.”—Ps. ciii. 1-5. Text—“ Thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s.”\**

Is David singing there of a renovation, in his later years, of his youthful bodily health and vigour,—of a renewing of his youth physically in his older age? I am thoroughly persuaded that he is not ; but that he sings of something altogether different, and unspeakably more excellent. For, in the first place, there really is no such thing as a man’s renewing his youth physically in his later years. No doubt we sometimes, in a kind of courteous pleasantry, say to one advanced in life whom we perceive to be looking unusually fresh and well, You are quite renewing your youth. But the kind pleasantry is very

\* There is nothing in the Hebrew for the previous “so that.” It is simply, “Who forgiveth all thine iniquities ; who healeth all thy diseases ; who redeemeth thy life from destruction ; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies ; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things”—then the text, which I regard as the culminating, crowning, summing up, of all the previous benefits together—“thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s.”

well understood on both sides. No sane person in advanced years would dream of writing gravely of himself, however hale and fresh, My youth is renewed like the eagle's! Ah, these white hairs are never to grow black again. Very surely—unless, indeed, death come in earlier to stay the advance—infancy passes into childhood, childhood into youth, youth into manhood, manhood into age, and age, as to the body at least, into the grave—"The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away."

But further, the supposition of any reference here to the renewing of youth physically in later years, is negatived emphatically by David's own history. When he was passing out of youth into early manhood, we find him described as "ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to." But in his later years, it appears from many of his psalms that the Lord had been pleased to visit him with manifold bodily infirmities. After his mournful, mournful, sin in the matter of Uriah the Hittite, about twenty years before his death, we find him writing many such words as these—"My loins are filled with a loathsome disease; and there is no soundness in my flesh." "When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth." "Remove thy stroke away from me; I am consumed by the blow of thine hand." Nor does he appear to have ever recovered from the effects of these maladies; so that he became, in fact, a man prematurely old. One reading the history of his last days, might fancy him to have been a man of at least eighty. In reality, he died but two or three years older than I now am,—died at the age of seventy—far from having renewed his youth physically in his later years.

But perhaps the most decisive evidence of all as to the

meaning of the text is its own language, "Thy youth"—whose youth? David is speaking to his soul—"thy youth," my soul, "is renewed like the eagle's." No doubt, the "soul" is frequently used in Hebrew for the animal life, as in that expression, "Thou hast brought up my soul from the grave." But assuredly it is not so used here. Observe the opening words of the psalm, "Bless the Lord, O my soul"—certainly that is not the animal life, but the soul, as we usually speak—"and all that is within me,"—every mental power and faculty,—understanding, will, memory, heart, affections,—"bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases"—thy profound corruptions, my soul; "who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; *thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.*" Therefore the question arises, What, more specifically, is that renewing of his soul's youth of which David speaks, and of which the Holy Ghost by his pen speaks to us, in these remarkable words, "Thy youth is renewed like the eagle's"?—as to which last figure, "like the eagles," it may suffice to say that the allusion is plainly enough to the known longevity, and amazing strength, of this noble bird, which, besides the power common to it with other birds of renewing its whole plumage periodically, is known to live on sometimes for a century, retaining the while, I presume, that might of wing, and wonderful clearness and keenness of vision, of which God himself says in the book of Job, "Doth the eagle mount up at thy command, and make her nest on high? She dwelleth and abideth on the rock, upon the crag of the rock, and the strong place. From thence she seeketh the prey, and her eyes behold afar off."

I. Well; I answer to our question that, first, and most

fundamentally, the youth of the soul of God's child was renewed gloriously, and he entered on a new and imperishable life, in his new birth,—in the hour of that entire change of state and of character, of which Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Does not David point to this grand radical change in the three first of the benefits for which here he summons his soul to give earnest thanks to the Lord, saying, "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases, who redeemeth thy life from destruction"? I will return to that presently. But let me first remind you how Nicodemus answered our Lord, "How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?" committing a mistake not unlike that which you should make in supposing David to speak here of the renewing of his youth physically. Jesus sets him right, saying, "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"—as if he had said, It is of the second birth *of the soul* I speak to thee, even as God long ago spake by the prophets, saying, "I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them." Brethren, would you see what that renewed youth is of which the text speaks? Behold it there, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new." Or, see it there, "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is

renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." Ah, that is youth renewed! Or, see it there, "As newborn babes—laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby"—Renewed youth!

I said that David points to this fundamental change, in the first three of the benefits here, "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases"—them all, my soul—not only thy manifold guilt by the medicine of the blood, but thy terrible corruptions also, by the clean water of the Spirit's grace,—“the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.” Then he combines both benefits in one, when he adds, “who redeemeth thy life from destruction.” O yes, the new life is life out of death more ways than one,—not only out of destruction, ruin, but out of the death of Jesus, the Substitute, and by union to Him and to it—as Paul speaks, “Our old man is crucified with him;” “buried with him into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” Beloved, he who has been thus forgiven and regenerated,—“washed, and sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God,”—is like Namaan, the Syrian leper, of whom it is written that, after he had been persuaded to wash seven times in the Jordan at God's command, “his flesh came again as the flesh of a little child, and he was clean;” or like that penitent in the book of Job, of whom, when God had said of him, “Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom,” it is added, “his flesh shall be fresher than a child's; he shall return to the days of his youth.” O most blessed renewing of youth this, without which, what were any mere renewing of youth physically, even were it a thing possible?—as one sings,

“Would you be young again? so would not I.”

Blessed renewing of youth this, of which our Lord speaks to us as often as he finds the type of his disciple in the little child! Most blessed renewing this of youth, wherein a sinner, throwing off at once the whole load of the “dead works” and iniquities of a lifetime, returns back to somewhat of the very gladness, and innocence, and guilelessness, of childhood! And that is the meaning of the exhortation, “Lie not one to another, seeing ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man:” and again, “Laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies”—ah, children *cannot* be hypocrites!—“and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.”

Let me only add here, that God gave a certain remarkable type of all this in the history of his ancient people. For you recollect that, when he was about to “bear them as on eagles wings”—so he speaks—forth from the captivity of Egypt, where they had grown as it were old, and worn, and wasted, with the rigours of their intolerable bondage, he spake to Moses and Aaron, saying, “This month shall be unto you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you.” Yes, the sprinkling of the blood of the lamb on their houses that night, and the bringing of them forth with mighty hand out of Egypt, was the beginning of their whole life as a people. And so afterwards we find such expressions as that, “I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness:” and again, “She shall sing there as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt.”

II. But, secondly, there is oftentimes a further, most blessed renewing of the soul’s youth of God’s child—some call it a second conversion, though the expression



requires to be used cautiously—when, after a period of darkness, and distance, and spiritual decay, with, it may be, the commission of positive sin, God revisits his child with his pardoning and sanctifying mercy, brings him to deep repentance, and restores to him the purity and the joy of his salvation. Thus was it eminently in the case of David, when, after that mournful sin to which I have had occasion to allude, he was first of all brought to cry out of the depths, “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation”—and by and by was brought to sing in the language of another psalm, “Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. . . . When I kept silence, my bones waxed old, through my roaring all the day long: for day and night thy hand was heavy upon me; my moisture was turned into the drought of summer. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Thou art my hiding-place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance”—*Thy youth, my soul, is renewed like the eagle’s*. Thus it was with the godly Asaph, when, after his period of long, and deep, and dark, temptation, he was made to sing, “So foolish was I, and ignorant; I was as a beast before thee. Nevertheless I am continually with thee; thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory”—*Thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s*. Thus was it with Peter, after his fearful, and to all human appearance fatal, denial of the Master with oaths in the high priest’s palace, when

Jesus made good to him the gracious words, "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted" (restored), "strengthen thy brethren." "The Lord turned and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out and wept bitterly." How does Peter come forth by and by, with his youth renewed like the eagle's, when at Pentecost he says before the assembled multitude, "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ!" And soon after we read, "When they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus." Ah, are there none in this assembly who know by painful, and yet blessed, experience what that means, "Behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths. And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them: then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now. . . . Behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt?"

III. But, thirdly, there is what I might call a more normal and progressive rejuvenescence,—renewal of the soul's youth of the child of God,—which I am satisfied David has in his eye here, and which Paul divinely exemplifies for us in his precious words, "For which cause we faint

not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day"—see how far the renewal is from depending on mere bodily vigour, "though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look"—ah, the eagle's piercing gaze,—how she cleaves the very sky, and looks on the blazing sun!—"while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." Or, see this normal and progressive renewal of the soul's youth in Isaiah's sublime words, "Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength"—see there why I have called the renewal normal, or according to a fixed blessed rule, "they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." The rather I have called it normal and progressive, because it is held forth in Scripture, not as privilege only, but as commanded duty also, thus, "Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind:" and again, "That ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

I said that David points to the grand radical change of state and of character in the three first of his benefits, "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction." But now observe the two that follow, "Who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things." "*Crowneth thee*"—a remark-

able word in the original, signifying to surround on every side as with a crown — “who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies.” Oh, this is God’s filling his child with all peace and joy in believing, that he may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost. It is the Sun of righteousness so arisen on his soul with healing in his wings, as to illumine his whole path, and turn even common mercies into so many tokens of covenant love. It is that voice in the Song, “He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste”—“Who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies; *who satisfieth thy mouth with good things.*” Of course the figure there is a rich and sumptuous feast of earth. But the reference is to a feast unspeakably different—even that one, “Behold, God is my salvation, I will trust, and not be afraid; for the Lord JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.” “Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.” “Delight thyself in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.” “Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it”—“Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; *thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s.*” I am the more persuaded that David has this progressive renewal of youth in his eye, because the verb he uses here, “renewed,” is in a kind of future tense, having the force of a continued present—or rather, past, present, and future, all in one—as if it were said, Thy youth, my soul, has been, is being, and yet more and more shall be, renewed like the eagle’s! But that runs into one other great particular.

IV. I observe, once more, that the youth of the soul of

God's child comes to be renewed, strange to say! in the highest of all ways, in his death,—in that which, to the eye of sense, might seem to be the end and wreck of all. Oftentimes there are marvellous foretastes and anticipations of this in the closing hours. Thus, of David it is written, "These be the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said, The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men,"—or rather, for it is manifestly a prediction of Messiah, "The Ruler over men is a righteous one, ruling in the fear of God. And he shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain. Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure." One very near and dear to myself, who was taken home in early life, when told that her disease was fatal, said to her mother—"But I am only beginning to live!" A few months ago I received a letter from a lady in London, a sister of the late distinguished and excellent Sir Donald M'Leod, whose body, as you will recollect, in the act of hastily entering a carriage of the Metropolitan Railway, became instantaneously a wreck and ruin. She says, "His song of praise began on this side of the river. His last words were, 'Praised be thy holy name for ever and ever!'" Oh, if such the anticipation, what the realisation—"absent from the body, present with the Lord:" "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory!"—truly, youth renewed like the eagle's. Methinks it is the fabled phoenix become a grand reality—the bird of which they dreamed that, after having been consumed in a funeral pile of its

own kindling, it revived out of its ashes in the freshness of immortal youth. "To day," said Jesus to the thief on the cross, "shalt thou be with me in paradise." Oh, not only is not the new life destroyed in death; then for the first time it reaches its highest fulness. Nay, not quite its highest. For the youth of God's child shall be finally and fully renewed only in the morning of the resurrection, when "this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality." And still is it life out of death—as Paul speaks, "it is *sown*—that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die"—"it is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power." "Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."

Dear child of God, your best things are all before you. For you can say, "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness." Only remember well the *normal, progressive*, rejuvenescence, and the rule of it, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." Keep near, I beseech you, to the Lord in prayer, with thanksgiving. Let your spirit be, "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee." "My soul followeth hard after thee; thy right hand upholdeth me." "Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave." "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." "Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord."

But alas for the mournful contrast of the men of this world, who have their portion in this life, and all whose

best things are past! How peculiarly mournful is old age out of Christ, and without the hope of any renewing of youth for ever! And yet, it need not be so even in old age. I have before told you of the late eminent Lord Chancellor Lyndhurst, who, at the age of ninety, was brought to the knowledge of the Saviour, and, among other things, said, "I used never to be able to understand what these good people meant, when they talked so much of *the blood, the blood*. But I understand it now—it's just Substitution!" When asked by Lady Lyndhurst very near his end, "Are you happy?" he answered, "Supremely"—ah, youth renewed at ninety,—renewed like the eagle's!

Dear children before me, would you be always young? Give your heart to Jesus to make it new, and more and more new. Let your prayer be, "O satisfy us early with thy mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days." So shall you know what that beautiful word means, "Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

## XII.

### THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

*“This is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.”—JER. xxiii. 6.*

IN the opening verses of the chapter God had pronounced a woe on unfaithful pastors—referring probably to rulers both civil and ecclesiastical—who had destroyed and scattered the sheep of his pasture. He had promised to gather his flock in due time together, and set up faithful shepherds over them. Then he passes, at the fifth verse, by a natural and beautiful transition, to that prediction of Messiah, the great Shepherd of the sheep,—King and Priest of his Church both,—of which the text forms a part, “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name whereby he shall be called, the Lord (Jehovah) our Righteousness.”

You will easily perceive that, in this great title of Messiah, there is a party introduced as if speaking, and giving it to him, “our,”—“The Lord *our* Righteousness.” Beyond doubt, this party is the ransomed Church of God,—the true Israel and Judah,—the body of Christ, consisting of believers of all countries and ages of the world. Of the members of this body



it is in effect declared that they shall be found addressing Christ—humbly, believingly, joyfully—by the name, “The Lord our Righteousness.” And what I purpose, accordingly, is to inquire a little into the leading thoughts and feelings which the title, as thus given to Christ by his Church, implies and expresses.

I. And, first, I remark that, when the people of Christ address him by this name, “The Lord our Righteousness,” it implies a contrite acknowledgment that they have no righteousness of their own,—that they are destitute of all personal righteousness in which to appear before a holy God. “The Lord our Righteousness,” they say, confessing in the very utterance that “all their righteousnesses are as filthy rags,”—that they have none in which they can for a moment venture to appear before the Holy One of Israel. The more narrowly they search the inspired Word, and view their own characters in the light of it, the more is this humbling conviction borne home on them. They find the Lord prescribing to man at the first a perfect rule of righteousness. They find him pronouncing his curse on every one who continueth not in all things which it requires. They find him declaring that, in this fallen world, “there is none righteous, no, not one;” that “the carnal mind is enmity against God;” that “as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse;” that “by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.” Once, indeed, the people of Christ did not, any more than the world around them, obtain the knowledge of sin by the law. “They were alive,” as Paul writes of his former self, “without the law once.” Blind to the extent and purity and spirituality of the law, they fancied themselves in their own righteousness sufficiently good and secure. But “when the commandment came” at

length to them by the Holy Ghost, "sin revived, and they died; and the commandment which was ordained to life, they found to be unto death." They found that, while a single sin was sufficient to bring the curse, their entire lives had been one continued course of sin,—of rebellion. They saw that, even since the time of their conversion to God—with some goodness, the fruit of his Spirit, there had mingled imperfections and defilements innumerable. And still, as they continue to search their own hearts,—rise in their thoughts of the breadth and purity of the law, and see its requirements reaching to the most secret motives and principles of action,—they find that their very best deeds have not only nothing in them meriting heaven, but much, very much, deserving wrath. Every way the conviction is borne home on them, that they are without a righteousness of their own in which to stand before God; and they give expression to this in effect when they call Christ by the name, "The Lord our Righteousness."

II. But, secondly, I observe that, when the people of Christ give this name to him, they declare their solemn persuasion that they require a righteousness, though they have none of their own, in which to appear before the Holy One of Israel; they not only confess their entire destitution, but acknowledge their indispensable need, of a true and perfect righteousness, "This is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness." O yes, they do not profess to regard as superfluous what they have found to be wanting. They do not so renounce the hope of life by the law as to despise and trample on the law. They believe it to be none the less "holy, and just, and good," that they have fallen beneath its curse. While they own themselves to have broken and dishonoured it, they acknowledge that kept it must be, "magnified and made honourable," or they must perish. The same

Spirit of grace that has “convinced them of sin,” “convinces them of righteousness,”—teaches them to know that their standing in need of forgiveness does not lay God under any obligation to bestow it; to know that mercy can never require anything at his hand which justice forbids; to know that justice does forbid pardon without satisfaction,—favour without righteousness; to know that even mercy itself, considered in relation to the whole scheme of things, requires that the threatenings of truth be executed, and the rights and claims of justice respected and maintained; to know that all the Divine perfections conspire in forbidding that that law which required a perfect righteousness of unfallen man, shall be lowered and set aside, to admit of the sinner’s acceptance without righteousness; to know, in a word, that, if they are to be saved, it can only be in some way (if such can by possibility be found) of reconciling and harmonizing the desires of mercy with the demands of justice, the integrity of the law with the blessedness of its transgressor, his utter destitution of righteousness with his acceptance before God as righteous, and capable of being restored holily to the favour, and fellowship, and image, and everlasting enjoyment of God.

III. And thus, thirdly, I observe that, when the people of Christ address him by this name, “The Lord our Righteousness,” they express and profess their faith, that Messiah, being in one person God and man, has brought in a righteousness in their behalf, which is by God accepted for them, and imputed unto them, for their justification—“This is his name whereby he shall be called, Jehovah our Righteousness.” They profess their faith, that Messiah is in one person God and man. As for his humanity, it is implied in the very idea of his becoming the righteousness of his people, since a creature alone is capable of fulfilling the righteousness of the law.

But the same blessed truth they find expressly in every prophetic announcement of Christ, from the first promise of the Seed of the woman that should bruise the head of the serpent, down to the prediction which introduces the text, "I will raise unto David a righteous Branch,"—a son—even as Isaiah had written, "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots." Well; but of what avail could be the righteousness of a man, however sinless, for the salvation of his fellow men? To yield such a righteousness had been but his duty for himself—more than which he could not yield, nor less, without falling beneath the curse. Accordingly, see how the title which God puts here into the mouth of the ransomed Church, proclaims Christ God as well as man, "This is his name whereby he shall be called, Jehovah our Righteousness." From the beginning the Church knew sufficiently this mystery, as witness the words of Jacob on his dying bed, "God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the Angel"—manifestly the same God—"which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads." But as the stream of prophecy widened, advanced, and fell at length into the tide of the gospel revelation, the Church grew more and more familiar with such titles as "Emmanuel," "The mighty God," "The fellow of the Lord of hosts," "The first and the last and the living One," "God manifest in the flesh," "God over all blessed for ever." Nor has she ever for a moment regarded this as some theological dogma or speculation, but has gloried in it ever as a truth wherewith her dearest hopes and interests are inseparably bound up, "Jehovah our Righteousness." As man, she beholds him able to suffer; as God, able to save: in his humanity, fulfilling all righteousness; by his Divinity rendering that righteousness available for the lost: as man, made under

the law, obeying its precept, enduring its curse; as God, imparting to the obedience and sacrifice a value, merit, sufficiency, strictly infinite.

In the counsels of eternity,—in the everlasting covenant,—she beholds Jehovah constituting our Lord Jesus the Head, Representative, Surety, of his people—as it is written, “I have made a covenant with my chosen one.” “I have laid help on one that is mighty.” “By the knowledge of him shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.” She sees the Son, in the fulness of time, coming into our world; taking our nature up into his Divine Person; and discharging in it the entire debt of obedience and suffering due by his people—“finishing transgression, making an end of sins, bringing in everlasting righteousness.” She sees the Father “well pleased for his righteousness’ sake;” raising him from the dead, in testimony of the acceptance of his sacrifice; acquitting and glorifying the Surety, and in him the people whom he represented, when their debt was paid. In a word, she beholds the Father, on his intercession within the veil, sending the Holy Spirit into their hearts, uniting them to Christ by living faith, imputing his righteousness to them, setting them for ever free from the curse, accepting them in the Beloved, making them heirs of everlasting salvation—as it is written, “He hath made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” “David describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works.” “By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” “Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us righteousness.” “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” “This is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness.”

IV. But, once more, I observe that, when the people of Christ call him by the name, "The Lord our Righteousness," they are seen in the act of embracing, appropriating, and rejoicing in him, as the Lord their righteousness. "Our"—a word of possession,—of appropriation, "The Lord our Righteousness." Do you ask what the ground is on which this all-important embracing, appropriating, proceeds? I answer, that assuredly it is not any kind of price paid by the sinner,—any kind of equivalent sought or given, for a possession which in fact is beyond all price, even as the Church has no price to pay, being in herself "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." And what *is* the ground, therefore, save the free and unrestricted offer of Christ and his glorious fulness, in the gospel, to sinners of mankind,—to sinners simply as such,—to them all without exception or distinction? Thus, "My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven." "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." "Hearken unto me; ye stout-hearted, that are far from righteousness: I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry." "Now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all, and upon all them that believe." "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Listening to such blessed offers,—taught by the Holy Ghost effectually to listen to them,—the Church flees for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before her; no longer "going about to establish her own righteousness, submits herself to the righteousness of God;" embraces, closes with, Messiah as the Lord her righteousness—like some drowning man laying hold of the plank that can alone sustain and save him, exclaims, "This is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness." Nor is this

her exercise once only, or a second time, but constantly — even as often as she discovers new defilements deserving wrath, new sins needing forgiveness, new glories of purity and spirituality in the law making manifest her own vileness. Entering daily into the spirit of the title, “The Lord our Righteousness,” she lives by the faith of the Son of God; comes up from the wilderness leaning on her Beloved; runs the race set before her, looking unto Jesus—“This is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness.”

But there is a further ground on which the “our” of the text,—this word of property and rightful possession, proceeds. I refer to scriptural evidence of being already in Christ,—evidence of having already embraced the Saviour,—evidence, in the fruits of faith, of the existence and reality of faith,—evidence of union to Christ in communion with him, and some measure of conformity and obedience to him. More and more thus ascertaining that Christ is hers in possession, the Church comes to mingle, you will observe, a new element of thought and feeling with the *our*, “The Lord our Righteousness.” It is the language of joy and triumph, as well as of reliance and faith. It is not the spirit only of the drowning man laying hold of the plank, but of the safe and happy, rich and joyful man, realizing his safety, and rejoicing in his treasures, “My Beloved is mine and I am his.” “Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength.” “In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified and shall glory.” “I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels”—“This is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness.”

Let me add an inference or two before I close.

1. First, see here how wondrous a provision the gospel has made for at once humbling the sinner and exalting him,—laying him low in his own eyes, and yet gloriously ennobling him. Utter destitution of righteousness, possession of an everlasting righteousness,—we have found both elements together in the title, “The Lord our Righteousness.” And you will carefully observe that not only is the believer both humbled and exalted; but—such is the admirable contrivance of Divine wisdom—it is the very same blessedness that elevates which also lays him low. The dignity of having Jehovah for his righteousness, whereby he is raised above angels, does, in the very act of his claiming and rejoicing in it, proclaim him “a child of wrath” by nature,—“dead in trespasses and sins,”—“wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” Ah, the men of this world are proud of unreal, imaginary dignities. The Christian learns to be lowly amid royal, celestial honours. This is what the apostle James means in his remarkable words, “Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted; but the rich, in that he is made low.” Think not, brethren, that when God so much insists on laying the creature low, it is that he may debase and degrade him. O no, no. He desires only to abase the pride which is his real degradation,—to lower him in his own eyes, that he may elevate him in reality,—to strip him of a glory that is visionary, that he may invest him with a crown of glory that fadeth not away. He desires only to change the object and ground of his glorying,—transferring it from himself to God, from earth to heaven, from vanity to wisdom, from the “filthy rags” of his own righteousness to the robe of a righteousness divine and everlasting. “Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord.” “In God we



boast all the day long, and praise thy name for ever.” “Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.”

2. Again, see what a ground of security, of peace, and of everlasting blessedness, the believer in Christ enjoys. As to his security, he is clothed from head to foot with the “righteousness of God.” Unlike to Adam at his creation, who was sinless, indeed, but mutable, and liable to fall, the believer stands, not in his own righteousness, but in that of the second Adam, the Lord from heaven,—“Jehovah our Righteousness.” “This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord; and their righteousness is of Me, saith the Lord.” Then, as to his peace, well surely may that be as a river,—a peace which passeth all understanding,—when, in the view of death and judgment and eternity, he can meet every challenge of conscience and the law, by pleading the obedience unto death of the God-man, exclaiming, “This is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness.” “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.” “The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever.” “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” As to the believer’s eternal blessedness, behold it the fruit, and crown, and reward, not of any merits of his, but of the righteousness of God’s own Son. And thus think it not incredible, but rather natural, certain, necessary, that it should be all that the Scriptures describe it,—a blessedness not exaggerated when set forth as an “inheriting of all things,” “inheriting of God,”

“sitting down with Christ in his throne,” an “exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” What purity, glory, happiness, shall be deemed too great to reward Messiah’s obedience unto death,—to be the fruit of the travail of his soul,—to express the Father’s boundless, eternal complacency in it. “He that spared not his own Son, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?”

3. Finally, let me beseech you to use the subject in the way of self-inquiry, and of direction, according to the result of it. Dear hearers, have you ever truly seen yourselves destitute of righteousness? Have you seen that you need a righteousness, though you have none of your own, in which to stand before God? Have you beheld the Lord Jesus, God manifest in the flesh,—the surety of the lost,—made under the law, obeying its precept, enduring its curse,—“made of God,” to all who put their trust in him, “righteousness”? Have you fled for refuge to lay hold on this offered Saviour? Have you laid the weight of your whole eternity on him as the Lord your righteousness? If so, then blessed are ye. Then is he your righteousness in actual possession, as well as in the offers of the gospel? “As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.” And, not content with confiding in him, rejoice and glory in him, exclaiming, “This is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness.” But if you have never built on this foundation laid in Zion,—if either you are quite conscious that you have not, or the absence of the fruits of righteousness prove that you have not, then, I beseech and implore you, trifle no more with the concerns of eternity. Ponder well the relations you stand in to God, his justice, his law. Think what that load of unforgiven guilt is, which even now presses on you, and presses all the more fatally that you do not feel it. Behold the sword of Divine justice ready at any moment to descend on you! But I beseech you to behold the

same sword, as it entered the bowels of Emmanuel, the Substitute of the guilty,—“Awake, O sword against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts; smite the Shepherd.” “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” “We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God; for he hath made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” “This is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness.”

In place of my usual closing word to the young, I cannot resist reading a sentence or two from Bunyan’s “Pilgrim,”—from the deeply precious dialogue held between Christian and Hopeful, lest they should go to sleep on the Enchanted Ground:—

CHR. And what did you do then?

HOPE. Do! I could not tell what to do, until I brake my mind to Faithful, for he and I were well acquainted. And he told me, that unless I could obtain the righteousness of a man that never had sinned, neither mine own, nor all the righteousness of the world could save me.

CHR. And did you think he spake true?

HOPE. Had he told me so when I was pleased and satisfied with mine own amendments, I had called him fool for his pains; but now, since I see mine own infirmity, and the sin that cleaves to my best performances, I have been forced to be of his opinion.

CHR. But did you think, when at first he suggested it to you, that there was such a man to be found, of whom it might justly be said, that he never committed sin?

HOPE. I must confess the words at first sounded strangely, but after a little more talk and company with him, I had full conviction about it.

CHR. And did you ask him what man this was, and how you must be justified by him?

