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WORKS

OF THE LATE

REV. ROBERT MURRAY M^c^CHEYNE,

MINISTER OF ST. PETER'S CHURCH, DUNDEE.

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SERMONS.

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PREFACE.

THE very favorable reception which the Christian public has given to the "Memoir and Remains" of the author, by the Rev. Andrew A. Bonar, has induced the Editor of this Volume, with the sanction and approbation of a clerical friend of great eminence and piety, intimately acquainted with the author and his writings, and by whom the greater part of the work has been revised, to publish these Additional Remains, consisting of a selection from the Sermons delivered by Mr. M'Cheyne in the course of his ministry. Like those annexed to Mr. Bonar's Memoir, they are printed from the author's MS. notes, written as preparations for the pulpit, but not intended for publication, or revised by him with that view.

This volume contains specimens of Discourses delivered in all the years of the author's ministry; and the places and dates of delivery are given at the close of each Discourse, wherever they have been marked. The demand for their publication by members of his flock and other friends, many of whom own him as their spiritual father, has been loud and urgent. To all such the book will be acceptable, as helping "to stir up their pure minds by way of remembrance;" and, notwithstanding many imperfections, which, in the circumstances of its publication, have been unavoidable, the Editor hopes that, by the blessing of God, it may be useful to others also into whose hands it may fall.

EDINBURGH, *November*, 1846.

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SERMONS, &c.

SERMON I.

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father but by me."—John xiv., 6.

It is the saying of an old divine, that God often orders it, that when he is in hand with the greatest mercies for us, then we are most of all sinning against him; which he doth to magnify his love the more.

In the words I have read, we find an example of this. At no time did the heart of Jesus overflow with a tenderer and a more sovereign love to his disciples, than when he said, "Let not your heart be troubled." They were troubled by many things. He had told them that he was going to leave them; he had told them that one should betray him; that another should deny him; that they should all be offended because of him that very night; and perhaps they thought he was going from them in anger. But, whatever the cause of their trouble was, Jesus's bosom was like a vessel full to overflowing, and these words were the overlipping drops of love—"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me." Surely such words of confiding tenderness were never whispered in this cold world before; and O then, think how cold, how dark, how dull is the question with which Thomas breaks in upon the heavenly discourse; "Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way?" And yet how condescendingly does Jesus bear with their cold-hearted dulness! How lovingly does he begin the very alphabet of salvation with them, and not only answers, but over-answers Thomas—gives him more than he could ask or think. He asked about the way and the place, but Christ answers, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me." Regarding this, then, as a complete description of the gospel salvation, let us go over the different parts of it.

I. *Christ is the Way.*—"I am the way; no man cometh," &c. The whole Bible bears witness that by nature we have no way to

the Father. We are by nature full of sin, and God is by nature infinitely holy; that is, he shrinks away from sin. Just as the sensitive plant, by its very nature, shrinks away from the touch of a human hand, so God, by his very nature, shrinks away from the touch of sin. He is everlastingly separate from sinners; he is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.

1. This was impressively taught to Adam and the patriarchs. As long as Adam walked holily, God dwelt in him, and walked in him, and communed with him; but when Adam fell, "God drove the man out of paradise; 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." This flaming sword between the cherubim was a magnificent emblem of God—the just and sin-hating God. In the bush, he appeared to Moses as a consuming fire—in the temple, he appeared between the cherubim in the milder glory of the Shechinah; but here he appeared between the cherubim as a sword—a just and sin-hating God. And I beseech you to remark, that this flaming sword turned *every way*, to keep the way of the tree of life. If it had not turned *every way*, if it had left some foot-path unglared across, then Adam might have stolen in by that foot-path, and made his own way to the tree of life. But no: whatever avenue he tried—however secret, however narrow, however steep and difficult—however silently he crept along, still this flaming meteor met him, and it seemed to say, "How can man be just with God? by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh living be justified." Well might Adam sit down, wearied with the vain search for a pathway into life; for man by nature has no way to the Father.

But Christ says, "I am the way." As he says in the 16th Psalm, "Thou wilt show me the path of life." No man could find out this path of life; but Jesus says, "Thou wilt show it me; in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore." *Jesus pitied* the poor sons of Adam vainly struggling to find out a way into the paradise of God, and he left the bosom of the Father, just that he might open up a way for us into the bosom of the Father. And how did he do it? Was it by escaping the vigilance of the flaming sword? No; for it turned every way. Was it by exerting his divine authority, and commanding the glittering blade to withdraw? No; for that would have been to dishonor his Father's law, instead of magnifying it. He therefore became a man in our stead, yea, became sin. God caused to meet on him the iniquities of us all. He advanced in our stead to meet that fiery meteor; he fell beneath its piercing blade; for he remembered the word of the Prophet, which is written, "Awake, O sword! against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts."

And now, since the glittering blade is bathed in the side of the Redeemer, the guiltiest of sinners, whoever you be, whatever you

be, may enter in over his bleeding body, may find access to the paradise of God, to eat of the tree of life, and live for ever. Come quickly—doubt not; for he says, *I am the way.*

2. The same fact—that man has by nature no way to the Father—was impressively taught to Moses and the people of Israel.

When God condescended to dwell among the children of Israel, he dwelt peculiarly in the holiest of all—the innermost apartment of the Jewish temple. There the visible token of his presence rested between the cherubim—at one time described to us as a light inaccessible and full of glory—at another time as a cloud that filled the temple. But this innermost apartment, or holiest of all (or secret place, as it is called in the Psalms), was separated from the holy place by a curtain or veil, and through that veil no man was allowed to pass, lest he should die, except the High Priest, who entered in, once in the year, not without blood. Now, no picture could express more plainly that the way into the holiest was not made manifest—that no sinful man has any way of coming into the presence of God.

But Jesus says, "I am the way." Jesus was grieved that we were shut out from the holiest of all, from the presence of God; for he knew by experience that in that presence there is fulness of joy. But how did he open the way? Did he pull aside the veil, that we might steal in secretly and easily into the presence of the Father? No: but he offered himself, an offering to satisfy Divine justice, and reconcile us to God. "He said, It is finished, and bowed his head and gave up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom." It is finished; the punishment of the law is borne, the demands of the law are answered, the way is finished, the veil is rent, from the top to the bottom! Not a shred of the dreadful curtain now remains to intercept us. The guiltiest, the vilest sinner of you all, has now liberty to enter in through the rent veil, under the light of Jehovah's countenance, to dwell in the secret of his tabernacle, to behold his beauty, and to inquire in his temple.

And now, my friends, is this your way of coming to the Father? Christ says, "I am the way; no man cometh unto the Father but by me." If, then, you will still keep to your own way, whatever it may be, whether it be the way of tears, or penances, or vows of amendment, or hopes that God will not deal strictly—if you will not be warned, you will find in the judgment-day that the cherubic sword turned every way, and that you are left a prey to the consuming fire.

But oh! if there be one soul that can find no peace in any self-righteous way, if there be one of you who finds that you are lost in yourself, behold Christ says to you, "I am *the* way," as he says in another place, "I am *the* door." It is a full, free, and open way, and it is a way for sinners. Why wait a moment longer?

There was once a partition wall between you and God; but Christ hath cast it down. God was once angry; but his anger is turned away from the blessed path. In Christ he is ever well pleased.

II. *Christ is the Truth.*—The whole Bible, and the whole of experience, bear witness that by nature we are ignorant of *the truth*. No doubt there are many truths which an unconverted man does know. He may know the truths of mathematics and arithmetic, he may know many of the common every-day truths; but still it cannot be said that an unconverted man knows *the truth*, for Christ is the truth. Christ may be called the key-stone of the arch of truth. Take away the key-stone of an arch, and the whole becomes a heap of rubbish. The very same stones may be there, but they are all fallen, smothered. and confused, without order, without end. Just so; take Christ away, and the whole arch of truth becomes a heap of rubbish. The very same truths may be there; but they are all fallen, without coherence, without order, without end. Christ may be called the sun of the system of truth. Take away the sun out of our system, and every planet would rush into confusion. The very same planets would be there; but their conflicting forces would draw them hither and thither, orb dashing against orb in endless perplexity. Just so; take Christ away, and the whole system of truth rushes into confusion. The same truths may be in the mind, but all conflicting and jarring in inextricable mazes; for "the path of the wicked is as darkness; they know not at what they stumble." But let Christ be revealed to an unconverted soul, let it not be merely a man speaking about Christ unto him, but let the spirit of God reveal him, and there is revealed, not a truth, but *the truth*. You put the key-stone into the arch of truth; you restore the sun to the centre of the system. All truth becomes orderly and serviceable in that mind.

Now he knows the truth with regard to himself. Did the Son of God really leave the bosom of the Father to bear wrath in our stead? then I must be under wrath. Did the Lord Jesus become a servant, that he might obey the will of God instead of sinners? then I must be without any righteousness—a child of disobedience.

Again, knowing Christ, he knows the truth with regard to God. Did God freely give up his Son to the death for us all? then, if I believe in Jesus, there is no condemnation to me. God is my Father, and God is love.

My friends, have you seen Christ, who is the truth? Has he been revealed to you, not my flesh and blood, but by the Spirit of our God? Then you know how true it is that in him "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge"—that he is the "Alpha and Omega," the beginning and the ending of all knowledge. But

if you have not seen Christ, then you know nothing yet as you ought to know; all your knowledge is like a bridge without a key-stone, like a system without a sun. What good will it do you in hell, that you knew all the sciences in the world, all the events of history, and all the busy politics of your little day? Do you not know that your very knowledge will be turned into an instrument of torture in hell? Oh, how will you wish in that day that you had read your newspaper less and your Bible more; that with all your getting you had got understanding; that with all your knowledge you had known the Saviour, whom to know is life everlasting.