HOPE. Yes, and he told me it was the Lord Jesus, that dwelleth on the right hand of the Most High. And thus, said he, you must be justified by him, even by trusting to what he hath done by himself, in the days of his flesh, and suffered when he did hang on the tree. I asked him further, how that man's righteousness could be of that efficacy to justify another before God? And he told me he was the mighty God, and did what he did, and died the death also, not for himself, but for me; to whom his doings, and the worthiness of them, should be imputed, if I believed on Him.

CHR. And what did you do then?

HOPE. I made my objections against my believing, for that I thought he was not willing to save me.

CHR. And what said Faithful to you then?

HOPE. He bid me go to Him and see. Then I said it was presumption; but he said, No, for I was invited to come. Then he gave me a book of Jesus' inditing, to encourage me the more freely to come; and he said, concerning that book, that every jot and tittle thereof stood firmer than heaven and earth. Then I asked him, What I must do when I came; and he told me, I must entreat upon my knees, with all my heart and soul, the Father to reveal him to me. Then I asked him further, how I must make my supplication to Him? And he said, Go, and thou shalt find Him upon a mercy-seat, where he sits all the year long, to give pardon and forgiveness to them that come. I told him that I knew not what to say when I came. And he bid me say to this effect: 'God be merciful to me a sinner, and make me to know and believe in Jesus Christ; for I see, that if his righteousness had not been, or I have not faith in that righteousness, I am utterly cast away. Lord, I have heard that thou art a merciful God, and hast ordained that thy Son Jesus Christ should be the Saviour of the world; and moreover, that thou art willing to bestow him upon such a poor

sinner as I am (and I am a sinner indeed); Lord, take therefore this opportunity, and magnify thy grace in the salvation of my soul, through thy Son Jesus Christ. Amen.'”

### XIII.

#### SELF-DEDICATION TO GOD.

*“O Lord, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servan’,  
and the son of thine handmaid: thou has loosed my  
bonds.”—Ps. cxvi. 16.*

“**LOOSED** my bonds.” Whatever reference the psalmist may have in this expression to deliverance from the grave,—from impending bodily death, I think we gather sufficiently from the whole strain and spirit of the psalm, that he points in it, over and above, to the anguish of an inward, soul-bondage—the fruit of departure from the living God. Out of the depths of this anguish he had called on the name of the Lord, as he speaks at the third verse, “The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me; I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the Lord; O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.” In answer to his cry, the Lord had not only preserved his temporal life, but loosed his spirit from its bonds,—restored to him the joy of his salvation,—brought him back again into the liberty of His children. And so, just as had thus opened the psalm, “I love the LORD, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications; because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live:” and as, at the seventh verse, he breaks forth, “Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee; for thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling; I

will walk before the Lord in the land of the living,"—so now, in our text, does he renew his everlasting self-dedication to God, saying, "O Lord truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds."

The particular occasion of the psalm is uncertain. If David was the penman of it, as I think very probable, would not the occasion of the rebellion of his son Absalom—that fruit of his fearful sin in the matter of Uriah—with his restoration at length to Jerusalem and to his kingdom, fulfil the whole conditions of it? But, however this may be, I mean to take the words more in general—even as the Holy Ghost evidently designed them to embody the feelings and exercise of God's children in every age, when, remembering and realizing their redemption from the bonds of sin, and death, and the curse, they, again and again, thankfully consecrate themselves to the God of their salvation, saying, "O LORD, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thy handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds."

Two things invite our thoughts here—the old bonds, and the new,—the old bonds loosed; and the new and blessed bonds that have come in place of them for ever, "O LORD, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds."

I. First, the old bonds loosed—*the old bonds*. This psalm is but one of many places of Scripture, where a deep resemblance, or analogy, is traced between the bondage of the soul, and the death of the body,—between the condition of a sin-bound, sin-imprisoned soul, and the strong dark bondage of the grave. For, first, the bondage, in both cases alike, is desperate as to all human power of loosing from it. And second, it is, in both cases, unknown and unfelt by those that are held most thoroughly bound in it. And this because, thirdly, it is death—death in

both cases, soul and body alike. I can conceive some one saying here within himself, So you tell us; but I am not able to understand it well. It is easy to see what the strong dark bondage of the grave is—not so easy to understand what that death, that death-bondage, of souls is of which you speak. Dear hearer, may not this just be what I have said, that, in both cases alike, the bondage is unknown and unfelt by those who are held most thoroughly bound in it? However, there is at least this important difference between the two cases, that we cannot even speak to a body dead and buried in the grave. But we can speak to a sin-bound, death-bound, soul. And fain would I speak a little to *you* who are thus silently speaking to me.

Suppose a man to have committed a capital crime; to have been convicted on the fullest evidence; and sentenced to die in a fortnight. You can understand how that man is dead already in the eye of the law,—already as good as dead, because held in the bonds of a sentence of death. Ah! it is your case—it is *you* I am speaking of. For every sin, in the government of the adorable God, is capital—"the wages of sin is death,"—the punishment annexed to it is death. You have sinned. The sentence has already gone forth, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." At this hour you are held in the bonds of a sentence of eternal death, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."

And this is not all. Not only are you held in the bonds of a sentence of death—you are already *dead in sin*. So the Holy Ghost declares, when, speaking of some who had been for ever loosed from their bonds, He says, "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." Oh, we have grown so familiar with these words that we fail to realize the import of them. "Dead in sins"—not only chargeable with ten thousand thousand iniqui-



ties, but *dead* in them,—as thoroughly estranged from, and incapable of, all righteousness, as a body which is dead and lying in the grave is incapable of all activity. Do not misunderstand me. It is not that we are incapable of activity,—intense activity in sin. “Dead in trespasses and sins,” are the words, “wherein in time past ye *walked*.” Alas! we are dead only to God,—alive too fully to sin—“dead in trespasses and sins, wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air.” And thus are you in the bonds also of Satan, and of this present world. Suffice it, however, to say more generally—the bondage of a manifold, terrible death. I said that the bondage in both cases, body and soul alike, is desperate as to all human power of loosing from it. But in the case of the soul, the bondage is much the more dreadful for this reason, to which I crave your earnest attention, that at least the power of God, though not the power of man, can loose from the other bondage,—that of the grave. It needed but the simple word and will of the Lord Jesus to bring Lazarus from his tomb. But the power even of omnipotence (to speak with reverence) cannot loose from the bondage of a dead soul, consisting, as it partly does, in that Divine sentence of death of which I spoke just now. For to such a sentence mere *power* can have no possible application. God no more can loose from the sentence of his law by any mere act of will or power, than he can deny Himself,—falsify his entire character and perfections.

But, strange to say, it is at this very point, where the soul's bondage is at its strongest and deadliest—for, “the strength of sin is the law” (1 Cor. xv. 56)—that we begin to hear of the loosing of all the bonds together,—to hear of the old bonds *loosed*. For that sentence of the law which the power of God could not loose, the blood of the Lamb could. “God sent forth his

Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law." The everlasting Son of the Father took our nature upon him; and, with it, and in it, took our very bonds, our sentence of death,—girt himself round with it,—bore it,—exhausted it. And now, no sooner is a man united to the Crucified One by living faith, than the sentence, borne by the Surety, falls from off him (as it is written, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us") and, with that sentence, all the other bonds together—sin, Satan, the world. None of them can survive the sentence of death. For, "the strength of sin is the law:" and "sin," writes the apostle, "shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace."

II. But thus you will perceive that we are already in the midst of our second head—the new bonds which have come in place of the old for ever. For, "sin shall not have dominion over you." But then, to be free from the dominion of sin is but another word for the service of God, in which the new bonds consist—as Paul again and again speaks of "being made free from sin, and becoming the servants of righteousness,"—"being made free from sin, and becoming servants of God." "O Lord," says David, "truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds." Thus, secondly, I speak to you of the new bonds of the service of God which have come in place of the old for ever. And first here let me offer a general remark. It is an alternative for us all,—a choice for us of bonds—the old bonds, or the new. For, from bonds of every kind we cannot possibly be free. As creatures, we must be under some master—God or Satan. It is, I repeat, a choice for us between the old bonds of sin, Satan, the world, hell; and the new and blessed bonds of the service of the adorable God—of which now I desire to speak a

little to you. Two remarks, opened out somewhat, may suffice on the new bonds of the service of God, as they are presented in the text—the one having respect to the *nature* of them, the other to the *spring* and *source* of them.

1. First, as to the nature of the new bonds, we are taught in the Psalmist's words that, as they consist in the service of God, so that service is, as to the character of it, first, true; second, entire; and third, hearty and free.

(1.) It is *true*—"O LORD, truly I am thy servant." It is no hollow, simulated, false-hearted service, such as men too often vow at communion tables, leaving them to serve their own lusts, the world, the devil. See how David is dealing here with God, the Searcher of hearts—"O LORD," says he, "truly I am thy servant." Just as at the ninth verse he had said, "I will walk before the Lord,"—under the eye, and in the immediate presence, of the Lord,—“in the land of the living,” so here says he, “O Lord, truly I am thy servant.” The truth is, that those self-deceivers at communion tables do not speak to God at all. If they would but carefully observe their own thoughts, they would find that either they speak to no one, or, at the best, to the people of the outer world, but do not speak to God at all. “O Jehovah,” says David, “truly I am thy servant.”

(2.) And, as the service is true, so it is *entire*,—not a half, divided service, shared deliberately between God and mammon, sin and righteousness, Christ and Belial. By a remarkable figure the psalmist tells here the entireness of his service, “O Lord,” he says, “truly I am thy servant, and *the son of thine handmaid*.” For, as a slave born in the house,—born of a bondmaid in the family,—was esteemed more thoroughly and unquestionably a slave than one reduced to servitude for the first time, so says David, “I am thy servant, and *the son of thine handmaid*”—although I do not see why he may not, over and above, include the idea of a godly mother (since the two thoughts are in

fullest harmony), "I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds.

(3.) And, as the service is true and entire, so also it is *hearty and free*. See how the spontaneousness of it comes out in every word, "O LORD, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds." David, in fact, does not call it bonds at all. "Thou hast *loosed* my bonds," he says. And yet it is bonds, though strange ones—bonds of blessed liberty,—the very defence and safeguard of liberty,—yea, liberty itself, as he elsewhere speaks, "I will walk at liberty, for I seek thy precepts." O yes, the service of God is the creature's freedom and happiness—"Man's chief end," and also highest good, "is to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever." Thus much, shortly, of the new bonds in the nature of them.

2. My second remark has respect to the spring and source of the new bonds. It is taught here as to this, that it is the loosing of the old bonds which is the source and spring of the new, "O LORD, truly I am thy servant; and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds." It is so in different ways.

(1.) First, the loosing of the old bonds is the source and spring of the new, in that it is indispensable to the whole formation of them. So long as the old are not loosed, the new cannot exist. If, as I said, we cannot be free from both old and new, no more can we be under both at the same time. A man who is under sentence of death cannot serve his country. The country can take no service at his hands. And the sinner under the sentence of death in the divine law cannot serve God. God can accept no service from him. And, besides, he is serving sin, the devil, the world, and cannot serve both masters, God and sin, together. First, I say, the loosing of the old bonds is the indispensable condition of the whole existence of the new.

(2.) Second, the loosing of the old bonds is the source

and spring of the new, inasmuch as it fixes the new, many ways, sweetly and strongly on the soul,—enhances many ways the obligation of God's service on the soul. True, the believer is said to be “delivered from the law.” But this, of course, only in the curse and penalty of it,—from the law as a covenant of works,—as the condition of eternal life and death. Considered as the *rule* of service, not only does the law abide unchanged—its obligation is many ways strengthened. For now it is not the will of a Master only, a Lawgiver, a Sovereign, but of a Father also, a Husband, a covenant-God—“O LORD, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds.”

(3.) Third, the loosing of the old bonds is the source and spring of the new, in that God's express purpose and design, in the loosing of the old, was to fix the new for ever upon the soul,—to set the soul free in order to its serving and glorifying Him for ever—as it is written, “Now we are delivered from the law, being dead to that” (margin) “wherein we were held, that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter;” and again, “What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” The very purpose of God, I say, in the loosing of the old bonds was to fix the new upon the soul for ever—“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people . . . *that we*, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.”

(4.) Fourth, the loosing of the old bonds is the source and spring of the new, in that it brings into the soul a Divine power and strength,—the power of the Holy Ghost,

effectually to persuade, enable, constrain, the soul to the service of God. O yes, in the very same hour in which the curse falls from off a soul, the Holy Ghost enters it, as it is written, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." "Sin shall not have dominion over you : for ye are not under the law, but under grace,"—even the grace of that Spirit of holiness of whom it is promised in the new covenant, "I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them."

(5.) But yet again, the loosing of the old bonds is the source and spring of the new, in that, besides the power, it brings into the soul all manner of inducements, persuasives, motives, to the service of God ; and specially among these, the motive of an overpowering gratitude and love, under whose blessed influence it comes to pass that, whereas we could not serve God before, now we cannot but serve him, as David sings in this psalm, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me?" "Return unto thy rest, O my soul ; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee ; for thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living." "A certain creditor," said Jesus, "had two debtors ; the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty : and when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most ? Simon answered, I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged." "The love of Christ constraineth us." "We love him, because he first loved us." "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God

and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever!"

Thus have I spoken a little of the old bonds loosed; and of the new which have come in the place of them. A closing word, first, to those who are strangers altogether to the new bonds; and then to those that have exchanged for them the old for ever.

Fain I would affectionately speak a word to you who are altogether strangers to the new bonds. You are not strangers to *bonds*. You are in the old bonds—"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" And Paul goes on to appeal to those who had been loosed from their bonds, "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?" It is quite possible, dear hearers, that you feel no particular shame. But will you try to read the text thus—"O Satan, world, self, sin, truly I am your servant!" You shrink from this. But remember that you can only be loosed from the old bonds by exchanging them for the new. And the Lord Jesus is welcoming you at this hour to make that exchange, saying, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you"—as if he should say, Come unto me, and I will give you rest from your own yoke,—from the old bonds; then "take my yoke upon you,"—the new bonds, "and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls; for my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Ah! I can thus speak to you, indeed. But God can speak after another manner—"When I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, Live"—"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

And now to those who are not strangers to the new bonds, but have exchanged for them the old for ever, I will but say, Happy, thrice happy, servants of the Lord! When the Queen of Sheba visited Solomon, witnessed the grandeur of his court, and heard his wisdom, she broke forth, "Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee." Ah, poor Solomon! Thrice happy servants, I repeat, of *our* Solomon—King of kings, blessed and only Potentate! What a service! What a Master! What a reward—"Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world!" "There shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it: and his servants shall serve him; and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads." What remains but that, remembering well, and oftentimes meditating on, the old bonds, with the wondrous loosing of them, you again and again thankfully renew your self-dedication to the Lord, saying, "O LORD, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds"? I persuade myself that you will find not a little helpful for this end the following beautiful *Leaflet*, from the pen of the saintly John Milne, of Perth, which I have long esteemed very precious:—

A HELP TO SELF-DEDICATION.\*

"I, the Lord, will make an everlasting covenant with you."—ISA. lv.

"One shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord."—ISA. xlv. 5.

LORD God of hosts, thou didst enter into covenant with Abraham, as he waited beside the sacrifices which *he* had prepared (Gen. xv. 18), and thou art now graciously waiting beside Jesus, the sacrifice which *Thou* hast prepared, in order that sinners may come and enter into covenant with thee (2 Cor. v.

\* There may be those who may wish to possess this Leaflet in a shape admitting of more easy private use. It is to be had from the Religious Tract Society, Paternoster Row, London.



19). Father, I have sinned against Heaven, and in thy sight, and I am no more worthy to be called thy child ; but thou, in thy rich mercy, art willing to receive me ; and I, through thy grace, am willing to be thine. I lay all my sin (Isa. liii. 6), the sin of my nature (Ps. li. 5), the sin of my heart (Jer. xvii. 9), the sin of my life (Job xxxiii. 27), the sin of my lips (Isa. vi. 5), my secret sins (Ps. cxxxix. 3),—I lay all my sins, and iniquities, and unrighteousnesses, and transgressions, upon Jesus the Lamb of God ; and, cleansed by his blood, and made acceptable in his righteousness (Eph. i. 6, 7), I desire now to give myself to thee (2 Cor. viii. 5) in an everlasting covenant, never to be broken (Jer. xxxii. 40).

I am not my own, I am thine (1 Cor. vi. 19). My heart is not my own, it is thine ; I will endeavour to keep it for thee, and to make it Bethel, a temple for the Holy Ghost (2 Cor. vi. 16). My thoughts are not my own, they are thine ; I will cultivate godly and heavenly meditations (Ps. i. 2, and lxiii. 6). My words are not my own, they are thine ; I will avoid all idle, unprofitable, vain-glorious, flattering, uncharitable discourse (Eph. iv. 29 ; Col. iii. 8, 9) ; and I will seek to have my conversation always savouring of Christ and heaven (Deut. vi. 7 ; Matt. xii. 34-37 ; Col. iii. 16). My eyes are not my own, they are thine ; I will withhold them from looking upon sin and vanity (Hab. i. 13). My wealth is not my own, it is thine ; I am only thy steward ; I will therefore lay it out prudently and faithfully for thee, avoiding all unnecessary expense upon myself (Deut. xxiv. 19-21 ; Job xxix. 12, 13 ; Prov. iii. 9, 10 ; Matt. xxv. 25, 26 ; Luke xxi. 2-4). My time is not my own, it is thine ; I will employ it for thee, doing all I do as unto the Lord, striving every day to grow in grace and in knowledge, and to make myself useful to my fellow-men ; I will redeem my time from too long or needless visits, idle imaginations, fruitless discourse, unnecessary sleep, and more than needful care about my worldly affairs (Eph. v. 16 ; Col. iv. 5). I desire to commit all my affairs to thee ; my friends, my family, my health, my business, my esteem in the world. I am willing to receive what thou givest, to want what thou withholdest, to relinquish what thou takest, to suffer what thou inflictest, to be what thou requirest, and to do what thou commandest.

Lord God of hosts, I desire deliberately, cheerfully, and with full purpose of heart, thus to surrender myself wholly and for ever to thee; I feel that this is my duty, my interest, my privilege, my glory;—I believe that thou wilt receive what I thus give (2 Cor. vi. 17); I believe that thou wilt keep what I have thus committed to thee (2 Tim. i. 12); I will trust in thee for temporal provision (Ps. xxiii. 1); I will trust in thee for support under daily cares and labours (Isa. xxvi. 3); I will trust in thee for pardon of daily sins (Ezek. xxxvi. 25); I will trust in thee for growth and fruitfulness (Hos. xiv. 5); I will trust in thee for strength in the hour of death (Isa. xliii. 2). If I sin, may I grieve without despair; if I walk uprightly, may I rejoice without pride.

Lord Jesus, I take thee for my Prophet, my Priest, my King, my Life, my Light, my Rest, my Joy, my Glory, my All in All.

Spirit of Adoption, that proceedest from the Father and the Son, I desire to receive thee into my soul, that thou mayest abide with me. Convince me of sin, convince me of judgment, guide me into all truth, take of the things of Christ and show them unto me; be as the dew and rain of heaven to my soul, causing the word of life to take root, and grow, and bear the fruits of peace, joy, love, gentleness; enable me to mortify the flesh with its affections and lusts,—when the enemy comes in like a flood, do thou lift up a standard against him; be in me as a well of living water,—be in me as the earnest of the inheritance, as the first fruits of heaven,—sealing me unto the day of redemption. Holy and Blessed Spirit, help me to distinguish between thy voice and the voice of the evil one,—between thy suggestions and the impulses of the flesh,—between thy leadings and the frowardness of my own heart. I will labour not to resist, nor grieve, nor dishonour, nor quench thee; but with a humble, broken, mortified, self-denying spirit, will endeavour to fall in with thee in all things, and to think, and speak, and act in thee.

O LORD, TRULY I AM THY SERVANT; I AM THY SERVANT,  
AND THE SON OF THINE HANDMAID: THOU HAST LOOSED MY  
BONDS.

## XIV.

### THE SICKNESS—THE PHYSICIAN.\*

*“And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.”—*  
MATT. ix. 10-12.

Text—*“But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.”*

It was as if he had said, I eat with sinners for the same reason that physicians walk in hospitals,—are found in sick rooms, and at sick and dying beds. I am a physician; sinners are the sick ones, in the terrible sickness, I am come into the world to cure and heal! You ask, why eat I with sinners? Because I am the Saviour of *sinners*. If there be any who are not sinners, they do not need me, and I have no errand to them. You ask why I eat with sinners. It is the very reason of my eating with them, that they *are* sinners—for, “they that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.” Thus, I think, there are two things which invite our thoughts here—

\* This short sermon was originally addressed to the young. With a few slight changes, it was preached afterwards to more than one congregation at large. Its “plainness of speech” needs no apology. There is but one gospel for old and young.

the sickness, and the physician,—these sick ones who need the physician, and the glorious physician for their need.

I. First, I touch on the sickness spoken of,—these sick ones who need the physician, — “they that are sick.” Of course you understand, then, that it is not of any kind of bodily sickness our Lord is speaking, but of sin, likened by him to sickness,—of sin, the worst of all sickness, disease—“they that are sick.” True, indeed, Jesus healed the sick in body when he was on the earth; he healed fevers, palsies, leprosies—“all manner of sickness and disease among the people.” But that was not what he came into the world for. When he healed the body, it was for the soul chiefly,—to get the better at the heart, the soul. When he healed the body, it was that men might see how he was just as able, by a word, a touch, to heal the precious soul. It was that they might see *sin* in all the different diseases which he healed,—see in them a kind of likeness of that more fearful sickness of sin which had brought him into the world. Accordingly, observe for a moment with me the *likeness*—ay, and the terrible *difference* too. The likeness. As sickness is a disordered body, so is sin a precious soul all in disorder. Sickness of body, not healed, will kill the body. Sin, not healed,—not pardoned, repented of,—will kill the never-dying soul. Or, take any of the particular diseases which Christ healed on the earth, and see the likeness in them. He healed madness. Sin is madness, flying in the face of God,—fighting against God, and the sinner’s own happiness. He healed fevers. Sin is a fever, consuming, burning, the soul. He healed palsies. Sin is a palsy, laying the soul prostrate. He healed leprosy. Sin is a leprosy, very foul and loathsome, and spreading its vile-ness to all around. He healed deafness, blindness. The sinner is deaf, blind,—deaf to the voice of God and of his

own conscience—blind to all it most concerns him to see, —to himself, to God, to Christ, to heaven, to hell!

Well, sin is like sickness; but see the difference, —the great and terrible difference, too. Sickness is usually one disease. Sin is all diseases in one—the madness, the fever, the palsy, the leprosy, the deafness, the blindness, all in one! Men wish to be free of sickness of body. Alas! they do not wish to be free of sin, the disease of the soul. The worse sickness of body is, the more earnest men are to be free of it. The worse sin is, the more men wish to keep it. Men run to physicians of the body,—will travel far to find them,—give large sums to get their advice and aid. But when a glorious Physician offers himself for their souls, “without money and without price,” they “hide as it were their faces from him,”—they say in heart, “Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways.” And see yet another mournful difference. Sickness is disease; sin is crime,—*sin*. There is, speaking generally, no blame in sickness of body—it is misfortune, not fault. But sin *is* just fault—“sin is the transgression of the law”—“the wages of sin is death,”—death of soul and body both. “The soul that sinneth,” saith God, “it shall die.” “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.” So much then, briefly, for the sickness of which our Lord speaks,—these sick ones who need the physician.

II. Let me now touch, a little more fully, on the glorious Physician for their need.

1. And first, let me say of him—*there is no other*,—there is but this one physician for sin,—for the precious soul. If you are sick in body, you may have a choice among physicians. But for the more terrible sickness of sin, none but Christ! none but Christ! Oh, if you miss Him, you must remain under your disease for ever—“I,

even I, am Jehovah, and beside me there is no Saviour” —“Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.” I say there is but this one physician for sin,—for the precious soul. But, happily, there needs no other. For see what kind of a physician this is.

2. Secondly, I observe respecting him, that he *knows our whole case, our whole disease*, and so is able to deal with it. Other physicians have to work often in the dark. They are uncertain what the disease is. Even if they know it, indeed, they may be quite unable to heal it. But they cannot heal, if they do not know, it. *This* physician never works in the dark. He is an omniscient physician—“He needeth not that any should testify of man, for he knows what is in man.” Oh, he knows the worst of me! Indeed, we might fear that one so holy, knowing all our vileness, would flee from us, or else come near only to destroy us. That was Peter’s fear, when he fell down once at Jesus’s knees, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” But what was the answer of Jesus to him? “Fear not, Simon, from henceforth thou shalt catch men.” For—

3. Thirdly, I observe about this physician, that he is unspeakably *tender* also—an omniscient, but an unspeakably *kind, tender, loving*, physician. What else but kindness, love, could have brought him ever down into this dark, leprous, dying, world of ours? Ah! other physicians may grow rich by their healing. Jesus became poor, poor, by his—“Though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor.” Jesus came in among the leprous ones, that he might be able to heal them. Yea, “Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses”—took, in a mysterious manner, our very leprosy,—was “made sin,” “made a curse,” that we might be healed and saved! Oh, there was never a physician like this! His chief medicine is his own blood—“by his stripes we

are healed" ! There *would* be something awful about an omniscient physician, knowing our whole vileness, if he were not very tender, kind, loving. But this is He who "took up the little children in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them." This is He who, from the cross, commended his mother to the care of the beloved disciple. This is He of whom we were singing a little ago, "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds. He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names. Great is our Lord, and of great power; his understanding is infinite." And that is the next thing I observe about this physician—

4. Fourthly, he is a *mighty, all-skillful*, physician,—*able to cure and heal to the uttermost*. Other physicians may know the disease, and be altogether unable to heal it. There never was a case put into Christ's hand, of which he said, I am not equal to that case. Other physicians have their hopes and fears; and they will do their best. Not so this physician. "Wilt thou be made whole?" he said to the man who had lain thirty and eight years entirely helpless. "I will come and heal him," said he of the centurion's dying servant—as old Matthew Henry has it, "Not, I will come and prescribe for him, or, I will come and pray for him; but, I will come and heal him." "I will, be thou clean," he said to the man full of leprosy, and "immediately his leprosy departed from him." As I said, he healed those diseases of the body, that men might see how he was just as able, by a word, by a touch, to heal the precious soul. What souls has he not healed! He healed Manasseh. He healed the thief on the cross. He healed Saul of Tarsus, "before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious." And I think some poor believer here is ready to say, You need not go so far away; he can heal any soul, for I trust he has healed mine.

5. But, fifthly, I must observe that this is a *faithful*

physician. What I mean is,—he will not flatter and deceive you. He will not *skin over* your wound, and say that it is healed. He will not do as the men we read of in Jeremiah, “They have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace.” He is too kind and loving for that. If you want that, you must go elsewhere than to Christ. This physician will probe your wound to the bottom, that he may heal it indeed. “That limb must come off,” he may very possibly say. Behold what his cure is—are you willing to have it? “I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.” Behold this physician, and his cure, “Him hath God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and forgiveness of sins”—repentance and forgiveness, both. “Zaccheus,” said he, “make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner. And Zaccheus stood, and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him four-fold.” Behold the cure of this physician, “Thou wilt subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea”! Jesus, I say, is a faithful physician.