III. *Christ is the Life.*—The whole Bible bears witness that by nature we are dead in trespasses and sins—that we are as unable to walk holily in the world as a dead man is unable to rise and walk.

Both Scripture and experience alike testify that we are by nature dead in trespasses and sins; and yet it is not a death in which we are wholly inactive, for in it we are said to walk according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air.

This truth is taught us impressively in that vision of the prophet Ezekiel, where he was carried out by the Spirit, and set down in the midst of an open valley, full of dry bones; and as he passed by them round about, behold there were very many in the open valley, and lo! they were very dry.

Just such is the view which every child of God gets of the world. The dry bones are very many, and they are very dry; and he asks the same question which God asked of Ezekiel—"Can these bones live?" Oh yes, my friends; and does not experience teach you the same thing. True, the dead cannot know that they are dead; and yet, if the Lord touch your heart, you will find it out: we prophesy to dry bones; for this is the Lord's way; while we prophesy the breath enters in. *Look back over your life then.* See how you have walked according to the course of this world. You have always been like a man swimming with the stream, never like a man swimming against the current. *Look into your heart,* and see how it has turned against all the commandments; you feel the Sabbath to be a weariness—instead of calling it a delight and honorable. If ever you tried to keep the commandments of God; if ever you tried to keep your eyes from unlawful desires, your tongue from words of anger, or gossiping, or bitterness, your heart from malice, and envy, and covetousness; if ever you have tried this, and I fancy most unconverted men have tried it; if ever you have tried this, did you not find it impossible? It was like raising the dead. Did you not find a struggle against yourself? O how plain that you are dead—not born again. Marvel not that we say unto you, ye must be born again. You must be joined to

Christ, for Christ *is the life*. Suppose it were possible for a dead limb to be joined into a living body, so completely that all the veins should receive the purple tide of living blood; suppose bone to join on to bone, and sinew to sinew, and nerve to nerve, do you not see that that limb, however dead before, would become a living limb. Before, it was cold, and stiff, and motionless, and full of corruption; now, it is warm and pliable, and full of life and motion. It is a living limb, because joined on to that which is life. Or, suppose it possible for a withered branch to be grafted into a living vine, so completely that all the channels should receive the flow of the generous sap, do you not see that that branch, however dead before, becomes a living branch? Before, it was dry, and fruitless, and withered; now, it is full of sap, of life, and vigor. It is a living branch, for it is joined to the vine, which is its life. Well, then, just in the same way, Christ is the life of every soul that cleaves to him. He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit. Is your soul like a dead limb—cold, stiff, motionless, and full of corruption? Cleave you to Christ; be joined to him by faith, and you shall be one spirit; you shall be made warm, and vigorous, and full of activity, in God's service.

Is your soul like a withered branch, dry, fruitless, and withered, wanting both leaves and fruit? Cleave you to Christ; be joined to him, and you shall be one spirit. You will find it true that Christ is the life; your life will be hid with Christ in God. You will say, 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."

Remember, then, my unbelieving friends, the only way for you to become holy is to become united to Christ. And remember you, my believing friends, that if ever you are relaxing in holiness, the reason is, you are relaxing your hold on Christ. Abide in me, and I in you, so shall ye bear much fruit. Severed from me, ye can do nothing.

Dundee, 1836.

SERMON II.

"Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus."—Heb. iii., 1.

When a traveller passes very rapidly through a country, the eye has no time to rest upon the different objects in it, so that, when he comes to the end of his journey, no distinct impressions have been made upon his mind; he has only a confused notion of the country through which he has travelled.

This explains how it is that death, judgment, eternity, make so

little impression upon most men's minds. Most people never stop to think, but hurry on through life, and find themselves in eternity before they have once put the question, "What must I do to be saved?" More souls are lost through want of consideration than in any other way.

The reason why men are not awakened and made anxious for their souls is, that the devil never gives them time to consider. Therefore God cries, Stop, poor sinner, stop and think. Consider your ways. "O that you were wise, that you understood this, that you considered your latter end." And, again, he cries, "Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider."

In the same way does the devil try to make the children of God doubt if there be a Providence. He hurries them away to the shop and market. Lose no time, he says, but make money. Therefore God cries, Stop, poor sinner, stop and think; and Jesus says, "Consider the lilies of the field how they grow; consider the ravens, which have neither storehouse nor barn."

In the same way does the Devil try to make the children of God live uncomfortable and unholy lives. He beguiles them away from simply looking to Jesus: he hurries them away to look at a thousand other things, as he led Peter, walking on the sea, to look round at the waves. But God says, Look here, consider the Apostle and High Priest of your profession: look unto me, and be ye saved; run your race, looking unto Jesus; consider Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

I. *Believers should live in daily consideration of the greatness and glory of Christ.*

(1.) There was once a time when time was not; when there was no earth, neither sun, nor moon, nor star; a time when you might have wandered through all space, and never found a resting place to the sole of your foot; when you would have found no creatures anywhere, but God everywhere; when there were no angels with golden harps hymning celestial praises; but God alone was all in all.

Question. Where was Jesus then? *Ans.* He was with God. "In the beginning was the *Word*, and *the Word was with God.*" He was near to God, and in perfect happiness there. "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way; before his works of old. Then I was by him as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him." He was in the bosom of God; "The only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father." He was in perfect glory there: "O Father, glorify thou me with thyself, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."

Ques. What was Jesus then? *Ans.* He was God. The Word was with God, and "was God." He was equal with the Father. "He thought it no robbery to be equal with God." He was rich.

"He was the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person."

Now, brethren, could I lift you away to that time when God was alone from all eternity. Could I have shown you the glory of Jesus then, how he dwelt in the bosom of the Father, and was daily his delight; and could I have told you "That is the glorious being who is to undertake the cause of poor lost sinners; that is he who is going to put himself in their room and stead, to suffer all they should suffer, and obey all they should obey; consider Jesus; look long and earnestly; weigh every consideration in the balance of the soundest judgment; consider his rank, his nearness, his dearness to God the Father; consider his power, his glory, his equality to the Father in everything; consider, and say, do you think you would intrust your case to him? Do you think he would be a sufficient Saviour?" O brethren, would not every soul cry out, He is enough, I want no other Saviour?

(2.) Again, there was a time when this world sprang into being; when the sun began to shine, and earth and seas began to smile. There was a time when myriads of happy angels springing into being, first spread their wings, doing his commandments; when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.

Ques. What was Jesus doing then? *Ans.* "Without him was not anything made that was made." "By him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him." O brethren, could I lift you away back to that wonderful day, and show you Jesus calling all the angels into being, hanging the earth upon nothing; could you have heard the voice of Jesus saying, Let there be light, and there was light; and could I have told you, "That is he who is yet to undertake for sinners; consider him, and see if you think he will be a sufficient Saviour; look long and earnestly;" good news, good news for sinners, if this mighty being undertake for us! I can as little doubt the sureness and completeness of my salvation as I can doubt the sureness of the solid earth beneath my feet.

(3.) But the work of creation is long since passed. Jesus has been upon our earth. And now he is not here; he is risen. Eighteen hundred years and more have passed since Christ was upon the earth.

Ques. Where is Jesus now? *Ans.* "He is set down at the right hand of the Majesty on high." He is upon the throne with God in his glorified body, and his throne is for ever. A sceptre is put into his hand, a sceptre of righteousness, and the oil of gladness is poured over him. All power is given to him in heaven and on earth.

O brethren, could you and I pass this day through these hea-

vens, and see what is now going on in the sanctuary above, could you see what the child of God now sees who died last night; could you see the Lamb with the scars of his five deep wounds in the very midst of the throne, surrounded by all the redeemed, every one having harps and golden vials full of odors; could you see the many angels round about the throne, whose number is ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, all singing, Worthy is the "Lamb that was slain;" and were one of these angels to tell you, "This is he that undertook the cause of lost sinners; he undertook to bear their curse and to do their obedience; he undertook to be the second Adam, the man in their stead, and lo! there he is upon the throne of heaven; consider him; look long and earnestly upon his wounds, upon his glory, and tell me do you think it would be safe to trust him? Do you think his sufferings and obedience will have been enough?" Yes, yes, every soul exclaims, Lord, it is enough! Lord, stay thy hand! Show me no more, for I can bear no more. Or rather let me ever stand and gaze upon the Almighty, all-worthy, all-divine Saviour, till my soul drink in complete assurance that his work undertaken for sinners is a finished work. Yes, though the sins of all the world were on my one wicked head, still I could not doubt that his work is complete, and that I am quite safe when I believe in him.

I would now plead with believers. Some of you have really been brought by God to believe in Jesus. Yet you have no abiding peace, and very little growing in holiness. Why is this? It is because your eye is fixed anywhere but on Christ. You are so busy looking at books, or looking at men, or looking at the world, that you have no time, no heart, for looking at Christ.

No wonder you have little peace and joy in believing. No wonder you live so inconsistent and unholy a life. Change your plan. Consider the greatness and glory of Christ, who has undertaken all in the stead of sinners, and you would find it quite impossible to walk in darkness, or to walk in sin. O what mean, despicable thoughts you have of the glorious Immanuel! Lift your eyes from your own bosom, downcast believer; look upon Jesus. It is good to consider your ways, but it is far better to consider Christ.