6. But once more I observe, that he is a physician *very near at hand*—so near, that if you are but ready even now, to give your soul to him to be healed, he is with



you where you now sit, to take it of you. Ah, we go in search of other physicians. This physician comes in search of *us*, as he said, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." We knock at the door of other physicians; and sometimes, when they are most needed, they are not to be found. This physician knocks at *our* door—"a very present help in trouble"—"Behold," says he, "I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."—Thus I have said about this physician—There is no other. He knows our whole case. He is unspeakably tender, kind, loving. He is mighty, all-skilful,—able to heal to the uttermost. He is a faithful physician. He is a physician very near at hand.

Beloved hearers, do you know him? Have you given your souls,—truly given them,—into his hand, to be healed by him? If you have, then let me say that you are healed; and yet you are not healed. You are healed—if you have truly given your souls into Christ's hand, he has healed you in this way, that your sins are forgiven, and you are born again. And yet you are not healed, in this other way, that you have still many wounds,—much of the sore sickness,—remaining about you. And you must come to the physician afresh every day, saying, "Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed"—

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
 Let me hide myself in thee!  
 Let the water and the blood,  
 From thy riven side which flowed,  
 Be of sin the double cure,—  
 Cleanse me from its guilt and power."

But if you have never come to this physician,—never given your souls truly into his hand,—then you are carrying about the whole terrible sickness with you, ready to

end in the second, eternal, death. You are carrying with you all the sins you ever committed since you had a being—unpardoned, unrepented of, unremoved, unhealed! Sure I am, it is not because there is not a physician among us, able and willing to heal you. “Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?” Listen to Christ’s own answer to the question, “Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.” In my text he bids you welcome to him just as you are. He makes your very wounds your welcome,—your simple need of him your sufficient welcome to him. When they asked why he ate with sinners—it is the very reason, he answered, of my eating with them that they *are* sinners—for “they that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.” Oh that you were persuaded to say to him in the words of Cowper’s precious hymn—

Heal us, Immanuel ; here we are,  
 Waiting to feel thy touch :  
 Deep-wounded souls to thee repair ;  
 And, Saviour, we are such.

Remember him who once applied,  
 With trembling, for relief :  
 “Lord, I believe,” with tears he cried ;  
 O “help my unbelief”!

She, too, who touched thee in the press,  
 And healing virtue stole,  
 Was answered, “ Daughter, go in peace ;  
 Thy faith hath made thee whole.”

Oh that you were addressing him in the language of the prophet Jeremiah, “Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved: for thou art my praise”!

## XV.

### PARABLE OF THE MARRIAGE FEAST.

“*The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready; come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: and the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all, as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding-garment: and he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding-garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall he weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen.*”—**MATT.** xxii. 2-14.

A FEW opening words on the structure of this parable will, I think, simplify materially the exposition of it. Any

one who examines with care the parables of Christ, as regards their structure, will find that they divide themselves into at least two great kinds or classes. In the first, which is the most numerous, there is a sort of story of common life,—a narrative of certain things of possible, if not actual, occurrence in ordinary life,—representing and embodying great corresponding things in the spiritual world. Such is the parable of the Sower; of the Tares in the Field; and many others. In the other kind of parables—of which the Pharisee and the Publican may be taken as an example—there is no story of common life at all. It is the spiritual world alone,—simply a class of characters in it (or more than one class, as the case may be), represented by a specimen, or instance. Well; to which of these two kinds of parables does this one of the Marriage Feast, or Marriage of the King's Son, belong? I answer, to neither of them, according to my judgment. No doubt, at first view it might seem plainly enough to belong to the class where there is a narrative of things in ordinary life; and so it has been viewed accordingly by expositors. But I am persuaded that it ought to be placed, along with certain others, in a third or intermediate class, where there is no narrative properly of things in ordinary life, embodying other corresponding things in the spiritual world, but where it is substantially the spiritual world alone, merely presented in the graphic form of a narrative, and with *allusion*, more or less, to certain things of ordinary life. Certainly, if there is a story of common life here, it is a very extraordinary, not to say extravagant, one—as will soon appear. And in this case our Lord is at least continually breaking through the shell of the narrative, and introducing circumstances so entirely peculiar to the spiritual world, that they never could, without a great deal of forcing, be imagined to have occurred in the ordinary affairs of men. And thus does it seem to my

mind far better and safer to avoid all such forcing, with all appearance of extravagance in the story, by laying it down at once, that there is no narrative here of common life; but that, just as in the Song of Solomon, for example, or in the Forty-fifth Psalm, where (as has always seemed clear to my mind at least), it is not Solomon *and* Christ,—Solomon first, and then Christ, but Christ alone, with simple allusion, more or less, to Solomon, so here it is the higher spiritual marriage, and marriage feast, exclusively—only presented in the arresting form of a story, and with more or less allusion (slight allusion, as we shall find) to a marriage, and a marriage feast, of earth. But all this, as well as the importance of it, will come out as we proceed with the exposition.

“The kingdom of heaven.” Our time will not admit of entering into this great expression, found in so many of the parables of Jesus.\* “The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son.” Now certainly we might so far seem to have here just the usual opening of an allegoric narrative of ordinary life. We shall very soon see. But meanwhile, and in either view, the king evidently represents the adorable God, the Father, who, in his matchless condescension and love to the children of men, from everlasting purposed to make a marriage for his Son,—a wondrous marriage union for his Son Jesus Christ, with a countless multitude of our fallen race. A marriage, observe, for *his Son*. The Old Testament Scriptures were full of a marriage relationship between the Church and Jehovah. Thus, among numberless examples, “Thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of Hosts is his name.” “I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in

\* It had been taken up in a previous lecture— one of a series on the Parables.

loving-kindness, and in mercies; I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness." A marriage relationship, I have said, between the Church and Jehovah. For, so exclusively was it with Him, that whensoever the Church gave her affections and homage to any other, it was in the prophets branded as spiritual adultery, and the sum of all wickedness and sin. At once it follows that, when we come down to the New Testament, and find the marriage now to be with the *Son* of the King,—when we find the Church to be the bride, the wife, of *the Lamb*,—find Jesus to be the bridegroom, the husband—it follows that Jesus is Jehovah, else the Old and New Testaments are two contrary religions. It follows at once that, when the King makes this marriage for his Son, he does not make it for any created being,—any other being than Himself,—but that this King and his Son are in essence one—distinct in certain grand respects, indeed, yet one essentially,—one in the everlasting unity of the Godhead.

But now will you notice that the word rendered a marriage here, signifies also a marriage feast, and is indifferently used, according as the connection may indicate the sense to be, either for the espousals, or for the feast at which they are celebrated. And, accordingly, in this parable the radical idea of the marriage passes into, and is merged in, the kindred one of the marriage feast—even as the bride no otherwise appears here than as the *guests* at the feast, who are the same Church which is the bride, under a different aspect of it.

Ver. 3. "And sent forth his servants—A certain king made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come." It is the first stage, this, of a great and solemn history. The reference is to a great historical fact—now long ago past, indeed, but of which the principles abide unchanged at this hour. The

reference is to the Jewish people of our Lord's day; to the invitation given them to come to Jesus,—to come to the marriage, to the feast; and their refusal to comply with it. They are called *the bidden*—“them that were bidden”—inasmuch as long before, in the Old Testament Scriptures, they had been invited to Christ. They had been invited to him there as to the glorious Husband, in such words as those we sang and read a little ago, “Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty; for he is thy Lord, and worship thou him.” They had there been invited to him as to a glorious feast of all spiritual blessings, in many such words as those, “In this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things—Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters—Wisdom hath builded her house; she hath hewn out her seven pillars; she hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table.” Throughout all the Scriptures they had been called to believe on Messiah, and charged to hold themselves in readiness to bid him welcome when he should appear on the earth. And now that he had appeared, the King “sent forth his servants” to summon them afresh,—to call them more immediately to the feast. For this purpose he sent forth John the Baptist. He sent the glorious Bridegroom himself, who condescended to become the servant of the Father for this end, and delivered to them many a blessed message of invitation. He sent the twelve for the same purpose, and many others. But, “they would not come.” A mere handful, “born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God,” welcomed the invitation. But the mournful general rule was, “He came unto his own, and his own received him not—He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not—Ye will not come

to me that ye might have life—O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, I would have gathered you; and ye would not.”

Now let me ask you at this place to notice that, supposing a story here of things of ordinary life, embodying other corresponding things in the spiritual world, already it begins to seem a somewhat improbable one. A king makes a marriage feast for his son, and invites to it a large number of his subjects. It does not seem very likely that they should in a body decline the invitation. But the improbable will presently, as I humbly think, become the incongruous, yea, extravagant, when we shall find that, on the invitation being sent forth a second time, and by the hand of other servants, not only is it made light of, but the servants are actually taken, mocked, spitefully entreated, and *murdered*. I find, accordingly, that Strauss, the German sceptic, makes a handle of this incongruity, to discredit the authenticity and genuineness of the whole passage, on the ground that the story in a parable behoves to have at least probability or verisimilitude about it. And no doubt it does, when there *is* a story of ordinary life. But supposing the case to be as I have put it, and entertain no doubt whatever that it is, that there is no story of ordinary life here at all,—that it is the spiritual world alone, only presented in the graphic form of a narrative, and with allusion, more or less, to ordinary things—then, what a terrible grandeur is thrown around the whole passage by that very absence of verisimilitude of which Strauss complains! O yes, beloved brethren, here is a folly, a wickedness, having no parallel,—nothing at all resembling it in the ordinary affairs of men. Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid; be ye very desolate, saith the Lord. The King of kings makes a marriage for his Son, and invites us to be, not guests only at it, but the very bride of that Son, and we trample the invitation beneath our feet! I say *us, we*, because,



although it is in this verse a fact of history, the principles, as I said, abide unchanged at this hour. We, all of us by nature, are they of whom that word is spoken, "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life"—"I would have gathered you as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not."

But now have we a second stage of the solemn history in ver. 4: "Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready; come to the marriage." It is here the day of Pentecost anticipated. It is a sublime anticipation by our Lord of all the great and solemn things which were to be transacted betwixt this time and that day—his crucifixion, death, resurrection, ascension, and the sending down of the Holy Ghost. The Father yearns, in the bowels of a divine compassion, over his lost sheep of the house of Israel. He will send the invitation again to them, under wonderfully changed circumstances. "He sent forth other servants." Partly, indeed, they were the same apostles. But, not to speak of those other men who were sent besides—such as Stephen, Philip the Evangelist, and many others—even the apostles might well be called "other servants," as now baptized with the Holy Ghost, and in respect to the new form of the message they were sent to bear. For here it is, "Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner." Formerly it was but in course of preparation; now it is prepared—"I have prepared my dinner." Ah, touching words from the lips of the Lord Jesus, when you think what that dinner consisted of,—when you recall words like those, "The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world—My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed—Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life—Christ our passover is sacrificed for us; therefore, let us keep

the feast." But it is the Father who speaks here, "I have prepared my dinner;" and thus you might recall those other words, "God spared not his own Son—It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief—Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts; smite the shepherd." "Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed." Ah! *My oxen and my fatlings*—for all the slain fatlings of the ancient economy, so far as God ever knew them as His, were in that one Lamb slain! "And all things are ready." After the costly preparations of four thousand years, all things now are ready—forgiveness is ready; the Holy Ghost ready; eternal life is ready—"Come to the marriage." As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked. How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? My heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together—Come, come to the marriage!

Ay, all things are ready, except one, alas!—the fallen heart,—the carnal mind, which is enmity against God, and is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. "But they made light of it," (verses 5 and 6), "and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: and the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them." In these two verses it is the rejection, over again, of the invitation by the Jews—one rejection, at bottom, in both verses, but under two forms in them respectively—indifference, hostility,—indifference, contemptuous disregard; and deep, murderous hostility. Contemptuous disregard, "They made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, and another to his merchandise,"—one to the property which he had, and another to the acquiring of a little more. O unheard of folly, madness! So taken up with a farm, and

a shop of merchandise, that no time is found for heaven and hell,—for a lost or won eternity! A farm and merchandise straightway to be left behind for ever, preferred before a kingdom, a marriage with the King of kings, a crown, an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away! *They made light of it.* Unparalleled this even in hell; for the devils at least believe and tremble. But unheard of guilt also,—criminality! God's highest grace and highest authority are alike trampled under foot. God has bound up with the salvation which is in Christ Jesus the glory of all his perfections—his Wisdom, Truth, Righteousness, Grace; and the sinner treads them all beneath his feet for his gains and dust!

Well; the contemptuous disregard is, as I have said, one and the same rejection, at bottom, with the murderous hostility. For in such a case indifference *is* hostility. There is no possible medium. “He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad.” But it is of high importance, practically, that we distinguish the two, as they are distinguished here. Because we now are placed in circumstances where there is really no room for the murderous violence. And thus might we suppose ourselves not to be in the passage at all. But we are at least in this fifth verse, “They made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise.” O yes, we, beloved, for all manner of wretched things in this world, do refuse Christ, and make light of the offers of his salvation! And now I will only further, on the other verse—“The remnant took his servants and entreated them spitefully, and slew them”—ask you to observe how it was very soon accomplished literally, when, for example, “they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit; and he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge”: and when, a little while after, “Herod the king stretched forth his hands

to vex certain of the Church, and killed James, the brother of John, with the sword, and, because he saw it pleased the Jews, proceeded further to take Peter also"—and so forth.

But now this second stage of the history reaches its consummation. Ver. 7. "But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city." He was wroth—because they robbed him of the glory of shewing mercy,—of bestowing on them everlasting life. Gracious wrath! and yet not the less wrath on that account, but rather, methinks, the more. Long had the patience of God waited for them. All day long he had stretched forth his hands to them. But they misunderstood it. He kept silence; and they thought that he was altogether such an one as themselves. Nay, he had not kept silence. In accents of unutterable tenderness he had spoken to them. But "they despised the riches of his goodness, and forbearance and long-suffering, and treasured up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath." And now that day was come. The old awful word was fulfilled, "I will meet them as a bear that is bereaved of her whelps, and there will I devour them like a lion"—"The king sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city." Historically, this is the Roman armies under Titus, with the siege, destruction, burning, of Jerusalem. "*His* armies." The Roman armies were His armies,—the rod of his anger,—the staff in his hand. Indeed, he had foretold of them fourteen centuries before, saying, "The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, as swift as the eagle flieth; and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst." "He sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up *their* city." Once it was Jerusalem "the city of the great King." But He had forsaken it, and now it was

*their* city. One is reminded of those words to Moses, after the sin of the golden calf, "Go, get thee down; for *thy* people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves."

But now, in the 8th and 9th verses, have we a third and last stage in the great history, reaching down even to our own day. "Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways" (or great outlets and thoroughfares, whether in town or country), "and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage." Briefly, this is the calling of the Gentiles into the Church and Kingdom of God, the Jews having been cast out of it. It is that word, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature;" or that word, "That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem;" or that one, "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof;" or, most of all perhaps to the purpose, those words, "Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said. It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life" (compare the words before us, "They which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage"), "lo, we turn to the Gentiles; for so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth."

Then, in the 10th verse, we have the fulfilment of this great commission, with the result—"So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all, as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests." Plainly this is the

visible Church of the Gentiles. But the question occurs, Where are here those of the Gentiles corresponding to the Jews who openly and avowedly refused the invitation? I answer, that they are not here at all; and for this reason, that it was the design of our Lord, in this latter part of the parable, to present his kingdom under one particular phase or aspect of it—even as, in its outward or visible character, it is composed both of those who are its true subjects and those who are its subjects only in appearance and profession,—composed of such as are both *in* and *of* it, and of such as are *in*, but not *of* it, and must soon be cast forth from it for ever. Only observe, that the “bad and good,” in this verse, are evidently not *these* two classes. The expression does not refer to the false and true subjects of the kingdom, but to the varied condition of the guests when the invitation reached them. God, in other words, would have the invitation to be addressed to all without exception,—to the openly wicked, as well as the outwardly decent and moral. In this respect there was to be “no difference”—even as “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God,” and can be “justified” only “by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”

It is, however, in the next verse, the 11th, that this distinctive feature of the latter part of the parable comes most expressly out: “And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding-garment.” But the question immediately suggests itself, What was there to be wondered at in this, or what in it to be blamed? Had not the King commanded the servants to go out into the highways, and bid as many as they should find to the marriage? O yes. But it is manifestly taken for granted that, though the invitation was to be given to all, it was far indeed from being the design of the King that the marriage of his Son should be degraded by the presence of persons in “filthy rags;” and so,

that the invitation carried in its bosom the provision of a *garment* in which all invited ones might fitly and worthily take their place. And here again comes out the importance of settling that there is no narrative of ordinary life here. I find the commentators, indeed, labouring to make out that in the Eastern feasts it was the practice to provide the guests with festival garments. The evidence, however, seems to me but scanty. All I find about the customs has simply brought me to this, that there was enough to make it not unintelligible to the hearers of our Lord, how, in this altogether peculiar marriage feast of which he is discoursing, the invitation should carry with it such a gracious provision and offer. And so, accordingly, the fact is, blessed for ever be God! You remember that great word, for example, "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all, and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference." Yes, beloved, God is inviting every one of us to this wondrous marriage. But he will have us come to it, only, "putting on" in the very act "the Lord Jesus Christ,"—putting on that peerless robe He has wrought out for us in his obedience unto death,—the robe of which the Church sings, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness"—that glorious righteousness which is in Christ, "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS," and which becomes ours in two distinct ways—first, in that it is imputed to us by faith alone; and, second, in that, by what one has well called the appropriative and assimilative power of faith, it carries with it also a personal and implanted righteousness and holiness, so that, in

one and the same hour, we are "washed, and sanctified, and justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

But, "a man"—what is this? "saw there a man." Are there, then, but a few such—one here, and one there? O no, no. But the solemn thought is, that, among all the multitudes, God deals as individually with each as if there were but one; and, further, that though there were but one in a whole assembly, God's eye would instantly find him out—"When the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding-garment: and" (ver. 12) "he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding-garment?" An opportunity is afforded to him of vindicating himself, if he can,—of affirming, if he dare, that he had done all in his power,—come as he was invited, and had no means of finding a wedding-garment. But, it is added, "he was speechless." O terrible word! What a contrast to Ezekiel's, "That thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified towards thee for all that thou hast done"! Here it is that solemn word in Samuel, "He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness." "Then said the king to the servants" (ver. 13), "Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." "The king said to the servants"—the angels, as we know—"Bind him hand and foot." In an instant those hands which might have resisted, and those feet which might have attempted to escape, are powerless. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Can thine heart endure, or thine hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with thee? The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites! "Bind him hand and foot, and take him away." It is the final separation



from the Church,—expulsion from the kingdom, of those who were in, but never of, it. Compare those words of another parable, “So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just; and shall cast them into the furnace of fire.” Here it is, “Cast him into outer darkness,”—the darkness outside the kingdom of light,—that terrible darkness, “God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.” “Cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” “Weeping,” sorrow; “gnashing of teeth,” despair—speechless, helpless, hopeless! “For” (ver. 14) “many are called, but few are chosen.” Not “few,” of course, absolutely. O no; but few in respect to the many called. And it is to be further observed, that the “few” are placed here in contrast, not simply to the class of professors within the kingdom with but a “name that they live,” but to all in the parable, besides, who had never even seemed to enter the kingdom.

Beloved hearers, unspeakably momentous are the bearings of the whole upon the character of God, and the character also of fallen man. On God’s transcendent Mercy—this marriage, this feast, with the universal invitation to it; but Mercy, hand in hand with omniscient, burning Holiness, “How camest thou in hither, not having a wedding-garment?” and the destruction,—the “outer darkness,” the “weeping and gnashing of teeth!” On the character also of fallen man—his exceeding folly and wickedness, having no parallel in the things of ordinary life,—not admitting of being set forth in any allegoric narrative taken from them!

One word only more. The attendants, it seems, incurred no blame for the presence of the man who had not on the wedding-garment—as they must necessarily have done had that garment been anything outward or visible,—had

there, in other words, been any narrative here of things in common life. The wedding-garment here is exclusively spiritual, unseen—and man looketh on the outward appearance. And so is it that, in the analagous feast of the Supper (soon to be again celebrated among us), we who are the Lord's servants will not be blamed for receiving you to it on the footing of your credible outward profession. Whether you have, or have not, on the wedding-garment—who are we that we should sit in judgment, and determine? But God looketh on the heart. All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. “When the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding-garment.” Lord, is it I? Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!

## XVI.

### CHRIST MADE A CURSE.

*“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.”* Text—“*Christ . . . made a curse for us.*”—GAL. iii. 13.

I AM desirous to examine with some care along with you these great, awful, blessed, words of the Holy Ghost. May the Lord vouchsafe His own presence with us while we reverently together turn our thoughts to them!

I. “Christ made a curse.” First of all, I lay down this position as certain (however unlikely it might have seemed to us beforehand), that the curse which the apostle speaks of is the curse of God,—that it is God’s curse which Paul says Christ was made, and God himself who made him that curse. It is the curse *of God* which the apostle says Christ was made. True, there was no lack of the cursing of this blessed One, in a secondary sense of the word, from other quarters,—no lack of the cursing of him by men and devils, in the sense of maligning, blaspheming,—wishing, calling him accursed. But Paul assuredly does not speak of anything of that kind. Besides that he says *made*,—not called, or wished, but (γενήματός) “made a curse,”—see how certain it is from the entire context that it is the curse of God which he speaks of, and which he says Christ was made. He had begun to speak of this curse at the tenth verse, saying, “As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it

is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." Then in the thirteenth verse, where the text lies, "Christ," says he, "hath redeemed us from *the curse of the law*, being made a curse for us." It is out of the question to imagine the sense of the term to be entirely changed in this second clause. It is out of the question to suppose the meaning now to be, Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, having been reviled, called accursed, by evil men. Truly a feeble curse it had been that could have been so removed! Beyond all doubt the meaning is, Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, having borne *that* curse,—been made the curse of the law for us. If anything further were wanting to fix this down as the meaning, it were found in the last clause of the verse, where the apostle, citing in confirmation and illustration a passage from the Pentateuch, adds, "for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." We shall look at this passage a little more narrowly by and by. Meanwhile it is sufficient to say that the exact words in Deuteronomy are, "He that is hanged is accursed of God"—so that it is just as if Paul had said, Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, having been made the curse of it for us; for it is written, he that is hanged is accursed *of God*.

And then, as it is God's curse which the apostle says Christ was made, so was it God himself who made him that curse. Who else by any possibility could? Wicked men may call or may wish their fellow-men accursed, and the priests of an apostate Church may profess to make them so. But it is a dream. God alone can bring his curse on any man. And you may only further notice as to this, that the word "made" here is the same the apostle uses in the fourth verse of the next chapter, "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law"—made

by God, of course. Our first position then is, that it is the curse of God which the apostle says Christ was made, and God himself who made him that curse.

II. But, secondly, at once the question arises, How could such a thing ever be? For the righteous God will bring his curse on no guiltless one. It may be questioned whether He will ever bring suffering of any kind on one absolutely guiltless. But it is certain he will not bring his *curse* on the guiltless. Wicked men may curse them,—may wish, or call them, accursed. But, as their “curse causeless shall not come,” so the only possible cause of the curse of God is ill-desert—even as we have already found it written, “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.” But then, Christ was “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.” In his Divine nature he was the Holy, holy, holy One of Israel. And in the humanity which he assumed he “did no sin,” “knew no sin.” Yet does Paul say that he was made a curse,—the curse of God, and by God himself made that curse.

III. But now, thirdly, there was a mysterious manner, yet most real and true, in which Christ was not guiltless,—yea, in which he who alone in all the world was without sin was, to speak with deepest reverence, of all guilty ones in the world the guiltiest. I might remind you of those words of the ransomed Church in Isaiah, “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.” But let us fix our attention a little more closely on those words of 2 Cor. v. 21, “God made him to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” *Made him to be sin*—the entire expression is, “made him who knew no sin to be sin for us.” So much is certain, therefore, negatively, that the apostle’s meaning is not, and cannot be, that he was made our sin in the pollution,

or stain, or turpitude of it, either in nature or in life. For, besides the frightfulness of such a thing to be even imagined, it were in contradiction to the express words, "He hath made him who *knew no sin* to be sin for us." Even as regards the frame and constitution of the humanity which the Son of God assumed, you recollect how the angel said to Mary, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." But then, on the other hand, the apostle expressly says, "He made him *to be sin*." And neither can the meaning of this be, made him to be a sufferer. There are, indeed, evangelical expositors who understand the word as meaning a sin offering. They think it is so used with reference to the language of the Old Testament, where the term for "sin offering" is simply sin—as in all those directions of the law, "he shall lay his hand on the head of the sin offering,"—literally, of the sin. Well, I cannot agree with this opinion, because it breaks the antithesis the apostle plainly designed to mark between sin and righteousness, saying, "He hath made him to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Still I do not greatly object to this view of the expression; and it will come to much the same result, provided it be distinctly borne in mind, that the word "sin offering" in the Old Testament is just "sin;" and that the reason doubtless lies in the mysterious manner in which the victim became an offering for the sin—even that it had first become the sin, as it were,—the sinner's guilt having been transferred, typically, to the sacrifice—of which transference the laying of the hand on the head of the victim was the medium and the symbol. Thus, "Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions

in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat." So that the question remains just as before, what that sin was which was transferred (now no longer typically, but truly) to the glorious Victim,—the "sin" which the apostle says Christ "was made." It could not be the pollution, the turpitude, on the one hand; it was not the suffering simply, on the other. But there was a great intermediate element between the turpitude and the suffering; and this it was that Christ was made in the whole fearful reality of it—even the guilt (the *reatus*, as the Latins spoke),—the just liability in law, and in the eye of the lawgiver, to endure the suffering, the punishment, the curse. For Christ, by an altogether peculiar Divine constitution—of infinite grace alike on the Father's part and on his own—had become the Head of his body the Church,—taken their place in law,—become one with them in law for ever. Read again, for instance, that fourth verse of the following chapter, "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law"—*under the law?* But what could the Son, the very Lawgiver, have to do with subjection to the law? Nothing, assuredly, for himself,—nothing save as a public Person, Surety, Representative. But having, in the act of taking our nature, taken this character also, he did thus become truly and justly chargeable before the Divine tribunal with the whole iniquities of his people. Thus did he, to speak with profoundest reverence, deserve and behove to endure the Divine curse—due to the blasphemies and persecutions of Saul; to the aggravated denials of Peter; to the crimes of the thief who hung on the cross beside him—to the unnumbered iniquities of all who shall be saved by him to the end of the world. "God made him to be sin," and so made, and could not but make him, to be "a curse for us," that we might be redeemed from the curse of the law.