I would now invite anxious souls. Anxious soul! have you understood all the glory of Christ? Have you understood that he undertook for guilty sinners? And do you doubt if he be a sufficient Saviour? Oh, what mean views you have of Christ if you dare not risk your soul upon him?

Objection. I do not doubt that Christ has suffered and done quite enough, but I fear it was for others, and not for me. If I were sure it was for me, I would be quite happy. *Ans.* It is nowhere said in the Bible, that Christ died for this sinner or that sinner. If you are waiting till you find your own name in the Bible,

you will wait for ever. But it is said a few verses before that, "He tasted death for every man;" and again, "He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world." Not that all men are saved by him. Ah, no; the most never come to Jesus, and are lost; but this shows that any sinner may come, even the chief of sinners, and take Christ as his own Saviour. Come you, then, anxious soul; say you, He is my refuge and my fortress! and then, be anxious if you can.

II. *Consider Christ as the Apostle, or Messenger of God.*

The word Apostle means messenger; one ordained and sent on a particular embassy. Now Christ is an Apostle, for God ordained and sent him into the world.

In the Old Testament, the name by which he is oftenest called is the Angel of the Lord, or the Messenger of the Covenant. He is called God's Elect, chosen for the work; he is called God's servant; he is called the Messiah, or the Christ, or the Anointed, because God anointed him and sent him to the work. In the New Testament, over and over again Christ calls himself, the sent of God. "As thou hast sent me into the world, so have I sent them into the world, that the world may know that thou hast sent me." "And these have known that thou hast sent me." All this shows plainly that it is not the Son alone who is interested in the saving of poor sinners, but the Father also. "The Father sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world."

Objection.—True, Christ is a great and glorious Saviour, and able to accomplish anything to save poor sinners; but perhaps God the Father may not agree to pour out his wrath upon his Son, or to accept of his Son as a surety in our stead. *Ans.* Look here, Christ is the Apostle of God. It is as much God the Father's work, as it is Christ's work. It occupied as much of the heart of God as ever it did of the heart of Christ. God loved the world, as much and truly as ever Christ loved the world. God gave his Son, as much as Christ gave himself for us. So, God the Holy Spirit is as much interested in it as the Father and Son. God gave his Son; the Spirit anointed him and dwelt in him without measure. At his baptism God acknowledged him for his beloved Son; the Holy Spirit came on him like a dove.

O brethren, could I lift you away to the eternity that is past, could I bring you into the council of the eternal Three, and as it was once said, "Let us *make* man;" could I let you hear the word, "Let us *save* man;" could I show you how God from all eternity designed his Son to undertake for poor sinners; how it was the very plan and the bottommost desire of the heart of the Father that Jesus should come into the world and do and die in the stead of sinners; how the Holy Spirit breathed sweetest incense, and dropped like holiest oil upon the head of the descending Saviour; could I show you the intense interest with which the eye of God

followed Jesus through his whole course of sorrow, and suffering, and death; could I show you the anxious haste with which God rolled away the stone from the sepulchre while it was yet dark, for he would not leave his soul in hell, neither suffer his Holy One to see corruption; could I show you the ecstasies of love and joy that beat in the bosom of the infinite God when Jesus ascended to his Father and our Father; how he welcomed him with a fulness of kindness and grace which God alone could give, and God alone could receive, saying, "Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee; thou art indeed worthy to be called my Son; never till this day wast thou so worthy to be called mine; thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." O sinner, will you ever doubt any more whether God the Father be seeking thy salvation, whether the heart of Christ and of his Father be the same in this one grand controversy? O believer, consider this Apostle of God; meditate on these things; look and look again, until your peace be like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea, till the breathing of your soul be, Abba, Father!

III. *Consider Christ as the High Priest of our profession.*

The duty of the High Priest was twofold—1*st*, to make Atonement; 2*d*. to make Intercession.

When the High Priest slew the goat at the altar of burnt-offerings, he did it in presence of all the people, to make atonement for them. They all stood around gazing and considering their High Priest: and when he gathered the blood into the golden basin, and put on the white garments, and passed away from their sight within the veil, their eye followed him, till the mysterious curtain hid him from their sight. But even then the heart of the believing Jew followed him still. Now he is drawing near to God for us, now he is sprinkling the blood seven times before the mercy-seat, saying, Let this blood be instead of our blood; now he is praying for us.

Brethren, let us also consider our great High Priest.

(1.) *Consider him making Atonement.*—You cannot look at him on the cross as the disciples did—you cannot see the blood streaming from his five deep wounds—you cannot see him shedding his blood that the blood of sinners might not be shed. Yet still, if God spare us, you may see bread broken and wine poured out, a living picture of the dying Saviour. Now, brethren, the atonement has been made, Christ has died, his sufferings are all past. And how is it that you do not enjoy peace? It is because you do not consider. "Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." Consider: has Jesus died in the stead of guilty sinners, and do you heartily consent to take Jesus to be the man in your stead? then, you do not need to die. O happy believer, rejoice evermore. Live within sight of Calvary, and you will live within

sight of glory ; and, O rejoice in the happy ordinance that sets a broken Saviour so plainly before you.

(2.) *Consider Christ as making Intercession.*—When Christ ascended from the Mount of Olives, and passed through these heavens, carrying his bloody wounds into the presence of God : and when his disciples had gazed after him, till a cloud received him out of their sight, we are told that *they returned to Jerusalem with great joy.* What! are they joyful at parting with their blessed Master? When he told them he was to leave them, sorrow filled their hearts, and he had to argue with them and comfort them, saying, Let not your heart be troubled ; it is expedient for you that I go away. How, then, are they changed! Jesus has left them, and they are filled with joy. Oh! here is the secret, they knew that Christ was now going into the presence of God for them, that their great High Priest was now entering within the veil to make intercession for them.

Now, believer, would you share in the great joy of the disciples? Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus. He is above yon clouds, and above yon sky. O that you would stand gazing up into heaven, not with the bodily eye, but with the eye of faith. Oh! what a wonderful thing the eye of faith is: it sees beyond the stars, it pierces to the throne of God, and there it looks on the face of Jesus making intercession for us, whom having not seen we love, in whom, though now we see him not, yet believing we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Oh! if you would live thus, what sweet peace would fill your bosom! And how many droppings of the Spirit would come down on you in answer to the Saviour's prayer. Oh! how your face would shine like Stephen ; and the poor blind world would see that there is a joy which the world cannot give, and the world cannot take away, a heaven upon earth.

Dundee, 1836.

SERMON III.

"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 unto my taste."—Song of Solomon ii., 2, 3.

If an unconverted man were taken away into heaven, where Christ sits in glory, and if he overheard Christ's words of admiring love towards the believer, he could not understand them, he could not comprehend how Christ should see a loveliness in poor religious people whom *he* in the bottom of his heart despised. Or again, if an unconverted man were to overhear a Christian at his

devotions when he is really within the veil, and were to listen to his words of admiring, adoring love towards Christ, he could not possibly understand them, he could not comprehend how the believer should have such a burning affection towards one unseen, in whom he himself saw no form nor comeliness. So true it is that the natural man knoweth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him. There may be some now hearing me who have a rooted dislike to religious people, they are so stiff, so precise, so gloomy, you cannot endure their company. Well then, see here what Christ thinks of them, "As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters." How different you are from Christ! There may be some hearing me who have no desires after Jesus Christ, who never think of him with pleasure; you see no form nor comeliness in him, no beauty that you should desire him; you do not love the melody of his name; you do not pray to him continually. Well then, see here what the believer thinks of him, how different from you—"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." O that you would be awakened by this very thing, that you are so different from Christ, and so different from the believer, to think that you must be in a natural condition, you must be under wrath!

Doctrine.—The believer is unspeakably precious in the eyes of Christ, and Christ is unspeakably precious in the eyes of the believer.

I. *Inquire what Christ thinks of the believer*—"As the lily among the thorns, so is my love among the daughters."

Christ sees nothing so fair in all this world as the believer. All the rest of the world is like thorns, but the believer is like a beautiful lily in his eyes. When you are walking in a wilderness all overgrown with briers and thorns, if your eye falls upon some lonely flower, tall and white, and pure and graceful, growing in the midst of the thorns, it looks peculiarly beautiful. If it were in the midst of some rich garden among many other flowers, then it would not be so remarkable; but when it is encompassed with thorns on every side, then it engages the eye. Such is the believer in the eyes of Christ. "As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters."

(1.) See what Christ thinks of the unconverted world. It is like a field full of briers and thorns in his eyes. 1. Because fruitless. "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" So Christ gets no fruit from the unconverted world. It is all one wide, thorny waste. 2. Because, when the word is preached among them, it is like sowing among thorns. "Break up your fallow-ground and sow not among thorns." When the sower sowed, some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them; so is preaching to the unconverted. 3. Because their end

will be like that of thorns; they are dry and fit only for the burning. "As thorns cut up shall they be burned in the fire." "For the earth, which is often rained upon and only bears thorns and briers, is rejected, and nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned." My friends, if you are in a Christian state, see what you are in the eyes of Christ—*thorns*. You think that you have many admirable qualities, that you are valuable members of society, and you have a hope that it shall be well with you in eternity. See what Christ says—you are thorns and briers, useless in this world, and fit only for the burning.