And now turn we for a moment to the passage cited by

the apostle from the Pentateuch. Let no one be startled in the reading of it. Let us rest well assured that Paul cites no Scripture inaccurately, and thus be well assured that, when God inspired Moses to write the words, he had his beloved Son in his eye; and that what might at first view seem to be the degradation of Christ, will in the end be found to be equally to his glory and our salvation. It is the twenty-first of Deuteronomy, the twenty-second and twenty-third verses—"If a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree; his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day, (for he that is hanged is accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance." Too many expositors, Protestant as well as Romanist, have tortured the apostle's words in our text, to evade the plain sense of the statement, "Christ was made a curse for us;" and as for the citation from Deuteronomy, they in effect venture simply to deny the applicability of it to Christ, entering into formal proof (of what surely is too evident to require any), that Moses is speaking of thieves and other notorious criminals; hence concluding that the passage can have no possible application to Him who was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners. Ah! they are blind to what is the very soul and glory of the gospel, that Christ, in a mysterious sense, yet most real, *was* the guiltiest of all,—that the Lord did verily lay on him the unnumbered iniquities of his people—not their punishment only, but their iniquities first, and then their punishment, their curse. As Luther speaks, "We must as well wrap Christ, and know him to be wrapped, in our sins, in our malediction, in our death, and in all our evils, as he is wrapped in our flesh and blood." "God sent him into the world, saying to him, Be thou Peter, that denier; be thou Paul, that persecutor, blasphemer, cruel oppressor;



be thou David, that adulterer ; be thou that sinner who ate the apple in paradise ; be thou that thief that hung on the cross." " If thou wilt deny him to be a sinner and accursed, deny also that he was crucified and dead. For it is no less absurd to say, that the Son of God (as our faith confesseth and believeth) was crucified and suffered the pains of sin and of death, than to say that he is a sinner and accursed. But if it be not absurd to confess and believe that Christ was crucified between two thieves, then it is not absurd to say also that he is accursed, and of all sinners the greatest. These words of Paul are not spoken in vain, ' Christ was made a curse for us.' ' God made Christ who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.' "

IV. Fourthly, thus have we the wondrous explanation of the whole life of our Lord Jesus Christ, which otherwise were an inexplicable enigma. For, when we look at the Saviour's life on earth, we are at once struck with this amazing fact, that there was but one man who ever trode that earth, and never defiled it by sin,—one only who " always did the things which pleased the Father ; " and yet that that Father, " the righteous Lord who loveth righteousness," was so far from exempting him from those sufferings which are the fruit of sin, that from his birth onwards to his death on the accursed tree, " it pleased the Lord to bruise him, and to put him to grief." Even had his sufferings proceeded simply from the hands of men and devils, the mystery would not have been removed, since neither devils nor men could be more than instruments—voluntary and guilty, yet only instruments—in the hand of Jehovah for the executing of his designs. But the fact unquestionably was, that the principal sufferings of this Just One came from the immediate hand of the Father himself. It is impossible to read the gospel histories without perceiving, that by far his deepest agonies were those which he endured when there was no

hand of man upon him at all, or when, at least, he himself traces the suffering to another hand altogether—saying, for example, “Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour; but for this cause came I unto this hour”—“My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; tarry ye here and watch with me”—“O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me”—“My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Ah! behold the explanation of all,—of the travail of Messiah’s soul,—of an agony that wrung the blood from every pore of his sacred body,—of what he himself declared to be his own Father’s desertion of him—see, not the source of it only, but the soul also of its deepest bitterness and anguish, in these words, *made sin, made a curse*,—not accursed simply, but—as if all the curses due to a world’s sin had been made to meet in his person—“*made a curse*,” that we might be redeemed from the curse of the law!

V. Fifthly, there are certain great central things among the types of the Old Testament, which cast much light over the mysterious fact in our text, and, in their turn, receive important light from it. Let me select three—the brazen serpent, the burnt offering, and the sin offering.

The brazen serpent. At first view it seems very strange, that the chosen type of the blessed Redeemer should have been the likeness of a serpent,—that, when the Israelites were dying of the bite of serpents, the medium of their cure should have been the likeness of one, “Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole; and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.” But the wonder ceases, or rather is turned into another wonder of holy admiration, when we find that the only possible way of our deliverance from sin, was the Redeemer’s taking it, in its whole guilt and curse, into his own person,—being made sin and a curse for us. What glorious light is

thus cast on the words of Jesus, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life!"

Then the burnt-offering. There is no doubt that the fire of all the burnt-offerings of the law, whether it came down immediately from heaven to consume the victim, as on various memorable occasions, or was kindled naturally, was the emblem of the Divine holiness and justice, consuming the substitute lamb on which the sin had been laid, —the sacrifice in place of the sinner. What a picture of Christ made a curse, enduring the fire of "the wrath of God revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men!" What a picture of the prophet's "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts; smite the shepherd!" What a picture of Him who cried, "My heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death!"

And lastly the sin-offering. Let these words, for example, be carefully observed (Lev. xvi. 27, 28), "The bullock for the sin-offering, and the goat for the sin-offering, whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place, shall one carry forth without the camp; and they shall burn in the fire their skin, and their flesh, and their dung. And he that burneth them shall wash his clothes, and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp." That is to say, the victim, as having had the whole iniquities transferred to it by the laying of the hand upon its head, had become an unclean and accursed thing, and so beloved to be carried away out of God's sight without the camp, and consumed in the fire. This is what our apostle refers to in those words in Hebrews, "The bodies of those

beasts, whose blood for sin is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." As if to say that when God appointed the sin-offerings of the law to be carried forth outside the camp as unclean and accursed, and to be burned in the fire, it was but a figure of our Lord Jesus, laden with our accursed iniquities, made sin and a curse, numbered with the transgressors, dealt with as the vilest of all—not by man so much as by God, the Holy One of Israel—because the Lord had, with his own most free consent, made to meet on him the iniquities of us all. When Jesus was led forth out of Jerusalem, and there crucified between the thieves, it was as if all the innumerable multitudes of sinners whom he represented had been in that hour carried out, and had there endured, in their own persons, the curse of the Divine law due to their whole ungodliness, unrighteousness, pride, falsehood, vanity, uncleanness, rebellion, and I know not what other crimes and sins. Writes Dr Owen in his treatise on the Divine Justice, "Unless God, the judge and ruler of all, after having thoroughly examined the nature, hearts, breasts, ways, and lives of us all, had thence collected whatever was contrary to his law, improper, unjust, and impure,—whatever displeased the eyes of his purity, provoked his justice, roused his anger and severity,—and laid it all on the shoulders of our Redeemer, and condemned it in his flesh, it had been better for us, rather than to be left eternally entangled in the snares of death and of the curse, never to have enjoyed this common air, but to have been annihilated as soon as born. Wretched men that we are, who shall deliver us from this most miserable state by nature? 'Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.'"

VI. But thus I observe, once more, that we do not get

at the full explanation of the mysterious fact in our text, till we have taken into view the wondrous design and issue of all, as set forth in the passage thus—"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." It is a very serious mistake, too frequently committed, to suppose that the chief difficulty that lay in the way of our salvation was the desperate corruption, ungodliness, of these hearts of ours. God forbid I should underrate this difficulty. It was one which nothing short of omnipotence could overcome. But omnipotence *could* overcome it. Viewing the inward principle of our corruption by itself, the Almighty God could have made an end of it by his *fiat*. But there was another difficulty which not even omnipotence could overcome, because mere power could have no application to it. I mean the sentence, the curse, of the divine law, which had gone forth against us. As Paul speaks elsewhere, "The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law." There lay, as it were, over the mouth of the grave of our corruption a stone, which even the Divine power could not remove, so as to reach down to the corruption to make an end of it. But that stone, immoveable as to all mere power, melted like wax before the fire of the expiatory sacrifice of Emmanuel—"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." And now, not only are we thus delivered from the law's terrible sentence, but—the stone which lay over the grave of our corruption once removed—the way is open for the Holy Ghost's descending into it to make an end of our corruption too,—yea, open for the whole blessing of the Abrahamic covenant, "I will be a God to thee," coming on believers everywhere, of the Gentiles and of the Jews alike—from which blessing the apostle singles out the promise of the Holy Ghost, as

being the centre and sum of it all, saying, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, &c., that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." Ah! they speak of difficulties attending the literal sense of the apostle's statement, "Christ made a curse." But it is the solution,—the only and all-glorious solution, of difficulties unutterably greater—even the entire difficulties of our lost condition, as, at one and the same time, estranged and alienated from God, and subject to the sentence of his immutable law, "the soul that sinneth, it shall die."

Three words in conclusion.

1. The apostle, in the opening chapter of this epistle, speaks of "another gospel, which is not another." Very rife in our day is another gospel, which truly is not another *gospel*. Substantially it is this, that God never has had a quarrel with man, but only man a quarrel with God,—that God never has been angry with men, but men only jealous of Him; and that the whole design of Christ's coming into the world, and of his suffering unto death, was to convince men of this—who, as soon as they are persuaded to believe it,—to believe that God loves them, and has loved them always, are saved. *Another gospel* truly—which in fact turns the whole mission and work of our Lord Jesus Christ into an unreality! But see the apostle's gospel in verses 10, 13, 14 of this chapter. Ver. 10, God's quarrel with guilty men—"As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." Then, the wondrous settlement of that quarrel, ver. 13, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." And hence the settlement of our vile quarrel also with God, ver. 14, "that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus

Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." Now at length a conscience purged, and righteously purged, from dead works, to serve the living God! Now all possible motives, of love, and fear, and gratitude, and hope, and joy, unto a new and child-like obedience! "O Lord, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds."

2. Behold here the very soul of the Lord's Supper,\* which might have for its motto, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us"—"This is my body broken for you: this cup is my blood of the new covenant, shed for remission of the sins of many." Oh for a profound self-abasement, and fervent love, and lively faith, in the observing of it! A profound abasement for sins which could be removed from us only by Christ's joining them to himself, and becoming a curse for us. And fervent love to Him who, at such a cost, and on such conditions, submitted to become our Redeemer. And lively, appropriating faith—as Luther was wont to speak, "O Lord Jesus, I am thy sin, thy curse, thy death, thy wrath of God, thy hell; and contrariwise, thou art my righteousness, my blessing, my life, my grace of God, and my heaven!"

3. Be it well known to all, that we become partakers of this whole redemption by faith alone without the deeds of the law. If we are not believers, then we are strangers to it—for, "as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse." But simply by faith do we become partakers of it. Purchased at the cost of the Saviour's blood, it is offered to us without a price. "It is of faith, that it might be by grace." God will have us to be debtors eternally to his absolute mercy. If we will not consent to this, then must we be monuments

\* The Discourse was preached in immediate prospect of this ordinance.

of his justice through eternal ages; and those solemn words of Jesus come into view, "If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" If the everlasting Son of the Father was made a curse, and it pleased the Lord to bruise Him and to put Him to grief, when bearing the sins of others, what shall become of the sinner who shall have to bear his own? — "what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"

Meanwhile, it is among us as when the Israelites were on every side dying in the wilderness, and God said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. Even so hath the Son of man been lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. "Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him, all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."



## XVII.

### WAITING FOR THE PROMISE OF THE FATHER.

*“And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.”—ACTS i. 4. Text—  
“He commanded them that they . . . should wait for the promise of the Father.”*

A VERY deep interest attaches to this commandment, from whatever point of view it is regarded. It was given by the Lord in one of his last interviews with the Apostles, just before he was taken up, and the cloud received him out of their sight. About the same time he commanded them to “go and teach all nations,”—to “go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” But the commandment of the text was to take the precedence of all else; for they were not to depart from Jerusalem until they had “waited” there “for the promise of the Father.” Their compliance with this command was to be the inaugurating of a new era in the history of the Church of God, which should cast the glory of all previous epochs into the shade. With their fulfilling of the command to “wait for the promise of the Father,” the whole conversion of the world was to be bound up. And further still, although the commandment belonged, in some minor aspects of it, to those first disciples alone, yet, in the soul and substance of it,

it is the common precious inheritance of the Church in every age—as will come out more fully while we look at the following particulars:—first, that for which the disciples were commanded to wait; second, the import of their waiting for it; and, third, the commandment to wait—“he commanded them that they should wait for the promise of the Father.” Oh that that adorable Spirit of whom we shall have occasion to speak throughout, may vouchsafe to direct and bless us!

I. And first, notice what the disciples were commanded to wait for—“the promise of the Father,” that is to say, of course, the fulfilment of the promise,—not the promise of the thing, but the thing itself promised. And what was that? and why is it called emphatically, “*the* promise of the Father?” You know what it was,—that it was the effusion of the Holy Ghost, as it follows here expressly, “the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me; for John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.”

Not that the Spirit of God had been absent at any time from the Church. There could be no Church, worthy of the name, without the Holy Ghost. We find David again and again praying, “take not thy Holy Spirit from me”—“uphold me with thy free Spirit”—“thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness.” But then, besides that the Spirit’s presence with the Church had from the beginning only been in virtue of Christ’s prospective obedience unto death—now that he had died, finishing the work of redemption, the Holy Ghost was to be given on a scale so new,—given so much more copiously and extensively, that we find those remarkable words in one of the Gospels, “this spake he of the Spirit which they that believe on him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.” “He commanded them that they

should wait for the promise of the Father, *which, saith he, ye have heard of me.*" Thus we are sent back, if we will learn more specifically what the thing to be waited for was, to the great words of Jesus before his death, "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you"—"When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me; and ye also shall bear witness"—"It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove [convince] the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment"—"He shall glorify me"—"He will guide you into all truth"—"He shall receive of mine and show it unto you." "He commanded them that they should wait for the promise of the Father." They were to wait for the Holy Ghost with reference to all those blessed ends and offices,—to wait for him, not only to advance mightily the whole work of grace within their own souls, but to prepare and furnish them every way for the discharge of their great commission to the "world lying in the wicked one," and to render the discharge of it effectual for the turning of men everywhere from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.

But the further question arises, why Christ calls this emphatically, "*the* promise of the Father," as if he had never given another promise beside—and so in Luke, "behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you." Undoubtedly the expression points, in general, to the large and central place which the promise of the Holy Ghost had occupied in the scriptures of the Old Testament, the Father's word. It was the promise of the

Father in a very eminent manner in those Scriptures, wherever treating of the times of Christ and of the gospel. Thus, to give an instance or two: "It shall come to pass in the last days that I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh"—"Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns and briers . . . until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest"—"I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring; and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water-courses"—"I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him"—"Son of man, can these bones live? . . . Thus saith the Lord God, Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain that they may live. . . . I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live"—"As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; my Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever." "The promise of the Father." Jesus, delighting ever to regard the Scriptures as his Father's word, has in his eye the central place which the promise of the Holy Ghost had occupied in them—"behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you."

But the expression doubtless tells, in close connection with this, of the peculiar preciousness, and all-comprehensive character, of the promise of the Holy Ghost—as inclusive in fact, of all the Father's promises and gifts together, flowing in the channel of the Mediator's death. It was the promise of the Father, as if he had never given

another beside, because it carried every other along with it. It was just as in those words in Galatians, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit"—co-extensive, therefore, with the whole blessing to Abraham—"through faith." Or as in those words of Jesus, "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," comprehensive of all good gifts together, "to them that ask him." O yes, let the Church, let but the individual soul, receive the Holy Ghost, "the promise of the Father," and they have all things therein. All that the Church needs,—for example, for the work of the ministry, ordinary and extraordinary,—is embraced in the promise of the Holy Ghost. And all things needed by an individual soul are in the same promise. Life from the dead is in it; union to Christ by faith is in it; hence, in effect, forgiveness, justification, is in it; repentance is in it; holiness, prayer, grace, glory—"the promise of the Father,"—all-precious, all-comprehensive. And does not the expression thus tell also of the Father's peculiar delight in this promise, and in the fulfilling of it, now that the barriers of unexpiated guilt have been taken out of the way, by the death of the Lamb? The *Father's* promise! Does it not tell of this as a promise specially dear to the Father's heart, and so lend a new emphasis of encouragement to the words of Jesus, "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit," his own pre-eminent promise, "to them that ask him."

II. But thus we are led to the second thing in the text, namely, the waiting,—the import of the waiting for the promise—"he commanded them that they should *wait* for

the promise of the Father." I think that the waiting imported three things—first, looking for it under a profound conviction of its absolute necessity, and its full sufficiency; second, pleading for it with the Lord in prayer; and this the prayer, third, of intense longing desire, and patient believing expectation. First, looking for it under a profound conviction of its absolute necessity, and its full sufficiency. Those disciples had witnessed a solemn proof of the absolute necessity of the Holy Ghost, in the comparative barrenness, the inefficacy for saving purposes, of the ministry even of their Master himself, while the Holy Ghost was not yet given. What a comment was this on the words, "upon the land of my people shall come up briers and thorns"—under all possible advantages—"until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high!" But the Lord had taught them no less to rest assured of the full and glorious sufficiency of the gift of the Holy Ghost. Once and again he had taught this to them by symbol, when, after they had toiled all night in their occupation of fishermen, and taken nothing, immediately on the putting forth of his resistless power, they enclosed a great multitude of fishes. And in express terms he had taught it when he said to them, "verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father"—"If I depart, I will send the Holy Ghost unto you; and when he is come, he will reprove [convince,] *the world* of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." Well; they were to wait at Jerusalem under a profound conviction of these truths,—settling it deep in their minds, that without the promise of the Father they must labour all in vain; but that with it, even under their humbler instrumentality, "the wilderness and the solitary place should be glad for them, and the desert should rejoice, and blossom as the rose." They were to wait at Jerusalem somewhat in

the spirit of God's prophet, when the Lord set him down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, and caused him to pass by them round about; and, behold, they were very many in the open valley, and very dry. And he said unto him, Son of man, can these bones live? And he answered, O Lord God, thou knowest—not by any human power at least. "And he said unto me, prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones, behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live; and I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the Lord." The first element in the waiting for the promise, was a profound conviction of its absolute necessity, on the one hand, and of its full and glorious sufficiency, on the other.

But this ran necessarily into prayer. They were to wait for the promise by pleading for it with the Lord in prayer. By far the best comment here on the import of the commanded waiting, is the actual waiting of the disciples in compliance with the command—which we have in the 12th, 13th, and 14th verses, "Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey. And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alpheus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren." And in the same attitude we find them,—in the same exercise of ceaseless prayer, at the opening of the second chapter, "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place:

and suddenly," &c. "He commanded them that they should wait for the promise of the Father." It evidently never entered the minds of these disciples, that, having their Master's express promise of the Holy Ghost, they might sit down with folded hands, and abide its fulfilment in listless indolence. They had drunk into the spirit of those words, "Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them." They had drunk into the spirit of David, of whom we read that, when God gave him an equally express and absolute promise respecting his kingdom, or rather the kingdom of Messiah to spring from his loins, he went in, and sat before the Lord, and said, Thou, O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house; therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee. . . . And now, O Lord God, thou art that God, and thy words be true; and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant: therefore now let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue for ever before thee; for thou, O Lord God, hast spoken it; and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever. "When they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, &c. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren." Ah, what meetings for prayer were these—of which we are reaping the blessed fruits at this hour! Methinks none of those disciples said, "Oh, it's only a prayer meeting!" Assuredly, if there were addresses of any kind at these meetings, yet the business, the work of them, was prayer. I doubt not that the drift of any exhortations at them would simply be, to call up another and another example of "the promise of the Father," and to impress the more deeply



on every heart its glorious certainty—its urgent necessity—its all-comprehensive preciousness and sufficiency. The scope of them all would be—“ask of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain”—“ye that are the Lord’s remembrancers, keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.” What definiteness, solemn definiteness of *aim*, would characterise these meetings, these prayers! How would they exemplify the words of Jesus, “If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.” “He commanded them that they should wait for the promise of the Father”—“they continued with one accord in prayer and supplication.”

And thus I said that, further still, the waiting for the promise imported the prayer of intense longing desire, and patient believing expectation. I am the rather led to notice this, because the term rendered “wait” in the text is a remarkable one, of somewhat rare occurrence, signifying literally *to wait round about a thing*, as in anxious expectation. And nobody can doubt that this was the very character of the waiting of these disciples, as expressed in the words “they continued”—*stedfastly persisted* is the idea—“with one accord in prayer and supplication.” It was the prayer of intense desire. Agreed together as touching that which they should ask, how would they “fill their mouths with arguments,” drawn from their own utter insufficiency, from the world’s ungodliness and misery, from Jehovah’s power, and grace, and faithfulness to his own pre-eminent promise in Christ! “Oh that thou wouldst rend the heavens,” would be their spirit, if not their language, “that thou wouldst come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence!” “We have no might, Lord, against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee.” “O Lord, though

our iniquities testify against us, do thou for thy name's sake." "Are there any among the vanities of the Gentiles that can cause rain? or can the heavens give showers? Art not thou He, O Lord our God? therefore we will wait upon thee; for thou hast made all these things." And it was the prayer of *expectation*, patient believing expectation, as well as longing desire. They came together day after day, and beheld no outward manifestation of any kind. But they "continued with one accord in prayer and supplication." They had only the naked promise; but it was enough. If, in respect of longing desire, they were as when Elijah, in the famine in Israel, went up to the top of Carmel, and cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees, and said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea—in respect of patient believing expectation, they were as when the servant went up and looked, and said, "there is nothing," and Elijah said, "go again seven times." God hath spoken in his holiness: we will rejoice. Didst not thou say, Lord Jesus, if I depart, I will send him unto you, and when he is come, he will do this, and this, and this? Be it unto us as thou hast said. It is nothing with thee to help, whether with many or with them that have no power. We will not let thee go except thou bless us. Remember the word unto thy servants, upon which thou hast caused us to hope. "He commanded them that in spirit they should wait for the promise of the Father," under a profound conviction of its absolute necessity, and its full sufficiency—pleading for it with the Lord in prayer—and this the prayer of intense longing desire, and patient believing expectation.

III. I will limit myself to a briefer notice of the third and last thing, namely, the *commandment* to wait—"he commanded them that they should wait for the promise of the Father." I will not dwell on the important fact, that, while the promise of the Holy Ghost was express,

the disciples were commanded to wait for it in importunate prayer,—that the commandment was quite as express as the promise—the means no less necessary, and no less fore-appointed and ordained, than the end. Suffice it to touch on the commandment in but one point of view, that of the parties receiving it. To whom was this commandment given? Now it is very clear, so far, that the apostles did not regard it as belonging exclusively to them. We have found, at least, associated with them in the fulfilling of it, the private members of the Church of that day—“these all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brethren.” No sooner, evidently, had the apostles returned to Jerusalem, than they had hastened to make their friends there acquainted with the commandment,—hastened to make them sharers in the privilege and in the obligation of it—to charge it home on their hearts as belonging no less to them than to themselves. But perhaps the commandment at least belonged exclusively to the disciples *of that age*? Well, this question turns on a very simple issue. If the transactions of the Pentecostal period exhausted the riches of “the promise of the Father;” or if the Church and the World now no longer stand in need of these riches, then, doubtless, the commandment to wait for it must have fallen and ceased. But if, as is surely very palpable, only the first-fruits of the promise, the first precious sheaves of the harvest, were reaped in the apostolic age,—if, in the mysterious providence of the Lord, a blight began soon to come over the Church, and the spirit of anti-Christ to take the place of the Spirit of the Father and of the Son,—if those great promises of the Spirit to which I referred under the first head remain still to be accomplished in their fulness,—if darkness yet to a mournful extent covers the earth, and gross darkness the people,—if the dispensation of the covenant of grace under which we live is termed expressly

in Scripture "the ministration of the Spirit,"—if the whole predicted glory of the latter day is inseparable from the effusion of the Holy Ghost—if that word abides the inheritance of the Church, "I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh," with numberless words like these, "the earth shall be full of the knowledge and glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea"—then it can admit of no doubt at all that the commandment of the text belongs to us at this hour. Then we, no less than the apostles, are not warranted only, but commanded, "to wait for the promise of the Father." Then it is ours to meditate on all that that expression implies—the large, central place of the promise in the scriptures; the all-precious, all-comprehensive, character of it; the Father's delight in it, and in the fulfilment of it. Then it is ours to fix deep in *our* minds also its absolute necessity, and its full sufficiency. Ours it is to plead for it with the Lord in prayer—prayer of intense longing desire, and patient believing expectation. Ours it is, ministers and people alike—in secret, when we have entered into our closet, and shut our door—in the family—in the social meeting—in the public assembly—to "stir up ourselves to take hold of God" in this behalf. If the preaching of the word belongs to those who are in the ministry, assuredly the duty and the blessedness of prayer for the Holy Ghost to render the word efficacious, belongs to all disciples of the Lord alike. What a momentous function! What untold results may hang upon the prayers of but one retired unknown disciple, listening to the call, "ye that are the Lord's remembrancers, keep not silence, and give him no rest, till he establish and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth"!

The time would fail us to enter into manifold special circumstances in this our own day, fitted to constrain and animate, to stimulate and encourage, us to wait for the promise of the Father,—for the effusion of the Holy

Ghost. "Who are these that," even now in a great empire, "fly as a cloud, and as doves to their windows?"\* Is not the Lord's voice from that land to us, "I am the Lord, the God of all flesh; is there anything too hard for me?" "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not." "Ask of me things to come, concerning my sons; and concerning the work of my hands command ye me." "Prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it?"

Dear hearers, have you yet received the Holy Ghost *yourselves*? Do you yet know what prayer really is? Did Jesus ever say of you, as he did of Saul of Tarsus, "behold, he prayeth?" If not, I can but affectionately remind you that charity eminently here begins at home,—begins with the inquiry, "what must I do to be saved?" I can but remind you of the words of Jesus, "ye will not come to me, that ye might have life"—"If ye, 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?"—"If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, give me to drink; thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water"—"If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive." But ye all who know anything of prayer—I charge home on you, for your

\* The Sermon was preached in the year 1858, after the tidings had arrived from the United States, of the wide-spread awakening of souls that had taken place in that country, in manifest answer to prayer; and which was followed, first, by the great revival in the North of Ireland in 1859, and next by the no less remarkable spiritual movement in Scotland, in 1860-61-62.

own sakes, for your families, for the Church, for the World, the commandment of the text. And I commend earnestly to you, in connection with it, that first fulfilment of it, left on record for the instruction and imitation of the Church in every age, "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brethren." HE COMMANDED THEM THAT THEY SHOULD WAIT FOR THE PROMISE OF THE FATHER.

## XVIII.

### A COMMUNION SABBATH'S SERVICES.

#### 1. *Morning Sermon.*

##### THE SAVIOUR—HIS ERRAND INTO THE WORLD.

*“The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”—LUKE XIX. 10.*

I. *The Son of man.* Have you happened to observe, in your reading of the Gospels, that there is no name which our blessed Lord takes there so constantly to himself as this one, “the Son of man”? He evidently preferred to take it above every other. About fifty different times does he call himself “the Son of man.” It is very noticeable, indeed, that his disciples never venture to address him by this lowly name—as God, for example, was wont to address the prophet Ezekiel, “Son of man,” to remind him, and keep him in remembrance, that, amid all the revelations made to him in connection with the perverse people to whom he was sent, he was himself but a worm of the dust, and compassed about with human infirmities, even as they. Never do the disciples so address their Master and Lord. But the name, as I have said, is continually on his own lips—“when ye have lifted up the Son of man”; “the Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men”; “the Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath”; “the Son of man hath not where to lay his head”; “when the Son of man shall come in his glory”—and so on, endlessly.

Of course the name told, with deepest emphasis, that he was very man, "Son of man,"—no high angelic spirit, in the appearance of a man—as the Arians dream and teach, thinking thus to explain the greatest things spoken of him, and spoken and done by him, without confessing him to be the living God—but very man of very man, "Son of man," bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. But let me venture to ask, whether the very fact of our Lord's constantly taking this name, "Son of man," did not itself tell, by implication, of the infinitely higher nature, from the glory of which he had descended to take our humanity. Why else have everywhere proclaimed himself, what all behoved to know him to be, seeing it in his human countenance, and hearing it in his human voice? \* Assuredly, at all events, he *did* descend even from the majesty of eternal Godhead—not ceasing, of course, to be God—to become bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. Ill would it become us, surely, to

\* I am aware of an answer that may suggest itself to this question. It may be asked whether our Lord did not design, in using the name, "the Son of man," to announce himself as, pre-eminently and officially, "*the* Son of man,"—the second Adam,—the Christ. And I do not doubt that in his own mind there was more or less reference, in his use of it, to the one or two places of the Old Testament (for they are not more), where this title is given to Messiah. But I cannot believe that he intended thus to announce everywhere his official character, his Messiahship; or that anything of that kind will explain his constant use of the title. He must have known the *indefiniteness* of the ideas it would suggest to his hearers, and even to his disciples, since, at Cæsarea Philippi, he asked them, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?" Had he been constantly announcing himself in the name, as *the Christ*, what would have been the meaning of that question? I cannot avoid thinking that, in taking it to himself some fifty different times, he employed language which was fitted to suggest to his hearers the idea of the higher nature from whose glory he had descended to become man. However, the reader will see that I have not dogmatized as to this, nor laid any doctrinal stress on it.



let his gracious preference for the name of the lower nature, hide from our view the higher—obscure for a moment in our eye the glory of the God-man, — Emmanuel, God with us,—not more truly Son of man, very man of very man, than Son of God, very God of very God,—and who, when standing at length upon our earth, said to Nicodemus, “No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven”—*is* in it at this hour, while speaking to thee with human voice, the Son of man, upon the earth!