(2.) See what Christ thinks of the believer. "As the lily among thorns so is my love among the daughters." The believer is like a lovely flower in the eyes of Christ. 1. Because, justified in the eyes of Christ, washed in his blood, he is pure and white as a lily. Christ can see no spot in his own righteousness. and therefore he sees no spot on the believer. Thou art all fair, my love, as a lily among thorns so is my love. 2. A believer's nature is changed. Once he was like the barren, prickly thorn, fit only for burning; now Christ has put a new spirit in him; the dew has been given to him, and he grows up like the lily. Christ loves the new creature. "All my delight is in them." "As the lily among thorns so is my love among the daughters." Are you a Christian? then never mind though the world despise you, though they call you names; remember Christ loves you, he calls you "my love." Abide in him, and you shall abide in his love. If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed. 3. Because so lonely in the world. Observe, there is but one lily, but many thorns. There is a great wilderness all full of thorns, and only one lonely flower. So there is a world lying in wickedness, and a little flock that believe in Jesus. Some believers are cast down because they feel solitary and alone. If I be in the right way, surely I would not be so lonely. Surely the wise, and the amiable, and the kind people I see round about me, surely, if there were any truth in religion, they would know it. Be not cast down. It is one of the marks of Christ's people that they are alone in the world, and yet they are not alone. It is one of the very beauties which Christ sees in his people, that they are solitary among a world of thorns. "As a lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters." Do not be discouraged. This world is the world of loneliness. When you are transplanted to yon garden of God, then you shall be no more lonely, then you shall be away from all the thorns. As flowers in a rich garden blend together their thousand odors to enrich the passing breeze, so, in the paradise above, you shall join the thousands of the redeemed blending with theirs the odor of your praise. You shall join with the redeemed as living flowers to form a garland for the Redeemer's brow.

II. *Inquire what the believer thinks of Christ.*—"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."

1. Christ is more precious than all other saviours in the eye of the believer. As a traveller prefers an apple-tree to every other tree of the wood, because he finds both shelter and nourishing food under it, so the believer prefers Christ to all other saviours. When a man is travelling in eastern countries, he is often like to drop down under the burning rays of the sun. It is a great relief when he comes to a wood. When Israel were travelling in the wilderness, they came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and seventy palm-trees, and they encamped there by the water. They were glad of the shelter of the trees. So Micah says that God's people "dwell solitarily in the wood;" and Ezekiel promises "they shall sleep in the woods."

But if the traveller be hungry and faint for lack of food, then he will not be content with any tree of the wood, but he will choose out a fruit tree, under which he may sit down and find nourishment as well as shade. He sees a fair apple-tree—he chooses it out of all the trees of the wood, because he can both sit under its shadow and eat its pleasant fruits. So is it with the soul awakened by God. He feels under the heat of God's anger; he is in a weary land; he is brought into the wilderness; he is like to perish; he comes to a wood; many trees offer their shade; where shall he sit down? Under the fir-tree? alas! what fruit has it to give? he may die there. Under the cedar tree, with its mighty branches? alas! he may perish there; for it has no fruit to give. The soul that is taught of God seeks for a complete Saviour. The apple-tree is revealed to the soul. The hungry soul chooses that evermore. He needs to be saved from hell and nourished for heaven. "As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons."

Awakened souls, remember you must not sit down under every tree that offers itself. "Take heed that no one deceive you; for many shall come in Christ's name, saying, I am Christ, and deceive many." There are many ways of saying peace, peace, when there is no peace. You will be tempted to find peace in the world, in self-repentance, in self-reformation. Remember, choose you a tree that will yield fruit as well as shade. "As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons." Pray for a choosing faith. Pray for an eye to discern the apple-tree. Oh! there is no rest for the soul except under that Branch which God has made strong. My heart's desire and prayer for you is, that you may all find rest there.

2. Why has the believer so high an esteem of Christ?

Ans. (1.) Because he has made trial of Christ. "I sat down under his shadow with great delight." All true believers have sat down under the shadow of Christ. Some people think that

they shall be saved because they have got a head-knowledge of Christ. They read of Christ in the Bible, they hear of Christ in the house of God, and they think that is to be a Christian. Alas! my friends, what good would you get from an apple-tree, if I were only to describe it to you; tell you how beautiful it was, how heavily laden with delicious apples? Or, if I were only to show you a picture of the tree, or if I were to show you the tree itself at a distance, what the better would you be? You would not get the good of its shade or its pleasant fruit. Just so, dear brethren, what good will you get from Christ, if you only hear of him in books and sermons, or if you see him pictured forth in the sacrament, or if you were to see him with your bodily eye? What good would all this do, if you do not sit down under his shadow? O my friends, there must be a personal sitting down under the shadow of Christ, if you would be saved. Christ is the bush that has been burned yet not consumed. Oh! it is a safe place for a hell-deserving sinner to rest.

Some may be hearing me who can say, "I sat down under his shadow." And yet you have forsaken him. Ah! have you gone after your lovers, and away from Christ? Well, then, may God hedge up your way with thorns. Return, return, O Shulamite! There is no other refuge for your soul. Come and sit down again under the shadow of the Saviour.

Ans. (2.) Because he sat down with great delight.

1*st.* Some people think there is no joy in religion, it is a gloomy thing. When a young person becomes a Christian, they would say, Alas! he must bid farewell to pleasure, farewell to the joys of youth, farewell to a merry heart. He must exchange these pleasures for reading of the Bible and dry sermon-books, for a life of gravity and preciseness. This is what the world says. What does the Bible say? "I sat down under his shadow with great delight." Ah! let God be true, and every man a liar. Yet no one can believe this except those who have tried it. Ah! be not deceived, my young friends; the world has many sensual and many sinful delights; the delights of eating and drinking, and wearing gay clothes; the delights of revelry and the dance. No man of wisdom will deny that these things are delightful to the natural heart; but oh! they perish in the using, and they end in an eternal hell. But to sit down under the shadow of Christ, wearied with God's burning anger, wearied with seeking after vain saviours, at last to find rest under the shadow of Christ, ah! this is great delight. Lord, evermore may I sit under this shadow! Lord, evermore may I be filled with this joy!

2*d.* Some people are afraid of anything like joy in religion. They have none themselves, and they do not love to see it in others. Their religion is something like the stars, very high, and very clear, but very cold. When they see tears of anxiety, or tears of joy, they cry out, Enthusiasm, enthusiasm! Well, then,

to the Law and to the Testimony. "I sat down under his shadow *with great delight*." Is this enthusiasm? O Lord, evermore give us this enthusiasm! May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing! If it be really in sitting under the shadow of Christ, let there be no bounds to your joy. O if God would but open your eyes, and give you simple, child-like faith, to look to Jesus, to sit under his shadow, then would songs of joy rise from all our dwellings. Rejoice in the Lord always, and again, I say, rejoice!

3*d*. Because the fruit of Christ is sweet to the taste. All true believers not only sit under the shadow, but partake of his pleasant fruits; just as when you sit under an apple-tree, the fruit hangs above you and around you, and invites you to put out the hand and taste; so, when you come to submit to the righteousness of God, bow your head, and sit down under Christ's shadow, all other things are added unto you. *First*, Temporal mercies are sweet to the taste. None but those of you who are Christians know this, when you sit under the shadow of Christ's temporal mercies, because covenant mercies. "Bread shall be given you; your water shall be sure." These are sweet apples from the tree Christ. O Christian, tell me, is not bread sweeter when eaten thus? Is not water richer than wine? and Daniel's pulse better than the dainties of the King's table? *Second*, Afflictions are sweet to the taste. Every good apple has some sourness in it. So it is with the apples of the tree Christ. He gives afflictions as well as mercies. He sets the teeth on edge; but even these are blessings in disguise—they are covenant gifts. Oh! affliction is a dismal thing when you are not under his shadow. But are you Christians? look on your sorrows as apples from that blessed tree. If you knew how wholesome they are, you would not wish to want them. Several of you know it is no contradiction to say, these apples, though sour, are sweet to my taste. *Third*, The gifts of the Spirit are sweet to the taste. Ah! here is the best fruit that grows on the tree: here are the ripest apples from the topmost branch. You who are Christians know how often your soul is fainting. Well, here is nourishment to your fainting soul. Everything you need is in Christ. "My grace is sufficient for thee." Dear Christian, sit much under that tree—feed much upon that fruit. "Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples, for I am sick of love." *Fourth*, Promises of glory. Some of the apples have a taste of heaven in them. Feed upon these, dear Christians. Some of Christ's apples give you a relish for the fruit of Canaan—for the clusters of Eshcol. Lord, evermore give me these apples; for oh! they are sweet to my taste.

St. Peter's, 1837.

SERMON IV.

" A sword, a sword is sharpened, and also furbished : it is sharpened to make a sore slaughter; it is furbished that it may glitter; should we then make mirth ? it contemneth the rod of my son, as every tree."—Ezek. xxi., 9, 10.

From the second verse of this chapter, we learn that this prophecy was directed against Jerusalem ; " Son of man, set thy face toward Jerusalem, and drop thy word toward the holy places, and prophesy against the land of Israel."

We have already told you that Ezekiel, while yet a youth, was carried captive by Nebuchadnezzar, and placed, with a number of his countrymen, by the river of Chebar. It was there that he delivered his prophecies during a space of twenty-two years. The prophecy I have read was delivered in the seventh year of his captivity, and just three years before Jerusalem was destroyed, and the temple burnt. From verse 2, we learn that these words were directed against Jerusalem, for though God had taken Ezekiel away to minister to the captives by the river of Chebar, yet he made him send many a message of warning and of mercy to his beloved Jerusalem. " Son of man, set thy face toward Jerusalem, and drop thy word towards the holy places, and prophesy against the land of Israel."

God had already fulfilled many of the words of his prophets against Jerusalem. He had fulfilled the word of Jeremiah against one of their kings (Jehoiakim). " He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the walls of Jerusalem." He had fulfilled the word of the same prophet in carrying another king (Jehoiakin) to Babylon with all the goodly vessels of the house of the Lord. But still, neither prophecies nor judgments would awaken Jerusalem ; so that we are told (2 Chron. xxxvi., 12) that Zedekiah the next king, " did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord his God, and humbled not himself before Jeremiah the prophet, speaking from the mouth of the Lord." V. 14. " Moreover, all the chief of the priests and the people transgressed very much, after all the abominations of the heathen ; and polluted the house of the Lord, which he had hallowed in Jerusalem. And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending ; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling-place : But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy."

It was in a time of great hardness and impenitence in Jerusalem that the prophecy before me was delivered, and just three years before the wrath of God was poured on them to the uttermost. (1). All was mirth and sensuality in Jerusalem. (2). The

false prophets prophesied peace, and the people loved to have it so. (3.) There was no noise but that of revelry within the devoted city. But in the midst of that din and revelry, the lone prophet by the river of Chebar heard the muttering of the distant thunder. The faithful servant of God saw God arming himself as a mighty man for the war, and the glittering sword of vengeance in his hand, and he calls aloud to his countrymen, all at ease, with awakening thunders, "A sword, a sword is sharpened and also furbished; it is sharpened to make a sore slaughter; it is furbished that it may glitter; should we then make mirth?"

My friends, those of you who are unconverted are in the very same situation as Jerusalem was. In the years that are now fled, like the mists of the morning, how many messages have you had from God? How many times has he sent his messengers to you, rising up early and sending them? His Bible has been in your houses, a silent, but more mighty pleader for God; his providence has been in your families, in sickness and death, in plenty or poverty, all, all beseeching you to flee from the wrath to come; all, all beseeching you to cleave to the Lord Jesus, the only, the all-sufficient Saviour. All these messages have come to you, and you are yet unconverted, still dead, dry bones, without Christ and without God in the world; and you are saying, Soul, take thine ease, eat and drink, and be merry. But do, my friends, hearken once more, for God does not wish any to perish. I have a word from God unto thee, "A sword, a sword is sharpened and also furbished; it is sharpened to make a sore slaughter; it is furbished that it may glitter; should we then make mirth?"

Doctrine.—It is very unreasonable in unconverted persons to make mirth.

1. It is unreasonable, *because they are under condemnation.*—The sword is sharpened and also furbished. It is sharpened to make a sore slaughter; it is furbished that it may glitter. Should we then make mirth? There is a common idea that men are under probation, as Adam was, and that Christless persons will not be condemned till the judgment; but this is not the case. The Bible says, "He that believeth not is condemned already." "He that hath not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." "Cursed is every one (not shall be) who continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." Christless souls are at present in the horrible pit, every mouth is stopped, and they are guilty before God. They are in prison, ready to be brought out to execution. Therefore, when God sends us to preach to Christless persons he calls it "preaching to the spirits in prison,"* that is, who are under condemnation. The

* I believe he afterwards understood 1 Peter iii., 19, to mean "the spirits who are now in prison."

sword is not only unsheathed, it is sharpened and furbished. It is held over their heads.

Should they then make mirth? It is unreasonable in a condemned malefactor to make mirth. Would it not greatly shock every feeling mind to see a company of men condemned to die, meeting and making merry, talking lightly and jestingly, as if the sword was not over them? Yet this is the case of those of you who are unconverted and yet live lives of mirth. You have been tried in the balance and found wanting. You have been condemned by the righteous judge. Your sentence is past. You are now in prison, neither can you break out of this prison; the sword is whetted and drawn over you. And oh! is it not most unreasonable to make mirth? Is it not most unreasonable to be happy and contented with yourself and merry with your friends? Is it not madness to sing the song of the drunkard? "Eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die."

2. *Because God's instruments of destruction are all ready.*—Not only are Christless persons condemned already, but the instruments of their destruction are prepared and quite ready. The sword of vengeance is sharpened and also furbished. When swords are kept in the armory, they are kept blunt, that the rust may not hurt their edge; but when work is to be done, and they are taken out for the slaughter, then they are furbished and sharpened—made sharp and glittering. So it is with the sword of the executioner; when not in use, it is kept blunt; but when work is to be done, it is sharpened and made ready. It is sharpened and furbished just before the blow is struck, that it may cut clean. So is it with God's sword of vengeance. It is not sheathed and blunt, it is sharpened and furbished, it is quite ready to do its work, it is quite ready for a sore slaughter. The disease by which every unconverted man is to die is quite ready, it is perhaps in his veins at this very moment. The accident by which he is to drop into eternity is quite ready, all the parts and means of it are arranged. The arrow that is to strike him is on the string, perhaps it has left the string, and is even now flying towards him.

The place in hell is quite ready for every unconverted soul. When Judas died, the Scriptures say, "he went to his own place." It was his own place before he went there, being quite prepared and ready for him. As when a man retires at night to his sleeping room, it is said he is gone to his own room, so a place in hell is quite ready for every Christless person. It is his own place. When the rich man died and was buried, he was immediately in his own place. He found everything ready. He lifted up his eyes in hell, being in torments. So hell is quite ready for every Christless person. It was prepared, long ago, for the devil and his angels. The fires are all quite ready, and fully lighted and burning.

Ah! should Christless souls then make mirth? A malefactor

might, perhaps, say that he would be merry as long as the scaffold was not erected on which he was to die. But if he were told that the scaffold was quite ready, that the sword was sharpened, and the executioner standing ready, oh! would it not be madness to make mirth? Alas! this is your madness, poor Christless soul. You are not only condemned, but the sword is sharpened and ready that is to smite your soul; and yet you can be happy, and dream away your days and nights in pleasures that perish in the using. The disease is ready, the accident is ready, the arrow is on the string, the grave is ready, yea, hell itself is ready, your own place is made ready; and yet you can make mirth! You can play games and enjoy company. How truly is your laughter like the crackling of thorns under a pot: a flashy blaze, and then the blackness of darkness for ever!

3. *The sword may come down at any one moment.*—Not only are Christless persons condemned already, and not only is the sword of vengeance quite ready, but the sword may come down at any one moment. It is not so with malefactors; their day is fixed and told them, so that they can count their time. If they have many days they make merry to-day at least, and begin to be serious to-morrow. But not so Christless persons; their day is fixed, but it is not told them. It may be this very moment. Ah! should they then make mirth?

Some malefactors have been found very stout-hearted to the very last. Many have received their sentence quite unmoved, and with a determined countenance. Some have even gone to the scaffold quite unmoved; some even with a light, careless spirit. But when the head is laid down upon the block, when the eyes are covered, and the neck laid bare—when the glittering sword is lifted high in the air, and may come down any one moment—that is a dreadful time of suspense. It would be very horrible to see a man in a light, careless spirit, at that time. Oh! it would be madness to be merry then? Alas! this is your madness, poor Christless soul. You are not only condemned, and not only is the sword ready, but it may fall on you at any one moment. Your head is, as it were, on the block. Your neck is bared before God, and the whetted sword is held over you; and yet can you make mirth? Can you take up your mind with business and worldly things, and getting rich, building and planting, and this night your soul may be required of you? Can you fill up your time with games and amusements, and foolish books and entertaining companions? Can you fill up your hours after work with loose talk and wanton behavior, adding sin to sin, treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, when you know not what hour the wrath of God may come upon you to the uttermost? Can you go prayerless to your bed at night, your mind filled with dark and horrid imaginations not fit to be named, and

yet you may be in hell before the morning? A sword, a sword, it is furbished!

4. *Because God has made no promise to Christless souls to stay his hand one moment.*—All the promises of God are yea and amen; that is, they are true. He always fulfils his promises. But the same Scripture says they are "yea and amen *in Christ Jesus*." All God's promises are made to Christ, and to sinners that cleave to Christ. I believe that it is impossible, in the nature of things, that God would make a promise to an unconverted man. Accordingly, all God's promises are made to Christ, and to every sinner that cleaves on to Christ. But unconverted persons are those who have never come to Christ; therefore, there are no promises made to them. God nowhere promises to make them anxious. He nowhere promises to bring them to Christ. He nowhere promises to keep them one moment out of hell. "Should they then make mirth?"

Let me speak to Christless persons who are at ease. Many of you hearing me know that you are in a Christless state; and yet you know that you are at ease and happy. Why is this? It is because you hope to be brought to Christ before you die. You say, another day will do as well, and I will hear thee again of this matter: and therefore you take your ease now. But this is very unreasonable. It is not worthy of a rational being to act in this way. God has nowhere promised to bring you to Christ before you die. God has laid himself under no manner of obligation to you. He has nowhere promised that you shall see to-morrow, or that you shall hear another sermon. There is a day near at hand when you shall not see a to-morrow. If this be not the last, there is a sermon yet to be preached which will be the last you will ever hear.

Let me speak to Christless persons who are anxious about their souls. Some hearing me know that they are in a Christless condition, and this made them anxious, and yet it is to be feared some are losing that anxiety, and now going back to the mirth of the world. Why is this? This is most unreasonable. If you are still out of Christ, however anxious you have been, remember God has made no promises to save you. The sword is still over you, furbished and sharpened. Ah! do not then make mirth. Strive to enter in at the strait gate. Take the kingdom of heaven by violence. Press into it. Never rest till you are in the bonds of the covenant. Then be as happy as the day is long.