But I am very desirous here,—when I remind you of our Lord’s having so constantly taken this name to himself, “the Son of man,”—to arrest your thoughts on his wondrous grace and love, as they appear in the fact, that having come into our world to save the chief of sinners, by assuming their nature, and bearing in it their sin and their curse, it was to him a very refreshment and joy, to think and speak everywhere of the lowly nature which he had taken. He delights to take the name, “Son of man,” not only notwithstanding all the ignominy and suffering which the taking of our nature entailed, but because it was most dear to him *as* the nature in which he could, and in which he would, become “obedient unto death, even the death of the cross,” and so “bring the many sons unto glory,”—that “great multitude which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues.” “The Son of man,” said he over and over again; and here, when telling the blessed errand on which he came into the world, “The Son of man,” he says, “is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

II. But thus I am brought to touch, a little more fully, on the errand itself,—the Saviour’s errand into the world, as we have it here from his own lips,—“come,”

he says, "the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

1. I think that the last, solemn, word, "lost," summons our thoughts first, as at once declaring *the objects* of the errand,—who, and who alone, they were whom it contemplated,—whom the Son of man came to seek and to save,—says he himself, the "lost," and none else but, *the lost*. Oh, are there any in this house who are unwilling to take their place in that humbling word, "lost,"—who are ready enough, it may be, to confess that they are not what they ought to be, but are not ready to acknowledge that they either are, or ever were, ruined, dead, lost,—who are disposed, in their secret hearts at least, to take their ground with him who thanked God that he was "no extortioner, unjust, adulterer"? Dear hearers, if you think that you can do without Jesus Christ,—if you think that you can sufficiently dispose of your sins without this Saviour,—by all means hold by the judgment you have formed of yourselves. But know well, that so long as you hold by that judgment, you renounce and cut yourselves off from this blessed One, who declares expressly here that the objects of his whole errand into the world,—they whom, and whom alone, he came to seek and to save,—were the "lost." O Lord, let my lot be with him who, "standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner"!

And are there others here who also are disposed to say with the Pharisee, "I am not as other men are," but on precisely the opposite ground to his—meaning that they are so much worse (as they think) than other men, that they cannot easily believe in the possibility of mercy reaching them? Know ye well, that, as ye cannot be worse than lost, so your being lost, so far from shutting you out from this Saviour, forms a kind of strange door

of entrance into the whole riches of his salvation,—a kind of strange qualification for our Lord Jesus, who declares here that they whom he came into the world to seek and to save, were *only* the “lost.” As my old friend, Dr Duncan, used to speak, “For myself, I cannot always come to Christ direct, but I can always come by *sin*. Sin is the handle by which I get to Christ. I take a verse in which God has put Christ and sin together. I cannot always put my finger upon Christ, and say, ‘Christ belongs to me.’ But I can put my finger upon sin, and say, ‘Sin belongs to me.’ I take that word, for instance, ‘The Son of man is come to save that which is lost.’ Yes, lost—I’m lost. I put my finger upon that word, and say, ‘I’m the lost one; I’m lost;’ and I cry out, ‘What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.’” It is mentioned in the memoirs of the late admirable, and much honoured, home missionary, Duncan Matheson, that when an awakened sinner once cried out, in a kind of despair, “I am lost, I am lost,” he replied, “I am glad you think that, for Christ came to save the lost!”

But I must say yet another word on this account which our blessed Lord gives of the objects of his errand into the world,—those whom alone he came to seek and to save,—the lost. We are accustomed to apply the word rather to the finally lost; and so we speak, and quite properly, of “the state of the lost.” Our Lord applies it here, as you see, to all unpardoned, unregenerated ones,—all that are yet in their sins, and strangers to his great salvation. But, I pray you, do not think that there is any such great difference as might at first appear between the two significations,—between the lost *there*, and the lost *here*. True, there is this difference, that *there* the ruin is fearfully developed and revealed, “The rich man died, and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in

his bosom." And there is this further difference, that God has expressly said, that from the ruin *there* he will not deliver any more, "Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us that would come from thence." Blessed be God, He can, and may, deliver from the ruin *here*, as the text bears most precious witness. But otherwise the ruin is one and the same there, and here. Yea, it is equally final here, as far as concerns any power of the sinner to deliver himself out of it. You remember that question which is asked respecting a sinner saved by grace, "Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" Plucked *out of it*,—he was already in it, when God plucked him out—in the fire of the curse, as it is written, "as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse;" and in the fire of the unsubdued dominion of ungodliness and sin, "dead in trespasses and sins,"—lost! "We ourselves also," writes Paul to Titus, "were once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another"—in the fire, lost! "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others"—in the fire, lost! Oh for some heart-affecting apprehensions of this solemn word,—this account which our Lord gives of the objects of his errand into the world,—of those whom, and whom alone, he came to seek and to save,—the lost!

2. But now I touch on the errand, in the *nature* of it, as regards those its objects, the lost,—even "to seek and to

save" them. The Son of man, Jesus says, is come, first to *seek*, and then to *save*, that which was lost.

(1.) First, He is come to *seek* the lost,—to seek those who were not seeking Him! O the grace of this Saviour, come in search of those who sought only to escape away from Him! It had been great grace, indeed, to have saved men crying for mercy; and, sooner or later, all that are saved do cry for it—but not until Christ has first sought *them*, not seeking *him*, as it is written (Isaiah lxx. 1), "I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not." I have said that they only sought to escape away from him. Our first parents were fleeing from the presence of the Lord God, when God called to Adam, and said unto him, "Where art thou?" When the Son of God came into the world, it is written, "The light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not." "All with one consent began to make excuse"—"they would not come"! Once, when a crowd of Jews seemed in search of the Saviour, hastening across the sea of Galilee to find him, his first word to them was, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled"—ye seek not me, but only the outward things ye hope to get by me. There is reason to fear that even Zaccheus here "climbed up into the sycamore tree" very much out of curiosity, "to see Jesus, for he was to pass that way."

But let me take one unmistakable instance, as a specimen of all. You remember those words, "He left Judea, and departed again into Galilee. And he must needs go through Samaria"—must needs, that is to say, take an unusual route for Galilee, because in search of a sinful one in Samaria, who knew nothing of him,—thought of nothing less than of him! So, having set out on his

fatiguing way, and arrived in Samaria, in Sychar, at the well of Jacob, "being wearied with his journey, he sat thus on the well—it was about the sixth hour"—waiting for the object of his search. At length, the woman came to the well to draw water. Of course she addressed no words to him. But he, in search of her, was content to be painfully misunderstood, addressing the request to her, "Give me to drink." She saith unto him, "How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria?" Then, you know how she failed, and failed, to apprehend the meaning of his most blessed words, and how, when those words came closer to her ungodly life, she avoided and evaded them, until at length she did begin to seek him, saying, "I know that Messiah cometh; when he is come, he will tell us all things," and soon after hastening to the city, and saying to the men, "Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?"

Ay, it *was* a somewhat long and fatiguing journey that, for our Lord afoot, from Judea to the well of Jacob. But he had taken a far longer and more fatiguing journey, not then completed, in search of that woman, and of us—"Being in the form of God, and thinking it not robbery to be equal with God, he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." But that cross was "saving," as well as "seeking"!

(2.) Second, the Son of man is come to *save*,—"come to seek and to *save* that which was lost." Could such seeking, in fact, fail of finding,—fail of its design,—its aim? Impossible. "What man of you," said Jesus, "having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, *until* he find it? And when

he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost." In a very important sense, let it be observed, Jesus saved them all *in that cross*,—sought and saved the whole elect Church—the whole innumerable multitude given to him by the Father in the everlasting covenant,—in the hour of that word, "It is finished; and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost." There and then did he "redeem them," as to the costly purchase of their redemption, "from the curse of the law, being made a curse for them." They continued, however, still actually and individually lost,—unforgiven, unregenerated, under the curse, dead in trespasses and sins. But in due time does he save each soul of the unnumbered multitude to the uttermost,—as thoroughly as if they were but one. To each and all of them does he make good that word, "The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live": and that word, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live": and that word, "When I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, Live." He "saves them by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." He is made to each and all of them, "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption"—wisdom, opening their blind eyes; righteousness, clothing them with the white raiment of his perfect obedience unto death, that the shame of their nakedness may not appear; sanctification, transforming them into the image of God; redemption, now in the actuality of it, and at length, in the full and final completeness of it, even "the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body."

But how, brethren, shall I speak of what is in this

word “save,”—“the Son of man is come to seek and to *save* that which was lost”? My dear friend, Dr Candlish, a day or two before his departure from us all, said to his medical man, “Do you think it will be long?” adding, “I am not impatient; I wait for thy salvation, O God”—and then he broke forth, “Salvation! what a word!” O yes, beloved, it is one thing to think and speak of salvation when the flush of health is on a man’s cheek. Salvation will seem quite another thing, to saints and sinners both, when stretched on a dying bed, and when friends around are waiting for the last breath—“salvation! what a word!” Let me only say, and in very few words, that this saving of the lost by Christ is mighty, holy, glorious, everlasting.

It is *mighty*,—*almighty*. Not that Christ does violence in it to the human will, but only makes it “willing in the day of his power.” “Zaccheus,” said he, “make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.” The will is not forced in conversion; it is but sweetly, though mightily, swayed, moved, Godward, Christward—as Jesus said, “Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring; and they shall hear my voice.” “Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not; and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee.” It is *mighty* saving, this of the lost by Christ—“Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus; and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: and he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?”



And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he, trembling and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

And it is *holy* saving of the lost, this by Christ. Think of that Saul, afterwards called Paul—"None of these things move me," he said afterwards, "neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God"—"To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." "We ourselves also," wrote he to Titus, "*were once* foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures." "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness." "Such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." When Zaccheus received Christ into his house, we are told that "they all murmured, saying, that he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner. And Zaccheus stood, and said unto the Lord"—I suppose, with no reference to their murmurings—"Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forso-much as he also is a son of Abraham,"—a son of Abraham now indeed,—a son of his faith and his fidelity, both!

And it is *glorious* saving of the lost, this by Christ,—saving of them from wrath to sonship and glory! Indeed, it had been glorious, if it had been nothing more than deliverance from so great a ruin. But it is salvation to "a kingdom;" "a crown;" "a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God;" "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away;" "an exceeding and eternal weight of glory"!

And thus, once more, I said that it is an *everlasting* salvation—as Jesus spake, “Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.” “At thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.” “There shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign for ever and ever.”

I am happy that I shall have an opportunity of saying a few further words to the children of God, at an after part of this day’s service. For the present I close with a single brief remark. While Jesus tells here of our ruin, it is only in the act of publishing deliverance out of it. Here, and in other places, where he has occasion to make discovery of our undone condition, he does it not directly,—as of set purpose,—as if anywise courting the mournful theme, but only in the act of proclaiming the glad tidings of salvation—thus, “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish”—it comes indirectly out that they were perishing—“but have everlasting life.” It is much as in the Old Testament, where we hear of the *heart of stone*, only in the blessed promise, “I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.” So in the text, “The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” Oh to be “able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge”! And “unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.”

*2. Pulpit Address before Communion.*

Will you turn with me, for a very little, to the eleventh chapter of 1st Corinthians, and read at the twenty-third verse?—"For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread; and, when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup."

Is this supper of the Lord, brethren, an ordinance of *thanksgiving*,—of all thanks and praise to God for the redemption that is by the blood of the Lamb? Then those, and only those, can be fit and welcome guests at it, who are capable of giving thanks for that redemption, by not being altogether strangers to it, but partakers of it in very deed. Fain would I indicate very simply, shortly, and with all tender fidelity, as the Lord may enable me, who they are that are strangers to the great redemption,—that are not verily partakers of it. Dear hearers, we have all heard of it from our earliest years, and may long have known everything about it intellectually. But we are strangers to the redemption that is by the blood of the Lamb, if we have never seen and felt our absolute need of it; if no heart-affecting, soul-mastering, discoveries of

it have been ever made to us, and by us, as God's blessed provision for our need; if we have never, for ourselves, fled for refuge to lay hold on it; if we are not habitually falling in with the holy ends and designs of it in our lives.

We are strangers, I say, to the redemption that is by the blood of the Lamb, if we have never seen and felt our absolute need of it. How is it with us as to this? Have we ever taken our place, deliberately, in that humbling word of my text, "lost,"—in that description of the objects of the Saviour's errand into the world, "the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was *lost*"? Have we been verily convinced of our undone condition, as breakers of the divine law? Were we ever arraigned, as it were, in heart and conscience, before the divine bar, and made there to say, Guilty, Lord, guilty—Unclean, unclean—"Against thee, thee only, have I sinned; that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest"—"Woe is me, for I am undone; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts"? Have we ever known what that meaneth, "The wages of sin is death"? Have we ever responded, from our inmost souls, to the voice, "Without the shedding of blood is no remission"—"Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you"? "Search me, O God, and know my heart"!

Again, I said that we are strangers to the redemption that is by the blood of the Lamb, if no heart-affecting, soul-mastering, discoveries of it have been ever made to us, and by us, as God's blessed provision for our need. I say *heart-affecting, soul-mastering*, because we have all known the form of the doctrine, so to speak. But the hinge of salvation lies here much more in the doctrine having mastered *us*, than in our having mastered the doctrine. Oh, was it ever as music to our ears to listen to that

voice, "The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world"—"A just God and a Saviour"—"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men"—"The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost"?

Further I said, that we are strangers to the redemption that is by the blood of the Lamb, if we have never, for ourselves, fled for refuge to lay hold on it. Were we ever "shut up unto the faith"? ever made to say, with one of old, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life; and we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God"—"Lord, save me, I perish"—"My trust is in thee; let me never be confounded"—"I believe, Lord, help thou my unbelief"?

Once more I said, that we are strangers to the redemption that is by the blood of the Lamb, if we are not habitually falling in with the holy ends and designs of it in our lives. What these designs are, Scripture tells with no uncertain sound—"Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father." "Created in Christ Jesus unto good works." "There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared." "That we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life." Are we falling in with these designs? are we following them out, prosecuting them? Or is it with us, after all, but as Judas's "Hail, Master; and he kissed him"? Is inward corruption our burden? Is holiness in heart and life our very aim? Are we "exercising ourselves herein," with however imperfect success, "to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men"? Of course, if we are living in any way of known iniquity—as intemperance, or licentiousness, or fraudulent dealing, or malice and hatred—there needs

be no further questioning as to our condition. But apart from all such palpable iniquities, is Christian sanctification our pursuit? Is the apostle's cry ours, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" and David's, "Oh that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!" "Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy Spirit is good; lead me into the land of righteousness"?

And yet, dear brethren, I doubt not that there may be those among us, who are not able easily to persuade themselves that they can give an affirmative answer to these questions,—not able easily to persuade themselves that they are partakers of the great redemption, and so capable of giving thanks for it to day at Christ's table,—to whom nevertheless He would say, "O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice, for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely." More than once I have reminded you of the answer given in our Larger Catechism to the question, "May one who doubteth of his being in Christ, or of his due preparation, come to the Lord's Supper?" The answer is, "One who doubteth of his being in Christ, or of his due preparation to the sacrament of the Supper, may have true interest in Christ, though he be not yet assured thereof; and in God's account hath it, if he be duly affected with the apprehension of the want of it, and unfeignedly desires to be found in Christ, and to depart from iniquity: in which case (because promises are made, and this Sacrament is appointed, for the relief even of weak and doubting Christians) he is to bewail his unbelief, and labour to have his doubts resolved, and, so doing, he may and ought to come to the Lord's Supper, that he may be further strengthened." Remember well your undoubted warrant to come to *the Saviour himself*, just as you are; and, coming to him, your warrant to come also to his

table. "He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might, he increaseth strength." "A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory." *There*, I am quite sure, is a worthy communicant, "The publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner." May the Lord bless his word! Amen.

### 3. *Communion Table Address.*

#### BEFORE THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE ELEMENTS.

Already, Communicants, I trust we have seen somewhat of the grace and love of our Lord Jesus, as they come out in the remarkable fact, of his taking to himself so constantly, in preference to every other name, that of "the Son of man,"—the fact, that having come into our world to save the chief of sinners, by assuming our nature, and bearing in it our sin and our curse, he was so far from being "ashamed to call us brethren," that he delighted, above every other title, to take the name of our lowly nature, just *as* the nature in which he could and would suffer, and agonize, and die, "the Just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God"!

Behold a like manifestation of the Saviour's grace and love, in that all-precious psalm of his sufferings, opening, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" where he thus prays, "Deliver my soul from the sword, *my darling* from the power of the dog." Oh, he calls that human soul which he took up into his Person, his "darling"—dear, only, joined, one, as the word means—most dear to him *because* capable of all the agony, desertion, temptation, exceeding sorrow unto death, of which the psalm sings!

So, again, how touching is the evangelist John's account of the way in which Judas came to know the place where he should find the Saviour to betray him, "Judas," says he, "which betrayed him, knew the place; for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples"! It seems that, far from having avoided that garden, where, at length, "his sweat was to be as great drops of blood, falling down to the ground," he had been wont to refresh his spirit by "resorting to it oftentimes with his disciples,"—retreating from the turmoil, from the tumult and wickedness, of Jerusalem, to the very scene of his after agony and betrayal into the hands of sinful men!

But perhaps most remarkable of all to the same purpose (although we have grown so familiar with the words as probably to fail of apprehending their wondrous character), it is written that, when our Lord instituted that feast of love which we are to celebrate to day, "he took bread, and *gave thanks*, saying, This is my body broken for you," and again, "when he had taken the cup, *gave thanks*, saying, This cup is my blood of the new covenant, shed for the remission of the sins of many." Oh, well might *we* be expected to give thanks for that body broken, and blood shed, for our sins. But Jesus, whose body and blood they were, gave thanks for them,—gave thanks that ever he had a body to break, and blood to pour forth, for remission of our sins! Who shall tell what that human soul, and human body, had already cost him, those three and thirty years long? *Now*, he is looking immediately forward to the soul agonized, sore amazed, exceeding sorrowful even unto death; and to the body scourged, spit upon, crowned with thorns, crucified with thieves. Yet he gives thanks, saying, This is my body broken for you; this is my blood shed for you, for the remission of sins!

Much as, in the book of Proverbs, he had spoken, "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or



ever the earth was. . . . Then was I by him, as one brought up with him, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and *my delights were with the sons of men,*" so, it seems that in his whole wondrous life on earth, his "delights" were still with the sons of men. Full fifty different times, as I said, did he choose to call himself by the name, "the Son of man"! And shall not *our* "delights" be now, and for ever, with this blessed One? Shall He not be our joy, our love, our theme, our rapturous praise, for ever? Shall *we* not give thanks to day for his body broken, and blood shed, for our sins? True, indeed, our thanksgivings, at the best of them, are poor and feeble. But we will place them in the hand, and in the fellowship, of His, and they shall rise perfumed and accepted before the throne. And we will mingle with them prayers and supplications, hearing his voice, What is thy petition? and what is thy request? O golden moments now before us at this table! Precious beyond all price, for prayer, our interval now of unbroken silence! Golden silence for prayer,—prayer for ourselves,—our souls, our work, duties, perplexities, trials; prayer for our beloved families, each member of them by name; prayer for the whole family of God; prayer for the Redeemer's kingdom and cause and glory in the world! "I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse: I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved."

## AFTER THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE ELEMENTS.

And now, Communicants, would that our whole life were a prolonged Eucharist,—a continued *thanksgiving service!* Oh for more, much more, thanksgiving in our

lives! How wanting are we in this heavenliest of exercises, whereof so much is made in Scripture, and in which God takes so much delight! "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me"—"Giving thanks always, for all things, to God, even the Father"—"Thou art holy, thou that *inhabitest the praises* of Israel." Would that our thanksgivings and praises might so "wait for God in Sion," that he should vouchsafe, as it were to come down, and dwell in them!

But, in another great sense, is our whole life to be a thanksgiving service,—*a service*, animated, prompted, pervaded, by holy thankfulness,—a life of grateful, devoted service, in the spirit of the words, "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then all died; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again." "O Lord, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds."

Two features of this life-service have suggested themselves to me from our meditations of to day. The one of them is, *Watchfulness*. For I took occasion, in illustrating that last, solemn, word of my text, "lost," to refer to the question which is asked respecting a sinner saved by grace, "Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" But remember how easily some brand snatched from a burning would catch the fire again, if brought heedlessly within its reach. "Be not conformed to this world"—"Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away"—"Keep thy heart with all diligence"—"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." And the other feature is, *Winning words for Christ to those around us*. Oh, have we known, by blessed experience of it, that "the Son of man is come to

seek and to save that which was lost"? And shall our lips be sealed about that Saviour,—his blessed errand,—his great salvation? "One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias." "Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write." Beloved, this belongs not to ministers alone. That saved Samaritan woman said to the men of her town, "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" "The Spirit and *the bride* say, Come. And *let him that heareth* say, Come. And let him that is athirst come: and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

4. *Evening Sermon.*

## FEAR AND FAITH.

“*And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee: I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy sercant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands. Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children. And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.*”—GENESIS XXXii. 9-12.

Text—“*I fear him. . . . And thou saidst.*”

JACOB’S fear, and Jacob’s faith—“I fear him: and thou saidst.” Whether is that a contrast, or a connection, or both? I believe that it is both. And I have linked the two together as the text, because they will be found to stand thus related by the double tie of contrast and connection,—deep, painful contrast, and yet strangely close kindredness also and connection—the fear with the faith—“I fear him: and thou saidst.”

I. First, look for a little with me at *the fear*,—Jacob’s fear at this time—“I fear him,” said he.

1. My first remark respecting the fear is, that *there was a great deal of unworthy unbelief in it*. I would not, indeed, be misunderstood in this. It is not that fear is by any

means necessarily,—always,—the offspring and the sign of unbelief. It may, on the contrary, be the offspring and the sign of faith. Everything depends as to this on the kind of fear,—the grounds and the circumstances of it. Thus, it is written that “by faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house.” That fear *was* faith, in fact. It was more than the fruit of faith,—it was faith itself. So often as a danger is real and imminent, fear is, at the least, wise and prudent; and if the danger be one which God has revealed to us in his word, fear is an essential element in faith. But see the fear of Jacob, at this time. What did he fear? and how? “The messengers returned to him”—we read at verse sixth—“saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and also he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him. Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed”—“I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children.” Ah, smite that mother, and those children, and destroy the everlasting covenant! destroy both the Church of God, and all the hopes of the world! Impossible, Jacob. At Bethel, twenty years before, had not the Lord said to the patriarch, “Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of”? Neither had he set out on this journey back to Canaan, until the Lord had said expressly to him—as he pleads, indeed, at the opening of this very prayer—“Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee.” And then, had not the Lord vouchsafed to him, as he journeyed, that vision of angels, protecting angels, of which Jacob said (second verse), “This is God’s host,” calling the name of the place “Mahanaim”—two hosts, or camps? No doubt there was ample room, without any unbelief, for prayer

in reference to Esau, and for the use also of all suitable and prudent means. But this was panic,—nothing less than panic,—“He cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him: then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed.” One can scarce help suspecting that the old sins had flashed across the memory and conscience of the patriarch,—that he had been made at this hour to “possess the iniquities of his youth” (as Job speaks),—that in his alarm there was not a little remorseful remembrance of the old subtlety, and the old falsehood—“I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children.” Assuredly, there was in the fear a great deal of unworthy unbelief.

2. And yet, secondly, *there was not wanting in it an element, kindred at least to faith.* “I fear him,” said he, “lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children.” He is alarmed for the whole seed and family of the Divine promise—“lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children. And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.” True, he might have left the Divine promise, — ought to have left it tranquilly, — in the keeping of the Divine power and faithfulness. Still, this is no mere craven dread of his personal safety, nor of that even of his beloved family, simply as such, but for that family as in relation to the Divine covenant, with which his own hopes for eternity, and the welfare of all the families of the earth, were bound up. There was an element in his fear, I say, kindred at least to faith. And is it not somewhat thus, brethren, that even in the unbelieving fears of God’s children in every age, there are to be traced elements, oftentimes, more or less allied to faith,—separating them, by a wide distance, from the fears of hypocrites and ungodly men,—of those “fearful and unbelieving” of whom the Holy

Ghost speaks in the Apocalypse? Do you remember, for example, John Bunyan's "Fearing"—that deeply touching character in the second part of the Pilgrim? Great-heart says of him, "Why, he was always afraid that he should come short of whither he had a desire to go. . . . When we were come to the place where the three fellows were hanged, he said that he doubted that would be his end also. Only he seemed glad when he saw the Cross and the Sepulchre. There, I confess, he desired to stay a little to look; and he seemed for a while after to be a little cheery. When he came at the hill Difficulty, he made no stick at that; nor did he much fear the lions: for you must know that his trouble was not about such things as these; his fear was about his acceptance at last. . . . When he was come to Vanity-Fair, I thought he would have fought with all the men in the fair. Upon the enchanted ground he also was very wakeful. But, when he came at the river where there was no bridge, there again he was in a heavy case. Now, now, he said, he should be drowned for ever, and so never see that face with comfort that he had come so many miles to behold." O yes, I think that in the fears of the desponding child of God, it is not so much the mere dread of wrath and hell, considered in general, as it is the dread of coming short of the holiness in heart and in life, which he has longed and prayed and striven after,—of never seeing in peace the face of Him who, amid all his fears, is in his eye, "the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely." "I fear him," said Jacob, "lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children." There was an element in the fear kindred, at least, to faith.

3. And, thirdly, I observe on Jacob's fear, that, amid all its unworthiness, *it was a fear told freely out to God,—laid bare before the omniscient One*—"I fear him," says he, speaking to Jehovah. O yes, "Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed"—that is one thing. But this is

quite another—Jacob's anticipating, as it were, that after-invitation of Scripture, "Pour ye out your heart before him,"—"O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, I fear him." Do not misunderstand it, brethren. It is not that Jacob was unconscious of anything to be ashamed of in his fears, and so told them out to the Lord. I doubt not that he was conscious of much mournful unbelief in them. But then, he could only make things worse by going away from God with his alarms, and cherishing them sullenly at a distance from him. He *must* bring them to God, must unbosom himself of them to Him, must have no secrets, no concealments, with Him—"O Lord," says he, "I fear him." A great lesson this, beloved, for us in reference to our difficulties, temptations, fears—that we bring them all to the Lord,—tell them freely out to Him. It may be that our fears are weak and foolish,—such as others might only smile at. Or it may be that they are deeply unworthy, and such as we should be ashamed to tell to others. But they shall be much more than safe with God. Let us tell them to Him, hearing the voice, "Bring them hither to me." Said Jesus to the two sorrowing ones on the way to Emmaus, "What things?"—

"A stranger join'd them, courteous as a friend,  
And ask'd them, with a kind engaging air,  
What their affliction was, and begg'd a share."

"O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice." The men of this world have their fears; but they have them away from God, and are driven by them yet further and further away from him—"Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season I will call for thee." The child of God brings his fears to the Lord,



and is thus driven at least, if not sweetly drawn, by them nearer to Him.

4. And this is my fourth and last remark on Jacob's fear. As it was a fear told freely out to the Lord, so *it shut up Jacob the more to the Lord, and to his word of promise.* "I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children. And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good." See how he breaks and bursts through the very heart of his fear into the presence and promise of the Lord, "*and thou saidst,*"—as if he had said, Lord, "I fear him;" but, "to whom shall I go? thou hast the words of eternal life"—"I fear him; and thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude." As I observed at the outset, it is both a contrast and a connection,—a deep, painful contrast, but a strangely close kindredness also and connection—"I fear him: and thou saidst."

II. And thus are we brought to the second thing which here invites our thoughts, Jacob's *faith*, "Thou saidst"—"I fear him: *and thou saidst.*"

1. Well; the things that have been already said have prepared us for my first remark on the faith, which is, that *it is faith in conflict,—faith in a struggle with unbelief and fear*—"I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children. And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude." Indeed, one reading the last verse alone, might suppose there was no room left for unbelief,—for fear. And so mere theorists, and perfectionists, will have it to be, ever, with the Christian's faith. But *the fact* is the reverse—"Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed"—"I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children." It reminds one of David in

the forty-second psalm, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me?" But in the very next verse, "O my God," says he, "my soul is cast down within me." So here, behold the spectacle of unbelief and faith at work side by side—not only in the same man,—in the same breast,—but in the same prayer,—the same devotional exercise, "I fear him: and thou saidst." Strange spectacle! And yet not strange, as if it were at all infrequent. Is it not just thus with God's children in every age? "What will ye see in the Shulamite? As it were the company of two armies"—"the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh,"—unbelief, faith—despondency, hope—terror, trust—struggling together, like Jacob and Esau in the womb of their mother, when Rebecca said, "If it be so, why am I thus?" At one time faith seems to have trampled unbelief finally under its feet. But anon unbelief rises from the ground in giant strength, and seems to threaten the very existence and life of faith. Ah! when the memory of those old sins comes darkly across the spirit, how is the believer tried sometimes, "pressed out of measure, above strength," ready even to "despair of life"! I have spoken of unbelief and faith at work side by side, not only in the same breast, but in the same devotional exercise. How often do we find it thus in the Psalms! In one part of a psalm, deepest despondency; straightway faith emerging, reviving, conquering. As, for example, "Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for evermore?—And I said, This is my infirmity; but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High." Or, again, "Behold these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches. Verily, I have cleaned my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency." Nay, nay, not "verily"—falsely, as thou shalt

thyself acknowledge—"So foolish was I, and ignorant; I was as a beast before thee. Nevertheless, I am continually with thee; thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." One other example—"How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord? for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me? How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? how long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?" But the short psalm (thirteenth) thus ends, "I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation. I will sing unto the Lord, because he hath dealt bountifully with me."

2. And so, secondly, I observe, on Jacob's faith here, that, if it is faith in conflict,—in a struggle with unbelief,—*it is faith prevailing, victorious, in the conflict*, "I fear him: *and thou saidst.*" I pray you to note that that is Jacob's closing word—he ends here. He plants his foot on this rock of the promise, and here will abide, "Thou saidst." Thus does he prevail at once over an oppressive sense of guilt, unworthiness, within, and an overwhelming fear, at least, of danger from without. He thus prevails over a crushing sense of unworthiness within. He can, indeed, make no answer at all to God for those old sins. But he will lie down as it were upon his face, and make confession of them before him, saying, "I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant:" but "*thou saidst.*" And thus also does he prevail against the overwhelming dread of danger from without, "Thou saidst," Lord, who hast the heart of Esau in thy hand, and canst turn it whithersoever thou wilt,—thou who art faithful to thy promise, and *wilt* turn it! I have said the *overwhelming* fear, because Jacob is not yet raised wholly above his fear of Esau—"I fear him," says he. But he has cast anchor, at least, within

the veil, "Thou saidst," and will "wait for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning."

3. But, thirdly, I observe in Jacob's faith, that *it is faith in the midst of difficulties taking simple hold of God in his word of promise.* "I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children. And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude." "*Thou saidst.*" I suppose that nothing was further from Jacob's thoughts at this time than writing lessons for posterity. And yet was he, all unknown to himself, in fact preparing lessons, at this hour, quite invaluable for the Church in every age. Long I have regarded this word of his, "Thou saidst," as a gem of the Old Testament. Ah! what difficulties might not be removed out of the way of the tried and tempted believer by the simple utterance of this word before the Lord in time of need, "Thou saidst"? O Lord, thy providence seems to frown, and all is dark around me. But *thou saidst*, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." My heart is very hard. But *thou saidst*, "I will take away the stony heart, and give you an heart of flesh." Iniquities prevail. But *thou saidst*, "To Him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." I cannot solve this difficulty and that. But *thou saidst*—thus and thus. Yea, thou seemest to say, "Trouble me not; the door is now shut"—"Let me go." Nay, Lord, I cannot—*thou saidst*—"I will not let thee go except thou bless me."

O yes, this closing word of the prayer, "Thou saidst," was the secret and the soul, I have no doubt, of the whole after triumph at Peniel. "*Let me go,*" said the Lord. Of course it was not that a worm could detain him, but that he was held by his own promise, of which the "worm Jacob" refused to let go his hold—"Thou saidst."

Ah, this was that which was wanting with Martha when she said, "Lord, by this time he stinketh; for he hath been in the grave four days—Jesus saith unto her, *Said I not* unto thee, that, if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?" This was the ground which David took, when addressing himself to an arduous enterprise, "God hath spoken in his holiness; I will rejoice: I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth." "Thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude." It was the old Bethel promise of twenty years before. But how new and fresh it was to Jacob that day! How entirely new did fresh need, and profound sense of need, make it!

Only, I think I hear some desponding believer say, Happy Jacob, who had the promise addressed to himself by name, "I will surely do *thee* good"! But is *thy* name not as good as written there, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"? Is it not written there, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely"? Nay, canst even thou deny, sorrowing one, that in another manner, even by the Holy Ghost bearing witness by and with the word in thy heart, the Lord hath said, "I will surely do *thee* good—I will never leave thee nor forsake thee—The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed: but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee"? Do not wait, I pray you, till difficulties are all out of the way. You may wait thus too long, too long! Recollect the men that uncovered the roof of old, and let down the sick of the palsy in his couch before Jesus. In the midst of difficulties, believe, trust, saying, "Lord, how are they increased that trouble me! many are they that rise up against me. Many there be which say of my soul, There

is no help for him in God. But thou, O Lord, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of my head"—“*Thou saidst.*”

4. Once more, I observe that this is *faith exercised in immediate converse and fellowship with God in prayer*. Brethren, prayer and faith are entirely distinct; yet they are most intimately connected together. For, as there is no true prayer without some measure of faith, so faith is never better exercised than in prayer. It is a poor sign of faith, if it will not bear to be confronted with God,—brought face to face with Him,—exercised in immediate converse with Him. At your leisure take any of the more notable recorded examples of faith. Is it Jehoshaphat? Hear him speaking to God, “O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee.” Is it Asa? “Asa cried unto the Lord his God, and said, Lord, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us O Lord our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O Lord thou art our God; let not man prevail against Thee.” Is it the dying penitent thief? “Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.” Is it David? “If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.” Jacob takes hold of the promise in immediate converse with God, “O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac . . . *thou saidst*, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.”

Let me affectionately ask, in conclusion, if *you* have known aught of this conflict between faith and fear,—anything of carrying your fears and difficulties to the Lord, and being shut up by them to Him? For if you

are strangers to everything of this kind, I think you must be strangers to God's salvation, and dead in trespasses and sins. Possibly you congratulate yourselves on having no conflicts—struggles. But your peace, be assured, is the peace of death and the grave. Oh flee, flee, from the wrath to come! I am very sure the Lord bids you heartily welcome, at this hour, to "flee for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before you," saying, "Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously"—"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

How interesting, let me just add, to think of Jacob as the chosen type of the ransomed Church,—the type of the "Israel of God"! I doubt not that he was chosen to be such partly in respect of the very imperfections of his character. For, the Church below is not that "glorious," sinless, Church, written of in the fifth of Ephesians, but the Church of the seventh of Romans, "The good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do. I find a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me." Only remember how Jacob, amid his imperfections, conflicts and struggles with them, clings to the Lord, lives by faith, comes up from the wilderness leaning on the Beloved. "Thou saidst," is his very life—"My soul followeth hard after thee; thy right hand upholdeth me." I think that the two words on which we have meditated might be written as the motto of vast numbers, at least, of the children of God, "I fear him; and, thou saidst." Strive, I beseech you, against unbelieving fears—long and pray to be delivered from them. But when they still cling to you, and oppress you, tell them freely out to the Lord. And be driven

at least, if not sweetly drawn, by them to Him, saying, "*Thou saidst*"—"Remember the word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope"—"I will not let thee go except thou bless me"—"Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice; let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications. If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared. I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning; I say, more than they that watch for the morning. Let Israel hope in the Lord: for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption. And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities."



## NIX.

### THE NATURAL HEART UNVEILED IN THE GREAT ACCOUNT.

*“And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept hid up in a napkin: for I feared thee, because thou art an austere man; thou tak’st up that thou laydest not down, and receivest that thou didst not sow.”—LUKE XIX. 20-21.*

*Text—“For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man.”\**

I HAVE many a time thought of preaching a sermon—taking for the text of it some such words as we sang just now from the hundred and thirty-ninth psalm, “Thou understandest my thought afar off”—having for its object to bring out this principle, or general fact, of the Scriptures, that God is accustomed in them to put words into the lips of men, which they would never dream of speaking out, but which he knows to be, and because he knows them to be, the true index of their character, and the expression of their inmost thoughts and feelings, if only they ventured to tell them to themselves and others. So it is, beyond doubt, with these words, which our blessed Lord puts into the lips of this man of his parable, who has come, as it were last of all, to give in his account in the judgment of the great day,

\* The veil of the allegory in this parable is so thin and slight, that I have ventured, in this discourse, to draw it very much aside, and to present the solemn spiritual realities all but nakedly and alone.

“Thou art an austere man—I feared thee, because thou art an austere man.” Of course it is not that such words will be spoken by any man at the judgment seat. Nor yet is it, that even in the present world any man ventures, in so many words, to speak thus to God. But it is, that myriads upon myriads of men,—even all the multitudes whom our Lord represents in the person of this man,—on supposition of their being made to disclose, in the judgment, their most secret thoughts, with the motives that all along actuated their life in this world, would give expression to them in some such appalling words as these—Lord, I knew thee to be a hard master, whom it was very difficult to please; and so, dreading thee, I thought it best and safest to keep as much as possible out of thy way, and avoid simply, as I hope I have avoided, giving thee any serious ground of offence with me, “Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin: for I feared thee, because thou art an austere man; thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow”! “I feared thee, because thou art an austere man.”

I am the more anxious to look at these words somewhat carefully with you, because they may be found to have a great deal more to do with not a few of us—and we with them—than might at first view seem probable. Certain it is that our Lord does not describe here any rare, abnormal, exceptional, case. I have spoken of myriads upon myriads of men. For, observe that in the two servants who had before given in their account,—given it in with humble joy,—he had represented all the righteous—all God’s forgiven and regenerated “children by faith in Christ Jesus.” Now, in this last servant—alas! servant without service—he represents all besides. And if you ask how this can be, while the language is so peculiar, I answer that the very peculiarity of it was doubtless intended to make the description, as by a kind of *à fortiori*

argument, the more widely comprehensive,—intended to prevent any man's making his escape from the searching application of it, by saying, Well, I am at least no profligate, no thief, drunkard, adulterer, murderer! For, neither was this man any such sinner—"Lord, behold, here is thy pound." If this man had done no good, neither had he done any flagrant harm. "Behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept"—he had not squandered it; he had not "wasted his substance with riotous living,"—"Here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin." Nay, he was not without a kind of religion of his own—"I feared thee," says he. In short, it is here just as in that profoundly solemn account of the judgment in the twenty-fifth of Matthew, where our Lord, of evident purpose, does not expressly deal with the case of licentious, profligate men, but 'pronounces the doom of the everlasting death on the simple want, or absence, of all loving, active, service rendered to Him, saying, "For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not." So here does he *include*, by only stronger reason, the licentious and the profligate, while he describes the man on whom he is about to pronounce the like doom, thus, "Another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin: for I feared thee, because thou art an austere man; thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow." "*For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man.*" I have singled out these central words, because they will be found to contain, in brief, the entire inward character of the natural man,—the whole character of the ungodly, natural heart—out of which unavoidably comes the ungodly life, though in endlessly different shapes and forms. *Three* distinct features will be found to make it up—distinct, yet inseparably connected together.

I. First, lying at the bottom of all here, in the character of the natural mind, there comes out "the evil heart of unbelief,"—a fatal misjudgment of the adorable God,—an entire heart-ignorance of God, estrangement from God, believing of the devil's lie concerning God, in place of God's blessed revelation concerning Himself—"Thou art an austere man," a hard master, very difficult to please, "taking up that thou layedst not down, and reaping that thou didst not sow," demanding—if, indeed, thou dost seriously *demand* anything of us—demanding things impossible for us frail creatures! You observe, and you may possibly wonder, that I have thrown in those parenthetical words, "if, indeed, thou dost seriously *demand* anything of us." But the truth is, that these extremes strangely and fearfully meet in the natural heart—the extreme of a secret sceptical contempt of God, with the extreme of a dark, servile dread of God,—that word, "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself," with this one, "I feared thee, because thou art an austere man," a hard master! Still, still, the natural conscience will bear stern witness to the reality of a divine judgment and law. And so, as often as the fallen heart is forced into near contact with God, this is its language—scarce uttered consciously even to itself, and much less uttered audibly to others—"Thou art an austere man," a hard master, demanding things unreasonable, impossible for us weak creatures!

Need I say that it is a lie of the devil, a foul calumny on the blessed God? A hard master? Oh, "God is love." "There is none good but one, that is God." A hard master? "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him; for he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust." A hard master? "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked." "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are

sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not"! A hard master? "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness." "If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." A hard master? "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." But, "if our gospel be hid," as Paul writes, "it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him." "An austere man,"—a hard master!

It is solemnly interesting to note, that this was the very lie with which Satan wrecked the fortunes of our race in paradise, saying to the woman, "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?"—an extraordinary restriction!—very capricious, arbitrary! Was it so in truth? "The Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat"—literally, "eating thou shalt eat," shalt, mayest, freely and abundantly eat"—"but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Assuredly it was nothing strange that the glorious God, in the act of giving to our first parents more than leave to expatiate, and regale themselves, over the whole extent of that garden, should, without giving his reasons to them, restrict their liberty in a single instance,—and all the less strange, that in the midst of the garden he had planted another tree, "the tree of life," in whose fruit, as often as they partook of it, he gave to them a kind

of sacramental pledge that they should be raised, by and by, with their posterity, to a higher, immutable, everlasting life, on condition of their loyal obedience to his commandment. But, that “liar and murderer from the beginning,” said unto the woman, “Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent”—the lie, alas! having already found lodgment in her heart, since she not only recoiled not from the tempter, entering into communication with him, but ventured to change the terms of both the liberty and the restriction—“We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither *shall ye touch it, lest ye die*”—possibly we may not! “And the serpent said unto the woman,” following up his advantage at once, “Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened; and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat”! Well, I have said that, lying at the bottom of all here, in the character of the natural mind, unveiled in the day of final account, there comes out the “evil heart of unbelief,” a fatal misjudgment of the adorable God, an entire heart-ignorance of God, estrangement from God, believing of the devil’s lie concerning God, in place of God’s blessed revelation concerning Himself—“Thou art an austere man,” a hard master!

II. Second, and inseparably connected with this first feature in the character, see a second,—a dark, jealous dread of such a God, prompting the wish to be away from him—“*I feared thee, because thou art an austere man,*” a

hard master ! The fear is obviously that of dark distrust, jealousy, suspicion. It is the opposite of confidence, affection, love. How, in fact, *can* such a God be loved ? Ask the Israelites if they love the tyrant that demands the tale of bricks of them, without giving them the straw wherewith to furnish it—"I feared thee, because thou art an austere man ; thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow." It is the fear that "hath torment." There is a fear of holy reverence, begotten of faith,—springing out of profound regard for the blessed God, and, in turn, deepening the regard from which it springs. But this is the fear of a slave beneath the master's lash, prompting, as I have said, the desire to be away from him.

Behold the earliest manifestation of it in our first parents, immediately on their committing the fatal sin. It is written, "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked . . . And Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou ? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked ; and I hid myself." Ah, it was well for them that God had come after them, calling to Adam, "Where art thou ?" There is reason to think that both soon exchanged the fear of dark and jealous dread for a far different kind of fear,—exchanged the faith of the devil's lie concerning God, for the faith of his blessed revelation concerning Himself, in the promise of the covenant, that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent ! But behold the natural heart in every age, left to its own workings—"I hid myself" ! Oh, listen to its unuttered language, "Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways"—O God, if we can get but thy benefits, let us have as little to do with

thyself as possible—the “evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God”! “I feared thee, because thou art an austere man.” It is the fear of those words towards the close of the Apocalypse, “But *the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable,*”—the fear that springs of unbelief—of dark, jealous distrust of God—“I feared thee, because thou art an austere man”!

III. And now, connected inseparably with these two features of character, even as the second with the first, see the third feature in the character—completing it—even an utter indisposition for all cheerful, active service of God, “*For I feared thee—Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin; for I feared thee, because thou art an austere man.*” Impossible to serve such a God—impossible, first, to love him; and next impossible to serve a God unloved. Oh, love is the spring of service; distrust, jealousy, suspicion, are the death of it—“Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin; for I feared thee, because thou art an austere man.”

But this man thinks he has served God tolerably well, “Lord, behold, here is thy pound”! In the exceeding deceitfulness of the natural heart, does he contrive to persuade himself that he has given God no serious cause of offence with him, “Behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin.” It is the more strange he should be able so to persuade himself, inasmuch as in his own word, “*thy pound,*” he confesses that it was the property of another,—of a Master who had lent it to him for a purpose, which, assuredly, was not that of keeping it laid uselessly up. Would you see, brethren, what the purpose was? You have it in the thirteenth verse, “And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, “Occupy till I come”—“occupy,” that is, traffic diligently, trade,



“till I come.” Oh, what is thus the whole Christian life but a busy commerce,—a trading for God, for the good of all around us, for eternity? To this end has the Master lent us our time, mental powers, reputation, influence, property, with all spiritual privileges, saying, “Occupy till I come.” But this man—along with all the myriads whom he represents!—has contrived to forget all that, and to persuade himself that God has forgotten it, too, “Lord,” says he, “behold, here is thy pound”! What is it but that insolent contempt of God of which I spoke near the outset, as meeting in the natural heart with the dark, jealous dread of him, “*Thy pound*”—“lo, there thou hast *that is thine!*” In reality, the man’s whole life had been a continued disobedience to the Master, rebellion against the Sovereign, robbery of the great Owner and Proprietor. Yet says he, “Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin”! The last word is worthy to be noted. It means literally *a sweat cloth*—such wherewith some earnest labourer might wipe the sweat from his brow. But this man, having no occasion for any such cloth in toiling for *this* Master at least, has taken it to wrap the Master’s pound in! Oh, beloved, in the day when God “will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts,” how will it come terribly out that to have done no good in this world, was to have done frightful evil; that to have been useless, was to have been mischievous; that not to have served God, was to have served the devil; that not to have “gathered with Christ” in his kingdom, was to have “scattered abroad”; that not to have been the loyal, loving servant of Christ, was to have been his enemy, and at war with him!

And, accordingly, glance a moment at the solemn reply of the King—“And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant.” Ah, the disguise is removed—“*Thou wicked servant*”—

“the fearful, and unbelieving, *and abominable!*” And then, the King will not descend to dispute his character with the man—“Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee. Thou knewest”—didst thou?—“that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow: wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank”—at the very least and lowest—“that at my coming, I might have required mine own with usury? \* And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound.” O terrible word—all the things now taken away, out of which might have come the hope of recovery! But that is not all. Ver. 27, “Those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.” Compare the corresponding words in the parable of the Talents, “Cast ye the *unprofitable* servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth”—“Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not”—“These shall go away into everlasting punishment”!

Fain I would have you to note—although it belongs less to my main theme—that, if you take the three features of character which we have seen in the text, and simply reverse them one by one, you shall have the whole character of God’s regenerated child,—of the renewed heart,—that heart of which it is written, “A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.” Thus,

1. First, substitute for that word of the apostle, “The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which

\* The word would *now* have been better translated *interest*.

believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine into them," the one which follows it, "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." For the mournful entire heart-ignorance of God, substitute the blessed promise fulfilled, "I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord." For the "evil heart of unbelief," crediting the devil's lie concerning God, substitute that heaven-born faith, "We believe and are sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God"—"We have known and believed the love that God hath unto us." And you have the foundation of the whole character of the new creature in Christ Jesus.

2. Secondly, for that fear of dark and jealous dread which springs of unbelief, substitute the *love* that springs of faith, "We love him, because he first loved us"—"My beloved is mine, and I am his"—and you have the new heart in its very *soul*. No doubt, there remains a great deal about God, his character and ways, which the believer is unable to understand and explain. But he is content to be unable, saying, "Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty; neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me." The old fear has given place to a new fear, the close companion of love, "Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name?" "It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea."

3. And thus, thirdly, for the utter indisposition to God's cheerful service, substitute that heart for all service, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then all died; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live

unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." True, the Christian's service, at the best, is full of imperfection, not only meriting no reward, but needing forgiveness every day and hour. But here is a Master, maligned by the devil as "austere" and "hard," who delighteth to crown the poor services of his people with mansions, cities, kingdoms! "Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities." Can it be doubted that, had the third servant come, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained two pounds, he had been met with the like glad welcome, and with the gracious reward, "Be thou also over two cities"—"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 an hungered, 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. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me"—"The righteous into life eternal"!

A practical inference or two before I close.

(1.) First, *there is to be a judgment day*, brethren. Do you believe it? Sure I am of this, that if there were

none, this whole world were but a horrible enigma,—a world in which any vile and reckless criminal should but have, after his crimes, to make away with himself by one of those easy deaths which modern science tells us of, and it should be as well with him as with him who had diligently “served his own generation by the will of God, and fallen asleep.” But, “we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.” “He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.” “I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God: and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.” Oh, I am reminded of old Herbert’s solemn lines:—

“Almighty Judge! how shall poor mortals brook

Thy dreadful look,

Able a heart of iron to appal,

When thou shalt call

For every man’s peculiar book?

What others mean to do, I know not well;

Yet I hear tell,

That some will turn thee to some leaves therein

So void of sin,

That they in merit shall excel.

But I resolve, when thou shalt call for mine,

*That* to decline;

And thrust a testament into thy hand.

Let that be scann’d;

There thou shalt find my faults are thine.”

(2.) Second, how worthless, in that day, will be all merely negative religion—"Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin"! And as for all attempts to occupy neutral ground in the kingdom of Christ, what dreams they are! The man who seeks for neutral ground here, has already taken his side with the devil against Christ, "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." "He that is not with me, is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad."

(3.) But, thirdly, be it carefully noted that this, properly speaking, is not yet the Judge, but the Prophet, telling beforehand of the Judge, and of the judgment to come. Thus is there richest mercy even in the most terrible things we have heard from his lips—as one has said,

"God's loudest threatenings speak of love and tender care,  
For who that wished the blow to light would say, Beware?"

Oh, are there those before me whom the god of this world still blinds, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ should shine unto them? I bring you good tidings this day from the mouth of Jesus, "I counsel thee to buy of me"—elsewhere he says, "without money, and without price"—"gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see." Oh that you were made to cry with Bartimeus, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy upon me"!—"Lord, that I might receive my sight"! Soon should *your* eyes also be opened; and, "knowing God's name," ye should "put your trust in him;" and trusting, love him; and loving, serve him; and serving him, hear at length the blessed voice,

“Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!”

(4.) Finally, I remind the children of God of their life-work, “Occupy till I come.” The whole spiritual life, as I said, what is it but a busy commerce,—trading for God, and for the highest welfare of ourselves and others? See how the man of business attends to his secular calling,—how his thoughts run ever on it; how he makes other things bend to it and its interests; how he economizes and arranges his time with a view to it; how he lies on the watch for ways of advancing it; how he insists on having definite security about all its affairs. Thus do you “occupy,” trade, in the grand spiritual business. And, remembering that the spring of all Christian service is faith and love, long and strive after advance in both. “Abide in Christ, that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.” “Be stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”

## XX.

### THE COVENANT—ITS DEATHLESS LIFE AND HOPE.

*“In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.”—TITUS i. 2.*

WAIVING all preface, I mean to take these blessed words in two ways—objectively, as they say, and subjectively, —more doctrinally, and more practically,—first, in the more general *doctrine* which they bring to view, “Eternal life which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;” and, second, in the use which the apostle makes of the doctrine, even to build on it *a hope* unspeakably glorious and stable in its character, “In hope,” says he, “of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.”

I. First, look with me at the more general doctrine which the words bring to view, “Eternal life which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.” The apostle makes here a twofold statement. He says that God, who cannot lie, made a certain promise before the world began; and he says, that it was “eternal life,” which, before the world began, God made promise of.

1. God, he tells us, who cannot lie, made a certain promise before the world began. Not, observe, formed a *purpose* merely. We know well, indeed, from many a scripture, that he formed a purpose. But the apostle says that he did more,—that he *made a promise*—and to this



belongs the special character under which he presents the adorable God here, "God that cannot *lie*." Thus the question at once arises, To whom was the promise made? For, although a purpose does not necessarily require a second party, a promise does. Where there is a promiser, and a promise, there must of course be some one to receive it. But, a promise "before the world began,"—while as yet there was no creature in existence—to whom *could* such a promise be made, save to the Eternal Son of the Father,—Him of whom it is written, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God; the same was in the beginning with God,"—Him whom we find saying of himself in the Proverbs, "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was; while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. . . . Then I was by him, as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth"—his future earth—"and my delights were with the sons of men." "Eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." Beyond all doubt, the promise was made to the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. But we have a further statement here. It was "eternal life," the apostle says, of which God, before the world began, made promise. Eternal life? But the Son of God could not possibly receive such a promise for Himself. As none but He could then receive a promise at all, so it was not possible He should receive a promise of eternal life in his own behalf—himself "the first and the last, and the living One." He could receive it only in a representative character,—for those "sons of men" of whom we just now found him speaking in the Book of Proverbs. He could receive it only as the predestined Mediator,—the Head and Surety of a people "given to

him by the Father," to be in time redeemed by him, and eternally saved.

3. And thus does there at once arise a third momentous truth, namely, that this promise could be made to Christ only on a certain *condition*,—only on supposition, and in respect, of his whole future obedience unto death in behalf of his people. Brethren, God, who cannot lie, could no more promise eternal life to Christ for guilty men, apart from such a condition, than he can break the promise now, after the condition has been fulfilled to the uttermost. The promise of which Paul speaks so briefly here,—speaks only in passing, and as taking it for granted,—is the same, in substance, of which it had been written in the prophets, "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities." "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people: and they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." "Eternal life which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began."