5. *It is a sore slaughter, "A sword! a sword!"*

1*st, Sore, because it will be on all who are Christless.*—The dreadfulness of the slaughter in Jerusalem was that all were slain, both old and young. The command which the prophet heard was (ix., 5), "Go ye through the city and smite. Let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity. Slay utterly old and young, both maids and little children, and women; but come not near

any man upon whom is the mark." Such is the sore slaughter waiting on unconverted souls. All Christless persons will perish, young and old. God will not spare, neither will his eye pity. Think of this, *old grey-headed persons*, that have lived in sin, and never come to Christ; if you die thus, you will certainly perish in the sore slaughter. Think of this, *middle-aged persons*, hard-working merchants and laborers, who make money, but do not sell all for the pearl of price. Think of this, ye *Marthas*, who are careful and troubled about many things, but who forget the one thing that is needful, you also will fall in the sore slaughter. Think of this, *young persons*, who live without prayer, yet in mirth and jollity; you that meet to jest and be happy on Sabbath evenings, you that walk in the sight of your own eyes, you too will fall in that sore slaughter. Think of this, *little children*, you that are the pride of your mother's heart, but who have gone astray from the womb, speaking lies. Little children, who are fond of your plays, but are not fond of coming to Jesus Christ, who is the Saviour of little children, the sword will come on you also. Oh! it is a sore slaughter, that will not spare the young, nor the lovely, nor the kind; the gentle mother, and affectionate child; the widow and her only son. Should you then make mirth? Unconverted families, when you meet in the evening to jest and sport with one another, ask this one question, should we make mirth? Is your mirth reasonable? Is it worthy of rational beings? Unconverted companions, who meet so often for mirth and amusement, should you make mirth together when you are in such a case? Ah! how dismal will the contrast be when God says, "Bind them in bundles to burn them!"

2*d*. *Sore slaughter, because the sword is the sword of God.*—If it were only the sword of man that is furbished and sharpened for the slaughter, it would not be very terrible. But it is the sword of Almighty God, and therefore it is very terrible. "Fear not them that kill the body, but after that have no more that they can do; but I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear. Fear him who, after he hath killed the body, is able to cast body and soul into hell. Yea, I say unto you, fear him." If it were the sword of man, it could reach only to the body; but, ah! it is the sword of God, and the iron will enter into the soul. It is the same sword that appeared in the garden of Eden. "A flaming sword, that turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life." It is the same sword which pierced the side of Jesus Christ in his agony. "Awake, O sword! against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts. I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered." It is that sword of which Christ speaks when he says, "It shall cut him asunder and appoint him his portion with hypocrites; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

Dear brethren, it is not a few flesh wounds that that sword

will make. It will cut asunder, it will be a death-blow; eternal death. It is a death which body and soul will be always dying, yet never dead.

1. *Let me speak to the Old.*—There may be some hearing me in whom these three things meet, namely, that they are old, and Christless, and full of mirth. Oh! if there be such hearing me, consider your ways—consider if your mirth be worthy of a rational being. I have shown you plainly out of the Scriptures what your case is: (1.) That you are condemned already. (2.) That God's sword is ready. (3.) That it may come down any moment. (4.) That God has made you no promise to stay his hand. And (5.) That it will be a sore slaughter. Consider, then, if it be reasonable to believe a lie, to deceive your own soul, and say, Peace, peace, when there is no peace. In the ordinary course of things, you must soon go the way of all living—you must be gathered to your fathers; and then all that I have said will be fulfilled. Should you then make mirth? Are you tottering on the brink of hell, and yet living prayerless and Christless, and playing yourself with straws, telling over the oft-repeated tale of youth, and laughing over the oft-repeated jest? Alas! what a depth of meaning was there in the word of Solomon! "I said of laughter, it is mad, and of mirth, what doth it? Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful, and the end of that mirth is heaviness."

2. *Let me speak to the Young.*—There may be many hearing me in whom these three things meet; They are young in years, far from Christ, and yet full of mirth. Now, my dear friends, I entreat you consider whether your mirth is reasonable. The sword is sharpened for a sore slaughter. Should you then make mirth?

Obj. 1. Youth is the time for mirth. *Ans.* I know well youth is the time for mirth. The young lamb is a happy creature as it springs about on the green pasture. The young kid leaps from rock to rock with liveliest glee. The young horse casts its heels high in the air, full of life and activity. But then they have no sin, and you have; they have no hell, and you have. If you will come to Jesus Christ now, and be freed from wrath, ah! then you will find that youth is the time for mirth; youth is the time for enjoying sweet peace in the bosom, and liveliest intercourse with God, and brightest hopes of glory.

Obj. 2. You would have us be gloomy and sad. *Ans.* God forbid. All that I maintain is, that until you are come to Christ, your mirth is mad and unreasonable. If you will come to Christ, then, be as happy as you will; there are no bounds to your joy there, for you will joy in God. And when you die, you will come to fulness of joy in his presence, and pleasures at his right hand for evermore.

Obj. 3. If I be Christless, it will not bring me into Christ to be sad, and, therefore, I may as well be merry. *Ans.* True, to be sad will not bring you into Christ; and yet, if you were really

awakened to cry to God, peradventure, ne would hear your cry. If you were striving to enter in, you might find entrance. If you were pressing into the kingdom, you might take it by violence. Seek meekness, seek righteousness. It may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger. If you stay where you are, you are sure to be lost. If you live on in carnal security, in mirth and jollity, while you are out of Christ, you are sure to perish.

"Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."

Dundee, 1837

SERMON V.

"Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of man."—PROV viii., 4

1. *These are the words of wisdom;* and wisdom in the book of Proverbs is no other than our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. This is evident from chap. i., 23, where he says, "Behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you;" but it is Christ alone who has the gift of the Holy Spirit. And again, from viii., 22, where he says, "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way;" and verse 30, "Then I was by him as one brought up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him." These words are true of none but of Jesus Christ, the Word that was with God, and was God, by whom all things were made.

2. *The places he goes to with the invitation.*—1. He goes to the country. He climbs every eminence, and cries there; then he descends to the highway where many roads meet. 2. He goes to the city. He begins at the gates where the people are assembled to make bargains and hear causes; then he proceeds along the principal avenue into the city, and cries in at every door as he passes. He first goes out into the highways and hedges, then goes into the streets and lanes of the city, carrying the blessed message.

3. *Observe the manner in which he invites.*—He cries aloud; he puts forth the voice; he stands and cries; he calls and lifts up his voice; he seems like some merchant offering his wares, first in the market and then from door to door. Never did busy crier offer to sell his goods with such anxiety as Jesus offers his salvation; verse 10, "Receive my instruction, and not silver; and knowledge rather than choice gold."

4. *Observe to whom the invitation is addressed.*—Verse 4. "Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man." Mer-

chants only offer their goods to certain classes of the people that will buy; but Jesus offers his to all men. Wherever there is a son of Adam, wherever there is one born of woman, the word is addressed to him; he that hath ears to hear let him hear.

Doctrine.—Christ offers himself as a Saviour to all of the human race.

I. *The most awakening truth in all the Bible.*—It is commonly thought that preaching the holy law is the most awakening truth in the Bible: that by it the mouth is stopped, and all the world becomes guilty before God; and, indeed, I believe this is the most ordinary mean which God makes use of. And yet to me there is something far more awakening in the sight of a Divine Saviour freely offering himself to every one of the human race. There is something that might pierce the heart that is like a stone in that cry, "Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of man."

1. Had you lived in the days when Noah built the Ark, had you seen that mighty vessel standing open and ready, inviting all the world to come into its roomy cavities, would it not have been the most awakening of all sights? Could you have looked upon it without thinking of the coming flood, that was to sweep the ungodly world away?

2. Had you lived in the times when Jesus was on the earth, had you seen him riding down the Mount Olivet, and stopping when he came in sight of Jerusalem, lying peaceful and slumbering at his feet, had you seen the son of God weep over the city, and say, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes," would you not have felt that some awful destruction was awaiting the slumbering city? Would he shed these tears for nothing? Surely he sees some day of woe coming which none knows but himself.

3. Just so, dear friends, when you see Jesus here running from place to place; from the high places to the highways, from the highways to the city gates, from the gates to the doors; when you hear his anxious cry, "Unto you, O men, I call," does it not show that all men are lost, that a dreadful hell is before them? Would the Saviour call so loud and so long if there was no hell?

Apply this to slumbering souls.

1*st, Mark who it is that calls you; it is Wisdom!* Jesus Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. "Unto you, O men, I call." Often, when ministers prick your hearts in their sermons, you go home and say, "Oh! it was only the word of a minister; shall I tremble at the words of a man?" But here is the word of no minister, but of Christ. Here is the word of one who knows your true condition, who knows your heart and your history; who knows your sins done in the light, and done in the dark, and done in the recesses of your heart;

who knows the wrath that is over you, and the hell that is before you. "Unto you, O men, I call."

2*d*, *Mark in how many places he calls you.*—In the high places and the highways, in the gates, in the entries, at the coming in of the doors. Has it not been so with you? Have you not been called in the Bible, in the family, in the house of prayer? You have gone from place to place, but the Saviour has gone after you. You have gone to places of diversion, you have gone to places of sin, but Christ has followed you. You have lain down on a bed of sickness, and Christ has followed you. Must not the sheep be in great danger, when the shepherd follows so far in search of it?

3*d*, *How loud he cries.*—He calls and lifts up the voice. Has it not been so with you? Has he not knocked loudly at your door, in warnings, in providences, in deaths? Has he not cried loudly in the preached word? Sometimes when reading the Bible alone, has not the voice of Christ been louder than thunder?