There are those, in the main sound enough in the faith, who are sensitively jealous of such language as the following—I repeat a question of our Larger Catechism, with the answer to it—"With whom was the covenant of grace made? The covenant of grace was made with Christ as the Second Adam, and in him with all the elect as his seed." They are jealous of this as savouring, they think, less of Scripture, than of the systems and theologies of men. Indeed? Then let the words of the text be read again, "Eternal life which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." To whom could the

promise be made, while yet there was no creature in existence, save to Christ? And *for* whom? Assuredly not to Christ for himself, but for his people, his seed. Thus have we, in almost as many words, the answer of the Westminster Divines, that “the covenant of grace was made with Christ as the Second Adam, and in him with all the elect as his seed.”

In truth, however, this great doctrine, in place of being confined to a single place of Scripture, runs through the Scriptures of the New and Old Testaments alike. Thus—to take only the New—turn for a moment with me to first Corinthians, fifteenth chapter. At the forty-fifth verse we read, “The first man Adam was made a living soul; *the last Adam* was made a quickening Spirit. . . . The first man is of the earth, earthy; *the second man* is the Lord from heaven.” Here have we plainly the doctrine of two public Heads or Sureties of mankind,—the first man, and the second man,—two Representatives, the one, of all his natural posterity, the other, of all his spiritual seed. But this necessarily involves the idea of a Divine covenant with these public persons respectively. They could occupy the place of public heads or representatives, only in virtue of a Divine compact entered into with them respectively,—in virtue of promises given to them in behalf of their respective seeds.

Or turn, for an instant, to the Apocalypse, the third chapter, and read the twelfth verse, “Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God: and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God.” Here, four times over, does Christ use the expression, “My God.” But it is well known that when, in Scripture language, Jehovah is called *the God of* any one, it signifies his being in covenant with him,—engaged by promise to be his portion and

heritage. Thus, "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob;" and again, "I will establish my covenant with thee, to be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee." But Jehovah is here spoken of, again and again, as the God of the Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed, no title of God is more common in the New Testament than this. It is thus declared, in effect, that Jehovah is in covenant with Messiah. But in what character? Certainly not for himself, but as the Head and Surety of his people. To Christ, in this character, does Jehovah make himself over to be his God, and to all the members of his body, in him, and through him—"Go to my brethren, said he, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God." "Behold, I, and the children whom God hath given me." "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." "Heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ" — "Eternal life which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began."

II. But now, in place of going into the evidence of the Old Testament to the same effect,—of the prophets and the psalms,—(though it is quite as abundant and clear as that of the New), I pass from the more general doctrine of the text, to the use which the apostle makes of it even to build on it, as I said, *a hope* unspeakably glorious and stable in its character, "In hope," says he, "of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began."

Generally let me say here, that it is to my mind profoundly interesting, to find that Paul,—that the great apostle of the Gentiles,—was able to endure his trials, and discharge his duties,—able to bear up amid the endless work and warfare of his ministry and apostleship, only by the power of the same faith and hope which is yours, believers,

at this hour, "Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness; *in hope* of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." And so, in the immediately previous epistle,—in the first chapter of Second Timothy, we find him saying, "Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed; *for* I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day." But now look a little more closely with me at the "hope" the apostle speaks of, in the *glory* of it, and in the immoveable *stability* of it.

1. First, in its *glory*. It is the hope of "eternal life." Brethren, so familiar have we grown with this word in the Scriptures, that we fail to realise the wonderfulness of it—*eternal life!* Ah, in this world of ceaseless change, decay, corruption, death, graves everywhere, "eternal life,"—life defying death, surviving death, which death cannot kill, nor the grave swallow up,—life which, when myriads of ages have passed, shall only have begun, and when myriads more have passed, shall be no nearer an end! And it is "eternal LIFE"—not existence merely—*life* eternal, in blessedness and joy, as it is written, "In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore:" *life* eternal, in dignity and glory, as it is written, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne;" "a crown of glory that fadeth not away:" *life* eternal, in boundless riches, possessions, as it is written, "Heirs of God"—"Come, ye blessed, inherit the kingdom"—"An inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." But I cannot tell what eternal life is. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him

as he is." This, at least, we know, that the "eternal life" shall have in it the expansion to the full of all the faculties and affections of the renewed nature; the perfect harmony of those faculties and affections, both among themselves and with the will of the adorable God; the end of the last remnants of sin; all tears for ever dried up; body and soul reunited in a holy, deathless, companionship, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity! "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." "Eternal life"—the *glory* of the hope.

2. Then see the immoveable *stability* of it. For,

(1.) First, the apostle says that it is built on the "promise of God who cannot lie." Ah, if that is not security enough, then farewell, at least, to all possible security in the universe! When Scripture, over and over, says that "God cannot lie," it is as if to say that he must cease to *be*,—cease to be God,—ere he can deny himself,—forswear himself,—falsify his word, his promise, since truth is his very nature, "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us."

(2.) Nor, second, is this *a* promise of God merely,—one among many; it is, in a sort, *the* promise, the promise pre-eminently, of Jehovah, as the words intimate, "eternal life which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began" So, in the first epistle of John, we read, "This is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life." And again and again we read of "eternal life," as of the grand central blessing—"I give unto my sheep eternal life." "Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as

many as thou hast given him." "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life." I say the hope is built on a promise, on *the* promise, of "God who cannot lie."

(3.) Again, the promise which this hope is built on was made by God "before the world began." See, I pray you, the immoveable stability which lies here. For this world is one of ceaseless fluctuations, vicissitudes. Had the promise arisen amidst the changes and emergencies of time, then, one of them having begotten it, another might peradventure have made a final end of it. But it was anterior to them all,—made in full foresight of them all,—made an eternity before them all. And thus none of them can in any wise affect its stability. There was but one thing that could have seemed likely to affect it, namely sin. But sin was the very occasion of the promise. The whole covenant of grace arose by reason of sin. And that runs into yet another ground of stability here.

(4.) Fourth, the promise this hope is built on is, as we have seen, the promise of *a covenant*,—a promise made only on express and determinate conditions. And own that these have been to the uttermost fulfilled, it has become matter of justice no less than truth,—of rectitude, as well as faithfulness, "My righteous servant shall justify many, *for* he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death; and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

Other grounds of stability, pointed to more indirectly in the text, might have been mentioned, such as this, that the promise the hope is built on, is already enjoyed by the believer in the earnest and foretastes of it, "He that believeth on me *hath* everlasting life." "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according

to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." "We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (for we walk by faith, not by sight:) we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began."

Three words of inference, before I close.

First, see the absolute security of the ransomed Church of God, and each living member of it. For, if the covenant had been made only with the believer himself, then might his faith and holiness have given way, and his soul been eternally lost. But he is only by faith *instated* in a covenant, which was made with the Son of God in his behalf before the foundation of the world,—a covenant, all whose conditions were fulfilled in the work of the Mediator,—and whose promises run in terms like these, "I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." "I will put my Spirit within you, and will cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." Taking hold of this covenant, we embrace and enter into a life that cannot die,—the life of Christ himself, in fact. Our security is bound up with the life of the Head and Surety of the covenant. "Because I live," said he, "ye shall live also." "My Father, and your Father; my God, and your God." "If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments, I will visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless my



lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me." "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee."

Second, you remember those words in Romans, "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed." *It is of faith, that it might be by grace.* That is to say, there is an open entrance for all of us, sinners, into the whole inviolable security of this covenant of promise, by faith alone, without the deeds of the law—"it is of faith, that it might be by grace." It had been but mocking us to tell of some richly stored and furnished edifice, without a door of entrance. But behold at once the edifice, and the door into it. The edifice, "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 again at the last day." And the open door, "And 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." The edifice, "An everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure." The entrance into it, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come: and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

But, thirdly and finally, I end with the "hope"

(daughter of the faith),—the undying hope,—the “hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.” What a hope this for storms and tempests—“anchor of the soul” indeed, “sure and stedfast”! What a hope for afflictions, to sustain under them,—for duties, to carry through them,—for death and the grave, to give the victory over them! “Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth; my flesh also shall rest in hope.” “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” Many a falsehood, beloved, has been written in the epitaphs of the dead. Here is an epitaph which might be as truly as sublimely written on the tombs of all who sleep in Jesus, “IN HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE, WHICH GOD, THAT CANNOT LIE, PROMISED BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN.”

## XXI.

### THE GOLDEN SAYING.

*“I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, IT IS MORE BLESSED TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE.”—Acts xx. 35.*

It is a golden saying truly, this of our Lord's, snatched for us from oblivion (for it is not found anywhere in the Gospels) by the inspired apostle, and handed down by him for the use of the Church in every age, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” Very honestly, I think, and with unabashed countenance, Paul could press it on the regard of the Ephesian elders; for his own life,—whole apostolic life,—had been an exemplification of it. And it was well that so it was, for the sake of their accepting it at his hands. For, so contrary is the saying to the practice at least,—the whole spirit and practical judgments,—of mankind, that when a public teacher declares it to be more happy and blessed to give than to receive, the question is apt enough to arise in the minds of his hearers, Does he really believe it? But this man had left no possible room for such a question arising with reference to him. Second in this respect only to his glorious Master, his whole life, as I have said, had been an exemplification of the saying, “It is more blessed to give than to receive”—not much, certainly, in respect to the giving of property, of which he had but little to give. But while his very poverty was only a nobler exemplification of the saying—

as to all other kinds of giving, behold his whole apostolic life in the spirit of those words, for example, "I will not be burdensome to you, for I seek not yours, but you; for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children"—"So, being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us." "Therefore watch," says he at the thirty-first verse here, "and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears"—ah, that was *giving*! "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified. I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel"—no very good coat, methinks, he must have had, who could protest that he had coveted no man's apparel—"Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."

But why speak I of *Paul's* exemplifying this saying? If you would see it exemplified in its perfection, you must go to his Master,—to the utterer of the saying. O yes, second only to Him in this Paul might be; but second, assuredly,—following at an immeasurable distance behind,—even Paul was—behind Him who "was rich, and for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich"!—behind Him who "was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took on him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even

the death of the cross!"—behind Him who, in uttering the saying without reference to himself, might yet have written in it the motto of his life, from Bethlehem to Calvary and the grave—"It is more blessed to give than to receive"!

I would fain unfold a little,—confirm, explain, illustrate,—the saying, if I can. Let me, however, first guard myself and you against a mistake, or rather vice, to which assuredly it lends no countenance. I mean the pride of such as decline to be receivers at the hands of others, lest they should be brought under obligations to them. A vice this is in the dealings of men with men, but a sin eminently heinous and deadly in the dealings of men with God. It is a vice in the dealings of men with men. For God has so ordered our relationships one to another, as that we shall be as it were interdependent, and, by a certain mutual indebtedness, knit together in the ties of a closer affection. I have spoken of Paul. Certainly he did decline, on grounds of high Christian expediency, to receive anything at the hands of the Corinthian church. But see how he speaks to another of the churches, "I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity. Not that I speak in respect of want," &c. "Notwithstanding ye have well done that ye did communicate with my affliction." Yea, the Lord Jesus himself did not decline to be a receiver,—did not disdain to ask drink of the woman of Samaria; to be indebted to Martha and her sister for a home at Bethany; to be indebted for the means of his earthly support, partly to "certain women who ministered to him of their substance."

But if the pride of declining to receive is a vice in the dealings of men with men, it is, as I have said, a sin eminently heinous and deadly in the dealings of men

with God. For the state of the case is this. We are before God “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” He, in the exceeding riches of his grace, comes offering to us, in Jesus Christ, gold tried in the fire to enrich us, and white raiment to cover us, and eyesalve to anoint our eyes that we may see—offering us water of life, and bread of life,—all things belonging to an everlasting salvation. If we will not be content to take all at his hands, and be eternal debtors to his mere mercy, then must we make up our minds to be receivers at length in a far different way,—to receive the wages of our sin in an “everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power!” O yes, it is the very soul and glory of the gospel, that God comes to us in it, not to get anything from us, but to give everything to us. And that faith which is its counterpart,—the faith which answers to it, and saves the soul,—is our, not giving, but taking,—not giving aught to God, but receiving all most freely at his hand. At the root of whatsoever giving on our part He will acknowledge, lies necessarily that *receiving*. But then, so soon as we have found our place among the blessed ones of whom it is written, “As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God,” there meets us that word, “Freely ye have received, freely give;” and we hear this saying of the Lord Jesus, never to be enough pondered by us, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

Attempting, then, to confirm, explain, illustrate, the saying a little, I observe that—

1. First, it is more blessed to give than to receive, because it is more like God,—more noble, excellent, God-like. For the glorious God is ever giving. Behold him opening his hand, and satisfying the desire of everything that lives; giving to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry; giving to all life, and breath,

and all things; giving us richly all things to enjoy—the giver of every good and perfect gift! But pre-eminent among his endless gifts, behold Him, when we were ready to drop into hell, opening no longer his hand merely, but his bosom, his heart, and giving forth from it his only begotten Son,—not sparing that Son,—and now, with him, freely giving us all things! Hear Him saying, “I will give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles”—“A new heart will I give you”—“I will give you an heart of flesh”—“I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever, for the good of them, and of their children after them.” Yea, behold him giving Himself to us in an everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure, saying, “I will be to you a God, and ye shall be to me a people”—“I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters.” Thus, evidently, it is more Godlike to give than to receive. And hence those great words, “I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you, *that ye may be the children*”—by your likeness to him manifested to be the children—“of your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” “Be ye followers (imitators) of God,” writes Paul, “as dear children, and walk in love”—“kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another”—ah, an illustrious form of *giving, forgiving!*—“even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.” It is more blessed to give than to receive, I say first, because it is more Godlike.

2. But second, and more specifically, because it is more Christlike. Already this has been glanced at; but it must be touched on a little further. True, as was said, Christ did not decline,—did not disdain,—to be a receiver. But it is very remarkable how his receiving ran ever

into a much more abundant giving. Did he ask drink of the woman of Samaria? It was to make way for that word, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." Did he accept a home of the sisters of Bethany? How profoundly they felt that, in accepting it, he was rather giving to them an everlasting home! Did he permit those women to minister to him of their substance? But he had first bestowed on them the everlasting riches; for the words are, "There were with him certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance."

But where should one begin, or where end, if one would speak of the givings of Jesus Christ, and His accounting it more blessed to give than to receive? For his entire life resembled, as to this, the sun in the heavens, scattering benefits in his whole course from his rising to his fall. Behold how he "went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed with the devil,"—how he "went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people." On his way to work one work of beneficence, see how he performs another—how, on his way to the house of Jairus, for example, he heals the woman that had the issue of blood twelve years, and then passes on to raise the young daughter of Jairus from the dead. "Whithersoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment; and as many as touched him were made whole." And yet were these cures little more



than symbols of his higher and more peculiar benefits. "Give, give," was ever his language—but truly after a new fashion. There it is, "The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world"—"The meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you"—"Come unto me, and I will give you rest"—"My peace I give unto you"—"I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish." And still, from the throne,—from the heaven of heavens,—his voice is heard, "I will give to him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely"—"I will give you a crown of life"—"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life;" "give to eat of the hidden manna;" "give to sit with me in my throne!" Oh, I would have you to be in love with giving. It is more blessed to give than to receive, because, first, it is more Godlike; and second, specifically, more Christlike.

3. But, thirdly, it is more blessed to give than to receive, because it is at once the sign and the source of a higher and purer happiness. It is the *sign* of a higher happiness,—tells of a higher blessedness already enjoyed by the giving one. The truth is that Christian giving of all kinds—property, sympathy, counsel, prayer—flows out of a certain affluence of peace and happiness, as we read of the Macedonian Christians, for instance, that the "abundance of their joy, and their deep poverty, abounded unto the riches of their liberality." And, on the other hand, what call we the mere receiver, the covetous, the hoarder, but *miser*—wretched one? But he who giveth christianly is already happy and blessed, as it is written of the people of Israel, that they "rejoiced for that they offered willingly, because with perfect heart they offered willingly unto the Lord; and David the king also rejoiced with great joy." And, as giving is the sign, so also is it the *source*, of a higher and purer happiness. O, is there

one among us who has known aught of what Job said of himself, "The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me, and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy"? I am sure that his own heart was made to sing with a joy yet deeper than hers. Or, let any Sabbath-school teacher, who, week after week, has gathered the destitute children from the streets and lanes hard by, and taught them of the love of Christ, and the pearl of great price, and the new heart, and the everlasting joy and rest for the weary, say if it is not more blessed to give than to receive. Our blessed Lord did ask drink of the woman of Samaria; and I am not quite certain that he obtained it. But I am sure of this, that soon his thirst was forgotten in the divine satisfaction of finding another lost sheep, and laying it on his shoulders, rejoicing—so that when the disciples came from the city, and said to him, Master, eat, he said, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. And they said, Hath any man brought him ought to eat? Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work—for "it is more blessed to give than to receive."

4. But again, fourthly, it is more blessed to give than to receive, because it will soon be crowned with the reward of an unutterable and everlasting happiness. Sufficient reward, indeed, were the present happiness of which it is both the sign and the source. But we hear our Lord Jesus saying, "Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward." And we hear him saying, "When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind.

And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." And what a recompense! "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again." But what a repayment, overpayment, of bliss! "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 an hungered, 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. . . . Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Ah, a kingdom for a little bread, or a cup of cold water! Truly—"My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." And yet, as an old writer has said, "The less thou lookest on it, the surer thou shalt find it—if labouring with thyself to serve God for Himself, in respect of whom even heaven itself is but a sinister end."

5. But once more, and in a sentence, it is more blessed to give than to receive, because it is liker heaven—liker, I mean, to the peculiar and characteristic, highest, happiness of heaven—where no more shall it be prayer, telling of want,—of asking, receiving,—but praise, which is a giving to God himself—to speak with reverence—as he condescends to speak, "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me"—"Give unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the Lord glory and strength; give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name."—Well; I have said that it is more blessed to give than to receive, because it is more Godlike; because it is more Christlike; because it is at once the sign and the source of a higher and purer

happiness; because it will soon be crowned with the gracious reward of an unutterable and everlasting blessedness; and because it is more like heaven,—the peculiar and characteristic, highest, happiness of heaven.

But I may not omit to touch, before closing, on the *giving itself*, which is so blessed. It is, I think, threefold—the giving of our means; the giving of our sympathy, help, counsel; and the giving of our prayers.

1. First, the giving of our means, either for relief of temporal distress, or for the advancement of the cause and kingdom of the Lord Jesus in the world. With reference to such giving, I must content myself with a brief corollary, or inference, from what has been said. It is, that when many claims are made on our means (as at such a time as this), we ought to bid them all heartily welcome. Not, of course, that we ought to give to all; we may be quite unable to do that. But, first, we ought to regret only our inability, and not the claims, which are but so many channels of happiness to us, and of good to others: and, second, if we do only regret our inability, and are in love with giving, we shall find that we can give to many more objects than otherwise would have seemed possible: and, third, we can commend to God in prayer those objects to which we cannot give of our means: and, fourth, as to those to which we do contribute, we shall do it with hearty good will,—in the spirit of those Macedonian Christians, who, “to their power, yea, and beyond their power, were willing of themselves, praying Paul with much entreaty that he would receive the gift, and take upon him the fellowship of the ministering to the saints.” We shall “give a portion to seven, and also to eight,”—for it is more blessed to give of our substance than to receive.

2. Then, second, there is the giving of our sympathy, help, counsel,—sympathy in distress, help in weakness,

counsel in perplexity. Paul's giving must have been very largely of this kind. How often must he have had to say, as Peter had said before him, "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee"! Of course, if a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and we give not the things that are needful to the body—having them to give—offered sympathy and counsel were but a mockery of the distress. But how precious is genuine *sympathy*, for example, either in addition to pecuniary aid, or without it, when it is either not needed, or not in our power to render! Take one instance—"David saw that Saul was come out to seek his life: and David was in the wilderness of Ziph in a wood. And Jonathan, Saul's son, arose, and went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God. And he said unto him, Fear not: for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee; and that also Saul my father knoweth. And they two made a covenant before the Lord." But that was help and counsel, as well as sympathy. O thrice happy, if with Job we can say, "I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame"—eyes, counsel, to the blind in perplexity,—feet, help, to the lame in weakness! One sort of counsel we might give far oftener than we do. I mean the counsel spoken of in those words, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come"—"Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?"—"We are journeying to the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you: come with us, and we will do thee good; for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel."

3. And last of all, there is the giving of our prayers—a kind of giving the more precious for two reasons—first, that we might all give thus; and second, that we might give thus to all. All might give thus.

Those who have no pecuniary means, or who may think that they have no sympathy, or counsel, or help, worth the giving, might commend the distressed in prayer to Him who is a very present help in trouble. And we might thus give to all—not to that very limited circle only which we can reach with our means or our counsel. In prayer we can reach those removed from us—by rank and station, for instance—as far as the Queen of these realms; or by distance removed as far from us as the people in China or Australia.

I close with one word as to the way in which the saying of the text has come down to us. Doubtless it belongs to those things of which John says in the closing words of his Gospel, “There are also many other things which Jesus did”—and words also, of course, which he spoke—“the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books which should be written.” Are we apt to regret that so many precious things of the Lord Jesus should have been lost to the Church? Well; he best knew what and how much to give to the Church. But what I desire to notice is this, that of all those other words of Jesus, unrecorded in the Gospels, only one has been preserved for us by the Holy Ghost—even the saying of our text, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” Surely it is well fitted to enhance the value of it in our eyes, that in this respect it stands quite alone. I have already noticed its Christlikeness,—how it might have been written as the motto of our Lord’s entire life. What a confirmation and illustration of this, that of all those other words of Jesus, it alone has been rescued for us from oblivion! The high value which Paul set on it strikingly appears in his closing his memorable address to the Ephesian elders with it. Bidding them farewell, to see their face no more, he thus takes his leave of them, “I have shewed you all things, how that so

labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." May the Lord write the saying in our hearts; make it very dear to us; and grant that, exemplifying it in our lives, we may thus make it manifest that, in our speculative and practical judgments alike, we do indeed account it MORE BLESSED TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE!

## XXII.

### THE DYING SUBSTITUTE AND KEEPER OF ISRAEL.

*“Jesus answered have told you that I am he. If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: that the saying might be fulfilled which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.”—JOHN xviii. 8, 9.\**

THERE is a more limited and more obvious sense of these words; and there is a larger and somewhat less obvious sense of them, to which principally it is that I mean to turn your thoughts.

I. First, shortly observe the more limited and more obvious sense of the words. “Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he.” Our blessed Lord delivers himself up into the hands of his enemies, to be bound and led away to death. But, in the act of doing so, he makes provision for the safety and liberty of the disciples who were standing by, “If therefore,” adds he, “ye seek me, let these go their way.” He *makes provision*, I have said, for their liberty and safety. For, assuredly, there was a great deal more in the words than a simple request, although

\* It is well worthy of notice, in connection with this citation from the Intercessory Prayer of the seventeenth chapter, that the Evangelist quotes the words of our Lord thus simply and absolutely, “Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.” On a first view of them, as they lie in that chapter, it might seem as if they were less absolute,—as if there had been at



they take that quiet form, "let these go their way." The officers who had come to apprehend the Master, would doubtless have proceeded to apprehend the servants along with him. And any mere *request* to the contrary could but have served to defeat its own end. I have no doubt that, under the quiet form of the words, "let these go their way," there went forth a silent, resistless energy,—an exercise of the same glorious power which had just before made the captors recoil, and fall to the ground, on the simple utterance of that word, "I am he." Jesus, I

least one exception to the safe keeping of those given to Christ by the Father—"Those," he says, "that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled." It is deeply interesting and important to find, however, that this strange, painful, and surely very improbable, idea, has no ground in the words of the blessed Intercessor, when more closely looked at,—that the seeming exception is not one in reality, but simply a deep *contrast*, as if it had been said, 'Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost. But the son of perdition, who seemed to be of them, is lost, that the scripture might be fulfilled.' Repeatedly the *εἰ μὴ* ("none of them is lost, *but* the son of perdition") is used by our Lord in this purely *adversative* sense. Thus, in the fourth of Luke, verses 25–27, he says, "I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias. . . . But unto none of them was Elias sent, *save* (*εἰ μὴ*) unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, *saving* (*εἰ μὴ*) Naaman the Syrian." Of course this is not an exception, but a simple contrast, as if it had been said, 'None of the lepers in Israel were cleansed; but Naaman the Syrian was cleansed.' So here, 'Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost; but the son of perdition is lost.' I only add, that this interpretation of the words—shewn thus to be thoroughly admissible—is proved to be the right one by John's inspired citation of them thus in my text, "Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he. If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: that the saying might be fulfilled which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost *none*." The reader will please now to turn back to the opening of the discourse in the previous page.

say, delivers himself up, freely and voluntarily, into the hands of his enemies, but makes provision, in doing so, for the safety and liberty of his disciples.

Only, does it not seem strange that in the ninth verse, the Evangelist should trace up this act of our Lord, however disinterested and kind on his part, to his great saying in the seventeenth chapter, as furnishing the explanation of it, "Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none—let these go their way; that the saying might be fulfilled which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none"? For, that saying of the Intercessory Prayer, beyond all doubt, refers to no mere preservation of believers from outward trials, such as loss of personal liberty, but to their secure preservation in faith and holiness to the end; and this last preservation, so far from being connected inseparably with immunity from temporal afflictions, is oftentimes more effectually secured by means of them—even as we know that these disciples, not very long after this time, "rejoiced to be counted worthy to suffer shame for Christ's name," and were led away, some to prison, and others to death, for his sake. True. But you recollect those words, "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able." Jesus knew that although these disciples should by and by be quite able and ready to meet every danger, and to suffer death itself, for his name, their faith was not equal to this now. And therefore does he consult for their *everlasting* welfare,—consult, with equal wisdom and loving-kindness, not for their temporal ease, but for their everlasting salvation, when in delivering up himself, he makes provision for their liberty and safety, saying, "I have told you that I am he; if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: that the saying might be fulfilled which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none." So much for the more limited and more obvious sense of these words.

II. But, while we so far account thus for the Evangelist's citation in the ninth verse,—so far account for his tracing up the words of Jesus in the eighth verse, to his blessed words of intercession recalled to view in the ninth, I am persuaded that the citation points to a larger and wider view of our whole text, which alone fully and sufficiently explains the inspired reference to the words of the seventeenth chapter. I believe that, when Jesus delivers himself up into the hands of his enemies, but makes provision, in the act of doing so, for the safety and liberty of his disciples, he designed that his Church in every age should see there, as in a glass, his most freely delivering himself up into the hands of his Father's justice, as the Saviour, Substitute, Surety, of his people,—delivering himself up voluntarily into the hands of the Divine justice, and so to the hatred and murderous rage of his enemies on earth; but only on condition, as it were, and in order to the securing, of the everlasting release and salvation of all who were given to him by the Father in the eternal covenant of grace, “Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he. If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way; that the saying might be fulfilled which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.” Thus I think that the last sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus,\* are presented to us here under three distinct aspects or characters of them—first, as they were entirely Voluntary; second, as they were Vicarious, or Substitutionary; and third, amid all their seeming weakness, as they were Royal, Kingly.