4*th*, *He cries to all.*—Had he cried to the old, then the young would have said, "We are safe; we do not need a Saviour." Had he cried to the young, the old men among you would have said, "He is not for us." Had he called to the good or to the bad, still some would have felt themselves excused. But he cries to you all. There is not one person hearing but Jesus cries to you. Then all are lost—old and young, rich and poor. Whatever you think of yourselves, Jesus knows you to be in a lost condition; therefore this piercing cry, "Unto you, O men, I call."

II *The most comforting truth in the Bible.*—When awakened persons are first told of Jesus Christ, it generally adds to their grief. They see plainly that he is a very great and glorious Saviour; but then they feel that they have rejected him, and they fear that he never can become their Saviour. Very often awakened persons sit and listen to a lively description of Christ, of his work of substitution in the stead of sinners; but their question still is, "Is Christ a Saviour to me?" Now, to this question I answer, Christ is freely offered to all the human race. "Unto you, O men, I call." If there were no other text in the whole Bible to encourage sinners to come freely to Christ, this one alone might persuade them. There is no subject more misunderstood by unconverted souls than the unconditional freeness of Christ. So little idea have we naturally of free grace, that we cannot believe that God can offer a Saviour to us, while we are in a wicked hell-deserving condition. O it is sad to think how men argue against their own happiness, and will not believe the very Word of God!

All the types showed the Saviour to be free to all.

(1.) The brazen serpent was lifted up in sight of all Israel, that any one might look and be healed; and Christ himself explains this. "So must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

(2.) The Refuge City set on a hill, with its gates open night and day, showed this. Whosoever will may flee for refuge to the hope set before us.

(3.) The angels over Bethlehem repeated the same thing; "Behold I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." And the last invitation of the Bible is the freest of all: "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Mark, also, in the text before us, "Unto you, O men, I call." This shows that he is not free to devils; but to all *men*, to every one that has human form and human name, the Saviour is now free. It is not for any goodness in men, not for any change in them that Christ offers himself; but just in their lost condition as men. He freely puts himself within their reach. There are many stratagems by which the devil contrives to keep men away from Christ.

1. Some say there is no hope for me. "There is no hope, no; for I have loved strangers, and after them I will go. I have committed such great sins, I have sunk so deep in the mire of sin, I have served my lusts so long, that there is no use of me thinking of turning. There is no hope, no." To you I answer, there is hope; your sins may be forgiven for Christ's sake; there is forgiveness with God. Ah! why should Satan so beguile you? True, you have waded deep into the mire of sin; you have destroyed yourself, and yet in Christ there is help. He came for such as you. Christ speaks in these words to you—you are of the human race, and Christ speaks to all of the human race—"Unto you, O men, I call."

2. "I have not the least care about my soul. Up to this moment I never listened to a sermon, nor attended to a word in the Bible. I have no wish to hear of Christ, or God, or eternal things." To you I answer: Still Christ is quite free to you. Though you have no care for your soul, yet Christ has, and wishes to save it. Though you do not care for Christ, yet he cares for you, and stretches out his hands to you. Christ did not come to the earth because people were caring about their souls, but because we were lost. You are only the more lost. Christ is all the more seeking you. This day you may find a Saviour. "Unto you, O Men, I call."

3. "If I knew I were one of the elect I would come, but I fear I am not." To you I answer: Nobody ever came to Christ because they knew themselves to be of the elect. It is quite true that God has of his mere good pleasure elected some to everlasting life, but they never knew it till they came to Christ. Christ nowhere invites the elect to come to him. The question for you is not, Am I one of the elect? but, Am I of the human race?

4. Some of you may be saying, "If I could see my name in the Bible then I would believe that Christ wants me to be saved. When Christ called Zaccheus, he said, 'Zaccheus, come down.' He called him by name, and he came down immediately. Now,

if Christ would call me by name, I would run to him immediately." Now, to you I say, Christ does call you by your name, for he says, "To you, O men, I call." Suppose that Christ had written down the names of all the men and women in the world, your name would have been there. Now, instead of writing down every name, he puts them all together in one word, which includes every man, and woman, and child—"Unto you, *O men*, I call; and my words are to the *sons of man!*" So your name is in the Bible. "Go and preach the Gospel to every creature."

4. "If I could repent and believe, then Christ would be free to me, but I cannot repent and believe." To you I say, are you not a man before you repent and believe? then Christ is offered to you before you repent. And, believer, Christ is not offered to you because you repent, but because you are a vile, lost sinner. "Unto you, O men, I call."

6. "I fear the market is over. Had I come in the morning of life, I believe Christ was offered me then—in youth, at my first sacrament; but now, I fear, the market-day is done." Are you not still a man, one of the human race? True, you have refused the Saviour for years, yet still he offers himself to you. It was not for any goodness that he offered himself to you at first, but because you were vile and lost. You are vile and lost yet, so he offers himself to you still. "Unto you, O men, I call."

I would here then take occasion to make offer of Christ with all his benefits to every soul in this assembly. To every man, and woman, and child, I do now, in the name of my Master, make full, free offer of a crucified Saviour to be your surety and righteousness, your refuge and strength. I would let down the Gospel cord so low, that sinners, who are low of stature like Zaccheus, may lay hold of it. Oh! is there none will lay hold on Christ, the only Saviour?

III. *The most condemning truth in the Bible.*

If Christ be freely offered to all men, then it is plain that all who live and die without accepting Christ shall meet with the doom of those who refuse the Son of God. "He that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul; all they that hate me love death." Ah! it is a sad thing that the very truth, which is life to every believing soul, is death to all others. "This is the condemnation." We are a sweet savor of Christ unto God. When the ignorant heathens stand at the bar of God—Hindoos, and Africans, and Chinese—who have never had the offer of Christ made to them, they will not be condemned as those will that have lived and died unsaved under a preached Gospel. Tyre and Sidon will not meet the same doom as Chorazin and Bethsaida, and unbelieving Capernaum.

Oh! brethren, you are without excuse in the sight of God, if you go home unsaved this day. The Gospel cord has been let

down as low as to every one of you this day. If you go away without laying hold, your condemnation will be heavier at the last day. If Christ had not come to you, you had not had sin, but now you have no cloak for your sin.

Obj. But my heart is so hard that I cannot believe, my heart is so set upon worldly things that I cannot turn to Christ. I was born this way. *Ans.* This does but aggravate your guilt. It is true you were born thus, and that your heart is like the nether millstone. But that is the very reason God will most justly condemn you; because from your infancy you have been hard-hearted and unbelieving. If a thief, when tried before the judge on earth, were to plead guilty, but to say that he had always been a thief, that even in infancy his heart loved stealing, would not this just aggravate his guilt, that he was by habit and repute a thief? So you.

O brethren, if you could die and say that Christ had never been offered to you, you would have an easier hell than you are like to have. You must go away either rejoicing in or rejecting Christ this day; either won, or more lost than ever. There is not one of you but will yet feel the guilt of this Sabbath-day. This sermon will meet you yet. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"

St. Peter's, 1838

SERMON VI.

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us); that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you that your joy may be full."—1 John i., 1-4.

I. *The subject of John's preaching.*

It was Jesus Christ, and him crucified. "That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you." This was the preaching of *John the Baptist*—"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world." He pointed to Jesus. This was the preaching of *Philip*. Acts viii., 5, "Philip went down to Samaria, and preached Christ unto them." And when he came to the Ethiopian Eunuch, "he preached unto him Jesus." This was the preaching of *Paul*. "I determined to know nothing among you, but Jesus Christ and him crucified." This was the beginning, and middle, and end of the preaching of Paul. This was the preaching of *John*. To declare all that he had seen with his eyes, heard

with his ears, handled with his hands, of Immanuel ; this was the object of his life, this was the Alpha and Omega of his preaching. He knew that Jesus was like *the alabaster box*, full of spikenard, very costly ; and his whole labor was to break the box, and pour forth the good ointment before the eyes of fainting sinners, that they might be attracted by the sweet savor. He knew that Jesus was *a bundle of myrrh*, and his whole life was spent in opening it out to sinners, that they might be overcome by the refreshing odors. He carried about the savor of Christ with him wherever he went. He knew that Jesus was the Balm of Gilead, and his labor was to open out this bruised balm before the eyes of sick souls, that they might be healed.

1. *His Eternity.*—"That which was from the beginning." John had often heard Jesus speak of his eternity. "In the beginning was the Word." "Before Abraham was I am." He remembered how Jesus said in prayer in the garden, "Glorify me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." "Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." John thus knew that he was the Eternal One—that he was before all visible things, for he made them all. By him God made the world. Even at the time John was leaning on his bosom, he felt that it was the bosom of the Uncreated One. John always declared this ; he loved to make him known. O beloved, if you have come to lean on the bosom of Jesus, you have come to the Uncreated One—the Eternal One.

2. *Was with the Father.*—John knew, from Prov. viii., 30, that Jesus had been with the Father—"Then I was by him, as one brought up with him, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him." He had heard Jesus tell many of the secrets of his Father's bosom, from which he knew that he had been with the Father. "All things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you." He had heard Jesus plainly say, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world." "Again I leave the world and go to the Father." John felt even when Jesus was washing his feet that this was the man that was God's fellow. Even when he saw Jesus on the Cross, with his pale lips and bleeding hands and feet, like a tortured worm, and "no man," he knew that this was the man that was God's fellow. He lived to declare this. Do you thus look to Jesus ? Have you beheld the glory, as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth ? O tempest-tossed soul, this is he that comes to save thee.