1. First, behold the gloriously *voluntary* character of the Saviour's death. In giving out the text, I read with you the opening verses of the chapter; and I am anxious at this place to arrest your attention on them for a moment—first recalling, however, such words of previous chapters as those, “He would not walk in Jewry, because

\* The discourse was preached on a Communion Sabbath.

the Jews sought to kill him"—“He escaped out of their hands, and went away again beyond Jordan”—compared with such other words as, “They sought to take him; but no man laid hands on him, because *his hour was not yet come.*” But now at length it had come, as he spake at the opening of that wondrous prayer, “Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee.” And now, accordingly, see what an entire change meets us at the beginning of this eighteenth chapter, “When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into which he entered, and his disciples. And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place; for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples.” I stay not to dwell on the touching simplicity with which John conveys to every reader here the baseness of the traitor, “Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place; for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples.” But see how our blessed Lord, instead of shunning that place of his frequent resort—so well known to Judas—deliberately enters the garden where he knew the traitor would reckon on finding him. “Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns, and torches, and weapons.” Ah, very superfluous “lanterns and torches,” to search the recesses of Gethsemane! Let the first Adam hide himself, if he will, among the trees of the garden. The second knows no fears; and now that his hour is come, is holily seeking his enemies, quite as much as they are unholy in search of Him, “Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye?” Truly a new kind of criminal this, who accosts the officers in pursuit of him, “Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. As soon then as he

had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground." Doubtless, one leading design of the putting forth thus of his resistless power, was to make the entirely *voluntary* character of his death the more apparent. How impotent, but for his good pleasure to die, had been all their rage against him, "As soon as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground"!

Of course, however, the Lord had no intention at all to turn back the course which events had now at length taken—"Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he. If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way,"—"If ye seek me," here I am; only "let these go their way." What a comment the entire scene on those previous words of Jesus, "No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself:" and on those words, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence:" and on the words we sang a little ago, "Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God:" and on those words, "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished"! True, Jesus had a little before fallen on his face, and three times prayed, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me"! But that tells only the unutterableness of his soul-sorrows. It touches not the perfect voluntariness of them. You remember how, when Peter said once to him, "Be that far from thee, Lord"—to die a malefactor's accursed death—he answered him, "Get thee behind me, Satan; thou art an offence unto me; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." "The cup,"

said he to the same Peter afterwards, "which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" "He took the cup, and *gave thanks*, saying, This cup is my blood of the new covenant, shed for the remission of the sins of many." Even so now, does he go forth to meet his enemies, delivering himself freely up into their hands, "Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he. If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way."

2. But this runs into the second great aspect here of our Lord's sufferings and death, the *Vicarious*, or *Substitutionary*, character of them, "Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he. If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: that the saying might be fulfilled which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none"—One for all,—one in the room of many,—"if ye seek me, let these go their way." Not, certainly, that I should think of *proving* the substitution of Christ, against an opponent, from this passage. I should not expect any one to see the doctrine here, who had not before found it in many a plainer statement of it in Scripture. In reasoning with a Socinian, for example, it were necessary to point to such words as the following—"He hath made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him"—"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us"—"The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all"—"Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many"—"His ownself bare our sins in his body on the tree"—"The Son of man is come to give his life a ransom for many"—"This is my blood of the new covenant, shed for the remission of the sins of many"—and so on. In the text, we have no more than a precious illustrative light thrown back, as it were in passing,—reflected, as from a kind of mirror,—on this grand central truth. As I said a little ago, when Jesus delivers himself up to his

enemies, but, in the act of doing so, makes provision for the safety of his disciples,—when he says, “If ye seek me, let these go their way,”—I believe that he intended his Church in every age to see there, as in a glass, nothing less than his delivering up of himself most freely into the hands of his Father’s justice, and so to the rage and injustice of men; but only on condition, and in order to the securing, of the everlasting release and salvation of all his covenant people, “If ye seek me, let these go their way: that the saying might be fulfilled which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.” Oh, it is as if, when he said to the officers, “if ye seek me, let these go their way,” he had said to his Father at the same moment—all unheard by this dead world—Here am I, O my Father! Let me be bound; but let that innumerable multitude be loosed,—freed from the bonds of death and of the curse for ever! Let all shame be cast on me, that none of them may “rise to shame and everlasting contempt”! Let me be spit upon, mocked, crowned with thorns, that they may be for ever glorified! Let thy sword awake against the Shepherd, and let thy hand be “turned” in love “upon the little ones”! Let me be condemned before the tribunal of Pilate, that they may not be condemned at thy tribunal eternally! Let me die, that they may live, and “drink of the river of thy pleasures,” for evermore! Take me, O Father, and “let these go their way”!

3. But now I pass to the third aspect of the sufferings and death of Jesus—what I called the *Royal, Kingly*, character of them. I mean, that they were not the sufferings and death of a Substitute only, High Priest, Lamb, but of a glorious King also, having authority and power to save his people to the uttermost. This also you will find in the text, if you recall that first and more limited view of the words, which has respect to our Lord’s providing for the safety of the

disciples, in the act of delivering himself up into the hands of his enemies. For, when he said, "Let these go their way," not preferring a simple request, but, as I said, under the quiet form of one, putting forth a silent, resistless energy to render it effectual, what did he but exercise a glorious Providence, securing a temporal benefit for these men, in order to their certain everlasting welfare and salvation, "Let these go their way; that the saying might be fulfilled which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none"? They were not equal at this time, as he knew, to bear the trial of imprisonment, and possible death, for his name. He would not "suffer them to be tempted above that they were able." And therefore, secretly, yet effectually, did he so sway the minds of those enemies, and order the matter of the liberty of his friends, as to exemplify and fulfil, the Evangelist tells us, that great word, "Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none."

Have we not here, as in one specimen, a glimpse of that whole Mediatorial, Kingly government of the world with which our Lord Jesus is invested by the Father, to the end of securing the holy, eternal blessedness and glory of the whole ransomed Church—as he spake at the opening of the Intercessory Prayer, "Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him"? In a specimen, we have it, I have said; ay, and not only the general *fact* of the government, but the glorious *character* of it also. For, be it observed that this act of our Lord's providence,—this silent exercise of his Kingly authority, "Let these go their way,"—was characterized at once by an ineffable tenderness, and a consummate wisdom, and a resistless majesty.

(1.) It was characterized by an ineffable *tenderness*. At the very moment when, about to be seized by his enemies, he might have seemed likely to think of himself, and to



forget his disciples, he forgets himself, and thinks only of them. Behold, believers, what a heart of matchless tenderness it is that is set over the world and its affairs for your safety,—for the everlasting welfare and salvation of the whole ransomed Church!

(2.) But the act was characterized as much by consummate *wisdom*, as by ineffable tenderness—“Let these go their way.” Jesus unerringly judged what the faith of his disciples, at this particular time, was able to bear. He would not “break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax.” He would not suffer the Adversary to expose those men to a trial to which their knowledge and faith were as yet unequal, whom afterwards he left to be dragged before kings and rulers, and led away, many of them, to bloody deaths, for his sake, “Let these go their way.”

(3.) And yet again, the Kingly government of Christ is seen, in this example of it, characterized by a resistless *majesty*, equal to its wisdom and tenderness, “Let these go their way.” It was the form of a request; it was the reality of a command. It was, as I said, the same resistless energy which had made the officers recoil and fall to the ground, on the utterance of that word, “I am he”! Dear brethren, if such the majesty of Christ’s government in that hour of his deepest seeming weakness, how tranquilly may we not trust ourselves in his hands, now that “he hath ascended on high, leading captivity captive,”—now that his voice is heard from the throne, as he lays his right hand on the trembling disciple, saying, “Fear not; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death?”

Three words of application, suggested by the three aspects or characters of Christ’s sufferings and death—the Voluntary, the Vicarious, the Kingly.

First, were they gloriously Voluntary sufferings? And shall we not exclaim, "The love of Christ constraineth us,"—constraineth us to a most free and unreserved surrender of ourselves to Him?—

"Lord, we return thee what we can!  
Our hearts shall sound abroad,  
Salvation to the dying man,  
And to the rising God!

And while thy bleeding glories here  
Engage our wondering eyes,  
We learn our lighter cross to bear,  
And hasten to the skies."

Again, were they Vicarious sufferings? How deeply humbling, yet confirming also and strengthening! Deeply humbling. When you behold the Surety seized, and led away to death, what was it but that you, believers, were ready to be seized, and dragged to judgment, to hell, when Jesus interposed himself, and said, Take Me, and "let these go their way"! But how confirming also and strengthening! What a rock beneath your feet is that, "Take Me, O Father, and let these go their way"—one in the room of all—"there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus"—"who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is Christ that died"!

Finally, as to the Kingly character,—that most tender and wise and mighty government which is on the shoulder of Christ,—let me mention a word which an experienced Christian lady once addressed to a much tried friend, "Things" she said, "will never be right with you, till you have learned to crown Christ king of Providence, as well as king of Grace." King of Providence, ruling bonds, liberty, sickness, health, casualties, death—"If ye seek me, let these go their way." King of Grace, "that the saying might be fulfilled which he

spake, Of them which thou gavest me, have I lost none." What an anchor in storms and tempests, "Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him"—"It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God"—"Angels and authorities, and powers being made subject unto him"!

O ye that are out of Christ this day, why, why, are ye out of him? No doubt there is an "election of grace," as the text intimates. But no believer ever entered into Christ by the door of his election, but all by that door only which is equally open to you—the unlimited offers of the gospel, as Jesus spake, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and *him that cometh to me* I will in no wise cast out." But if you shall still "neglect so great salvation," how can you escape? Why, the very substitution of Christ tells, in some respects above all things else, that you cannot. His words, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done," must seal your ruin. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." But meanwhile, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come: and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

## XXIII.

### THE CROWNING PETITION OF THE INTERCESSORY PRAYER.

*“Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory.”—JOHN xvii. 24.*

It is the last, and the crowning, petition of all. If you were to compare this wondrous chapter of intercession to some majestic edifice, temple, the text would form the top-stone of it. The entire series of intercessions—each of them more precious, unspeakably, than thousands of gold and silver—reaches its climax in this one, of pre-eminent grace and grandeur, “Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory.” Let us fix our thoughts for a little on these things in it:—first, the parties for whom the petition is offered; second, the very peculiar style and manner of it; third, the prayer itself in the matter of it. And may the glorious Intercessor himself, our “Advocate with the Father,” now within the veil, vouchsafe his own presence with us in our meditations!

I. First, observe the parties in whose behalf the prayer of the text is offered. Says Jesus, “I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am.” *They whom thou hast given me*—truly a vast, innumerable, company that, beloved! If you look at this great chapter with a little care, you will find that this expres-

sion, "they whom thou hast given me," occurs in substance eight different times in the course of it; and you will further find that it is used by our Lord partly in a larger, and partly in a narrower and more specific, manner. For the most part his reference in it—more immediately at least—is to the eleven disciples who were with him in the guest-chamber after Judas had gone out. In two leading instances, however, he uses it very much more largely—first, at the opening of the whole intercession, in the second verse of the chapter, "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him," where the manifest reference is to the entire elect Church,—the whole innumerable multitude who were given to Christ by the Father, in the everlasting covenant, before the world was,\* "Father," says he, "the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him:" and now, again, at the close of the intercession, in the prayer of our text, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory." Let it be noted that, at verse sixth, Jesus had begun to narrow, as it were, the range, the sweep of the expression, saying, "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word." Then, after continuing the more specific use and reference down to the nineteenth verse, inclusive, he returns to where he began, again enlarging the circle, the range, saying in the all-precious words of the twentieth verse, "Neither

\* The reader will find the doctrine of this covenant examined with some care in the discourse (p. 282) on Titus i. 2, "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began."

pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word ; that they all may be one ; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." Thus I think it is very apparent that, as the whole of the petitions were, really and in effect, for all believers,—not for the eleven only, but for believers everywhere and in every age,—so now, in this last petition of all, the parties are the entire unnumbered multitude of the elect, believing, children of God, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am ; that they may behold my glory."

I have said *the elect, believing*, children of God. For these two descriptions—elect, or given to Christ by the Father, and, they who believe on Jesus—meet in a great centre,—are, in fact, one and the same as to extent and comprehension. That is to say, none do truly believe on Christ who were not given to him from everlasting by the Father ; and, conversely, all who were so given to him do, sooner or later, believe on his name. He uses both descriptions, as you perceive, in this blessed chapter—the one over and over again, "those whom thou hast given me ;" the other in that twentieth verse, "them who shall believe on me through their word." The one, beloved, belongs to a secret purpose of the Divine mind, which we can by no means penetrate directly, to ascertain our interest in it,—whether our names were from everlasting "written in the Lamb's book of life." The other belongs to a visible effect arising out of the purpose in time, which we *may* know, and by the knowledge of which we may also know our interest in the eternal purpose of grace. O yes, would you find if you are among the parties in the prayer of our text,—among those given to Christ by the Father before the world was? You cannot possibly discover it by any scrutinizing of that description of them taken by itself. But you may know it from the other description, of the twentieth verse, "I

pray for them who shall believe on me through their word." Have you, in very deed, believed on the Son of God? Have you, by the Holy Ghost, come to Jesus? Have you given your souls into his hand for ever, to be "washed, and sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God"? And are you giving evidence of it, more or less, in a holy, humble, heavenly life? Then are you among the parties in the prayer of the text—and, indeed, in all the intercessions of the chapter together—"Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory."

One other remark only on the parties, "they whom thou hast given me." Our Lord passes here, as you see, by a single step or bound, from the eternal purpose to the final glory, saying, "I will that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am." Assuredly, however, he assumes and presupposes all the great intermediate steps,—the purchase with his blood, the calling effectually, the "manifesting of the Father's name," the "keeping," the "sanctifying." But he prefers to connect the glory at once with the everlasting purpose,—the giving to him by the Father,—because it lay at the root of all, secured all, formed the fundamental ground of the final heavenly glory—as he probably intended to intimate in the closing words of the verse (though I do not enter into these), "For thou lovedst me—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; for thou lovedst me," and them *in* me, as if he had said, and for my sake, "before the foundation of the world." So much, then, for the parties in whose behalf the prayer of the text is offered—"They whom thou hast given me."

II. Secondly, observe the very peculiar style and manner

of the prayer, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am." "*I will*"! Strange, very unwonted, manner of prayer that, "I will"!\* Do you remember those words of our Lord in the fourteenth chapter, "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"?—"we,"—God and I! What mere creature could, without blasphemy, approach such a manner of language, "*we* will come unto him, and make our abode with him"? And so, in the text, I think that we have a style of language which only He could use, who, indeed, was the servant of the Father for our salvation,—our "Advocate with the Father,"—but essentially and eternally was the Father's equal,—the "fellow of the Lord of hosts,"—"Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory." At the same time, I doubt not that the more immediate ground on which this unwonted "I will" proceeds, is that of the everlasting covenant, with its conditions all fulfilled by the Mediator. The Lord Jesus, in other words, lays claim in this wondrous chapter—reverentially, indeed, for it belongs to the Advocate to *ask*,—to sue out at the hand of the Judge,—even the things to which he has an unquestioned right in law—lays claim, at the hand of the Father, to that only which He had covenanted expressly to him on determinate conditions, as it is written, "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed—He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied—By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities."

\* Attempts have been made to give a feebler sense to the verb. But it is clear that the "*ἔλω*," either, on the one hand, must signify bare *willingness* or *wish* (which is out of the question here), or, on the other hand, must bear the sense of the emphatic, "I will."



“Father, I will,” says he, “that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am.” True, the conditions of the covenant had not yet,—on this night,—been in their whole extent actually fulfilled. There even remained the weightiest of them all—Gethsemane remained; and the accursed death of the next day remained. But then, just as in the fourth verse of the chapter, Jesus, in a triumphant assurance of faith, had spoken as if all were already accomplished to the full, saying, “I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do,” and as the whole subsequent intercession and advocacy together proceeds on that assumption, so is it in the prayer of our text, “Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am.”

Well; but may we not venture to ask a further question, Why this unwonted “I will,”—this language of claim,—for the first time now in the closing petition, “that they be with me where I am”? If I am not greatly mistaken, there is to be seen here a very peculiar tenderness, and grace, and faithfulness, of our Lord Jesus, “Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me *be with me where I am.*” Is it not the loving and faithful Saviour, claiming at length his affianced Bride,—claiming his dearly “purchased possession,” his redeemed body, his loved and ransomed ones, out of this world of suffering and sin, to be immediately with himself for ever? No doubt he has already prayed, “Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me”—“Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth.” But, in the midst of that keeping and sanctifying, he sees them still in the country of an enemy,—in the world, though no more of it. He sees them in conflict still with many an adversary. He “sees them toiling in rowing”—tossed on tempestuous seas—“afflicted, tossed with tempest, and

not comforted." He will not have them thus always. They are a part of Himself,—the "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." They belong to heaven already upon earth. And so, while Christian friends, it may be, would hold them back,—fain detain them here, does he lovingly claim them to be with Himself—so claim them in the hearing, as it were (see ver. 13), of those mourning friends, that he may the more prevail on them to part ungrudgingly with them for his sake, and for their higher, highest, blessedness, saying, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory."

III. But thus are we brought to the third and last particular which invites our thoughts here, even the prayer itself in the matter of it—"That they be with me—I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory." Truly it is the top-stone, as I said. It is the crown set on the entire series of intercessions. Very precious, indeed, each of them. Very precious that one, "Keep them through thine own name;" and that, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil;" and that one, "Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth." But all had been incomplete and abortive without the prayer of the text. Grace must have its consummation in glory. The bud must ripen into the flower,—the seed become the predestined glorious harvest, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory."

1. "*With me—that they be with me.*" But are they not "with him" already in this world? In a very important sense they *are* already with him; and He is with them.

They are with Him by faith, and holy love, and fellowship. And He is with them by his Spirit,—his upholding, sanctifying, comforting grace. You remember his words, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me”—I with him, and he with me, from the first hour of his welcoming me truly into his heart! And you remember his words, “He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.” “I sat down under his shadow,” the ransomed Church exclaims—“His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me”—“Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.” Dear hearers, know we anything of what it is to be with Christ thus by faith, and loving fellowship, *here?* For, assuredly, if we are altogether strangers to it, and shall remain so until we die, never, never, shall we know what it is to be with Christ in the unspeakably higher and nobler manner of which the prayer of the text speaks, “I will that they *be with me where I am.*” And what is that— that higher, nobler, manner of being with Christ? Ah, who shall tell what it is? It is unspeakable indeed. Eye hath not seen it; ear hath not heard it. But generally at least, it is to be with Christ no more by faith in the testimony of the word, but personally and immediately with him—“with him *where he is,*”—before the throne with him,—with him in the immediate presence of his Father and our Father, his God and our God,—with him after that manner, “I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.” So very, very, far higher is this manner of being with Christ, that Scripture elsewhere speaks as if in this world believers were not with Christ at all,—were

absent from him altogether—"Knowing," writes Paul, "that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord; we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present"—for the first time present—"with the Lord."

And thus let me observe that, while the prayer of the text is to have its highest fulfilment only at the second coming of Jesus, and the resurrection of the body in glory, it has its blessed answer,—its fulfilment in a very glorious manner,—at and in the death of the believer, his departure out of this world. Happily this is placed beyond all question by the words of the text, taken in connection with the apostle's words just alluded to, "Absent from the body, present"—at once present—"with the Lord." O yes—in the touching words of our Catechism—"the souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory." "Having a desire," Paul writes, "to depart, and to be with Christ"—"Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am." As I have said, we cannot tell what that is in the details of it. But thus much is certain, that to be "with Christ where he is," is perfected holiness, and perfected happiness, both. It is perfected holiness, likeness to Jesus. For "there shall in no wise enter" into that immediate presence "anything that defileth." And it is perfected happiness. No possible tears of sorrow in the presence of this blessed One—"In thy presence is fulness of joy." Beloved, at the best of that fellowship with Christ which is in this world by faith, it is but a kind of *distant nearness*, so to speak—as if one gazed on the picture of some loved friend, or read a much prized letter from his hand. And even that distant nearness—how liable is it to be interrupted, painfully broken, so that the believer is fain to cry from time to time, "Oh that I knew where I might find him!" "If ye find my beloved, tell him that I am sick of love." But

what a change now, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be WITH ME WHERE I AM"!

2. "That they may behold," continues the Lord, "*that they may behold my glory.*" And here again, be it observed that, as the believer is, in an important sense, "with Christ" in this world, so in this world, in a very important sense, does he "behold Christ's glory." O yes, the old words still hold good, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father." "Yet a little while," said Jesus, "and the world seeth me no more; *but ye see me.*" "We all," says Paul, "with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." But then, listen to the same apostle, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." "*Through a glass*—now we see through a glass,"—that is to say, behold Christ's glory by faith only in the reports of the word concerning him—"through a glass *darkly*,"—dimly, imperfectly, more or less erroneously, with deep shadows liable ever to come across our vision—shadows of bodily infirmity; shadows of unbelief and sin; shadows of corruption, desertion, temptation. "But then *face to face.*" What a word! "Thou canst not see my face," the Lord said to Moses at Horeb. He had prayed, "I beseech thee, shew me thy glory." And the Lord had answered him, "I will make all my goodness pass before thee." But he added, "Thou canst not see my face; for there shall no man see me, and live." As if he should say—but when thou dost die, Moses, thou canst, and shalt, see me face to face! "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they

may behold my glory." Oh, if the believer, seeing Jesus only as he "shews himself through the lattice" of the word and ordinances,—seeing him but through a glass darkly,—is made to break forth from time to time, "His head is as the most fine gold; his locks are bushy, and black as a raven"—"His countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars"—"His mouth is most sweet; yea, he is altogether lovely," what will it be to "see him as he is,"—to see him face to face,—to see him without clouds, without shadows, without sin, any more,—to see that God-man,—that crucified One, whose "visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men,"—that "Lamb, as it had been slain, in the midst of the throne,"—that "white and ruddy, and chiefest among ten thousand"? "He shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. . . . And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever." "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory."

Three words of inference before I close.

(1.) First, what blessed light is cast here over the glory of the Saviour's Person,—his essential and eternal Divinity! For the psalmist, by the Holy Ghost, speaks to Jehovah thus, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee"—Thee, Jehovah? But the Lord Jesus in the text makes heaven absolutely to lie in being with Himself, to behold his glory! How abhorrent, if he were but a creature,—if he were not Jehovah, the "fellow of the Lord of hosts!" How revolting, apart from such words as, "I

and my Father are one"—“He that hath seen me hath seen the Father”—“Thomas said unto him, My Lord and my God”!

(2.) Again, what light is cast in the text over the death of them that die in the Lord! It is not death, in fact—it is but the answering of this prayer, “Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory.” Jesus *died*; believers *sleep*. “Absent from the body, present with the Lord.” “If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.” Amid all that is terrible oftentimes in the outward aspects of their dying, they yet die not of the covenant of works, but of the everlasting covenant of grace—as in answer to Christ’s prayer, so in fulfilment of his promise, “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.”

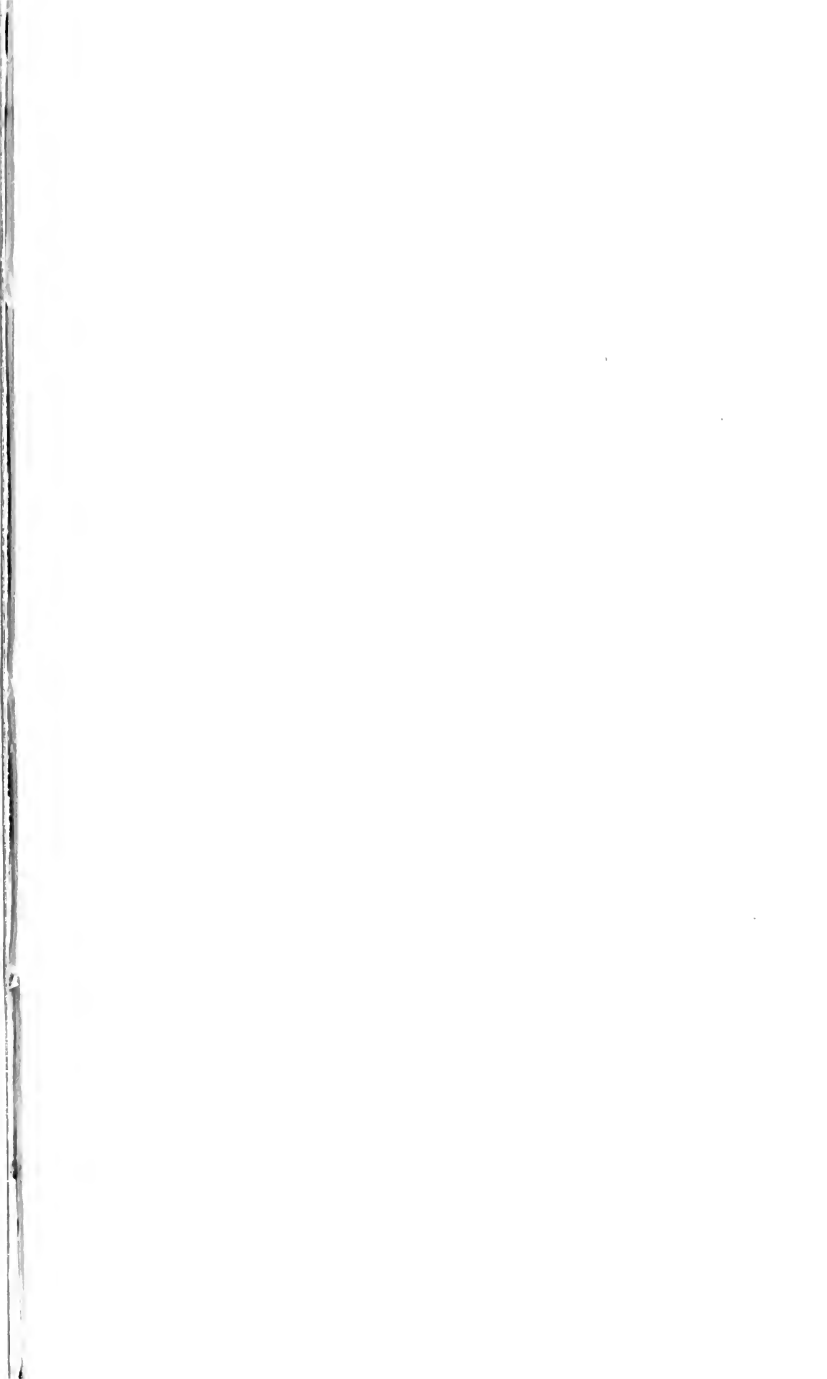
(3.) But lastly, what solemn light is cast here over the death of ungodly, Christless, men—“men of the world, who have their portion in this life”! *Christless* men! But Christ *is* heaven, brethren; heaven, in the very soul of it, is to be with Christ. Thus heaven could be no heaven to them, if they were there. But alas! not only is it thus impossible they should be in heaven—continuing as they are, they must die under the curse,—the unremoved sentence of the law; and this must be their dying, in the words of our Lord Jesus, “The rich man died, and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments”—“Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.” But that gulf, blessed be God, is not *yet* fixed. Although it exists already in this world between the wicked, and God with his ransomed family, *there is a pathway as yet across it*—“I am the way,” said Jesus, “and the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the

Father, but by me.” “I pray not for these alone, but for them also who shall *believe on me* through their word.” Oh, will you not be persuaded to give your hand to this blessed One, that he may lead you safe across the gulf, once and for ever? “Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.”

“Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live”!

“Awake, O north wind; and come thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits”!





## Date Due

<small>C V</small>			