3. *Eternal Life.*—John knew that Jesus was the author of all *natural life ;* that not a man breathes, no beast of the forest roars, no bird stoops on the wing, but they all receive the stream of life from the hand of Immanuel. He had seen Jesus raise the Ruler's daughter from the dead, and call Lazarus from the tomb. He knew that Jesus was the author of all *life in the soul.* He had heard Jesus say—"As the father raiseth up the dead, and quicken-

eth whom he will, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will." "My sheep know my voice, and I give unto them eternal life." He had heard him say, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." Above all, he had *felt in his own soul* that Christ was the Eternal Life. In that morning, when he sat with his father, Zebedee, in the boat, mending their nets, Jesus said, "Follow me!" and the life entered into his soul, and he found it a never failing spring of life. Christ was his life; therefore did he make him known as the eternal life. Even when he saw him give up the ghost, when he saw his pale, lifeless body, the stiff hands and feet, the glazed eye, the body cold as the rocky tomb where they laid him, still he felt that this was the Eternal Life. O beloved, do you believe that he is the life of the world? Some of you feel your souls to be dead, lifeless in prayer, lifeless in praise. Oh! look on him whom John declares to you. All is death without him. Bring your dead soul into union with him, and he will give you eternal life.

4. *Manifested.*—O beloved, if Jesus had not been manifested, you had never been saved. It would have been quite righteous in God to have kept his Son in his own bosom—to have kept that jewel in his own place upon the throne of heaven. God would have been the same lovely God; but we would have lain down in burning hell. If that Eternal Life which was with the Father—if he had remained in his glory as the living one—then you and I would have borne our own curse. But he was manifested—"God was manifest in the flesh—justified in the spirit—seen of angels—believed on in the world—received up into glory." *John saw him*—he saw his lovely countenance—he beheld his glory, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. He saw that better Sun veiled with flesh that could not keep the beams of his Godhead from shining through. He saw him on the Mount, when his face shone like the sun. He saw in the Garden, where he lay upon the ground. He saw him on the Cross, when he hung between earth and heaven. He looked upon him—many a time he looked up on his heavenly countenance—his eye met his eye. *He heard him*—heard the voice that said, "Let there be light!" He heard the voice like the sound of many waters. He heard all his gracious words—his words concerning God and the way of peace. He heard him say to a sinner, "Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee." *He handled him*—he put his hands in his hands, his arms around his arms, and his head upon his bosom. Perhaps he handled his body when it was taken from the cross—touched the cold clay of Immanuel. O beloved, it is a manifested Christ we declare unto you. It is not the Son in the bosom of the Father—that would never have saved you. It is Jesus manifested in flesh. The Son of God living and dying as man instead of sinners; him we declare unto you.

Learn the true way of coming to peace.—It is by looking to a manifested Jesus. Some of you think you will come to peace *by looking in* to your own heart. Your eye is riveted there. You watch every change there. If you could only see the glimpse of light there, O what joy it would give you! If you could only see a melting of your stony heart—if you could only see your heart turning to God—if you could only see a glimpse of the image of Jesus in your heart—you would be at peace; but you cannot—all is dark within. O dear souls, it is not there you will find peace. You must *avert the eye* from your bosom altogether. *You must look to a declared Christ.* Spread out the record of God concerning his Son. The Gospels are the narrative of the heart of Jesus, of the work of Jesus, of the grace of Jesus. Spread them out before the eye of your mind, till they fill your eye. Cry for the Spirit to breathe over the page—to make a manifested Christ stand out plainly before you; and the moment that you are willing to believe all that is there spoken concerning Jesus, that moment you will wipe away your tears, and change your sighs for a new song of praise.

II. *The object John had in view by preaching Christ.*

1. *That ye may have fellowship with us.*—To have fellowship with another is to have things in common with him. Thus in Acts iv., 32, the first Christians were "of one heart and of one soul; neither said any that aught of the things which he possessed was his own, but *they had all things in common.*" They had all their goods in common, they shared what they had with one another. This is what John desired in spiritual things, that we should share with him in his spiritual things, share and share alike.

1*st*, *Forgiveness.*—Some people think it impossible to have the same forgiveness that the Apostles had—that it would be very bold to think of tasting the same. But is it not far bolder to say that John is a liar, and that the Holy Spirit is a liar? for he here says plainly, that all his preaching, and all his desire was, that you should have fellowship with him. Yes, sinner, forgiveness is as open to you as it was to John. The blood that washed him is ready to wash you as white as snow. John had the same need of Christ that the vilest of you have. Only look to a declared Immanuel; clear your eye from unbelief, and look at a freely revealed Jesus, and you will find the same forgiveness is as free to you as it was to John.

2*d*, *The same love of Jesus.*—John was the disciple whom Jesus loved. Just as Daniel was the prophet whom he greatly loved—"a man, greatly beloved." So John was the disciple whom Jesus loved. At the last supper which Jesus had in this world, John leaned upon his bosom. He had the nearest place to the heart of Christ of any in all the world. Perhaps you think it is impossible you can ever come to that. Some of you are trembling afar off;

but you, too, if you will only look where John points you, if you will only believe the full record of God about Jesus, will share the love of Jesus with John, you will be one of his peculiarly beloved ones. Those that believe most, must get love, they come nearest to Jesus, they do, as it were, lay their heads on his breast; and no doubt you will one day really share that bosom with John. If you believe little, you will keep far off from Jesus.

3*d*, *The same fatherly dealings as John.*—John experienced many wonderful dealings of God. He experienced many of *the prunings* of the Father. He was a fruitful branch, and the Father pruned him that he might bring forth more fruit. When he was very old, he was banished to Patmos, an island in the Ægean Sea, and, it is supposed, made a slave in the mines there. He was a companion in tribulation; but he had many sweet shinings of the Father's love to his soul. He had sweet revelations of Christ in the time of his affliction; and he was joyfully delivered out of all his troubles. He experienced peculiarly the fatherly dealings of God. And so may you do, believer. Look where John looked, believe as John believed, and, like him, you will find that you have a father in heaven, who will care for you, who will correct you in measure, who will stay his rough wind in the day of his east wind, who will preserve you unto his heavenly kingdom.

2. *Fellowship with the Father.*—O beloved, this is so wonderful, that I could not have believed it, if I had not seen it. Shall a hell-deserving worm come to share with the holy God? O the depth and the length of the love of God, it passeth knowledge!

1*st*, *In his holiness.*—A natural man has not a spark of God's holiness in him. There is a kind of goodness about you. You may be kind, pleasant, agreeable, good-natured, amiable people, there may be a kind of integrity about you, so that you are above stealing or lying; but as long as you are in a natural state, there is not a grain of God's holiness in you. You have not a grain of that absolute hatred against all sin which God has; you have none of that flaming love for what is lovely, pure, holy, which dwells in the heart of God. But the moment you believe on a manifested Christ, that moment you receive the Spirit, the same spirit which dwells in the infinite bosom of the Father dwelleth in you, so you become partakers of God's holiness, you become partakers of the Divine nature. You will not be as holy as God; but the same stream which flows through the heart of God will be given you. Ah! does not your heart break to be holier! Look then to Jesus, and abide in him, and you will share the same spirit with God himself.

2*d*, *In his joy.*—No joy is like the Divine joy. It is infinite, full, eternal, pure, unmingled joy. It is light, without any cloud to darken it; it is calm, without any breath to ruffle it. Clouds and darkness are round about him, storms and fire go before him; but within, all is peace ineffable, unchangeable. Believers in some

measure share in this joy. We might mention some of the elements of God's joy. *First*, All things happen according to the good pleasure of his will. He has fore-ordained whatsoever comes to pass. Nothing comes unprepared upon God. Many things are hateful in his sight, yet, looking on the whole, he can delight in all. If you have come to Christ, you will have some drops of his joy. You can look upon all events with a calm, holy joy, knowing that your Father's will and purposes alone shall stand. *Second*, The Conversion of Souls. There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner repenting, more than over ninety-nine who need no repentance. I have no doubt that this is one of the great elements of his joy, seeing souls brought into his favor. God loves to save; he delighteth in mercy; he delights when he can be a just God and a Saviour. If you are come to Christ, you will have the same joy.

3. *Fellowship with the Son.*

1*st*. *We share with the Son in his justification.*—Once Jesus was unjustified, once there were sins laid to his charge, the sins of many. It was this that occasioned his agony *in the garden, on the cross.* His only comfort was, "He is near that justifieth me." He knew the time would be short. But now the wrath of God has all fallen upon him. The thunder-clouds of God's anger have spent all their lightnings on his head. The vials of God's wrath have poured out their last drops upon him. He is now justified from all the sins that were laid upon him. He has left them with the grave-clothes. His fellow-men and devils laid all sins to his charge; he was silent. Do you believe this record concerning the Son? Do you cleave to Jesus as yours? Then you have fellowship with him in his justification. You are as much justified as Christ is. There is as little guilt lying upon you as there is upon Christ. The vials of wrath have not another drop for Christ, nor another drop for you. You are justified from all things.

2*d*, *His adoption.*—When Jesus went up to heaven, he said, "I go to my Father." When he entered heaven, the word of God was, "Thou art my Son: sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." Oh! it was a blessed exchange, when he left the frowns and curses of this world for the embrace of his Father's arms, when he left the thorny crown for a crown of glory, when he came from under the wrath of God into the fatherly love of God. Such is your change—you that believe in Jesus. You have fellowship with the Son—you share in his adoption. He says, "I ascend to my Father and your Father." God is as much your Father as he is Christ's Father—your God as Christ's God. O what a change! for an heir of hell to become an heir of God, and joint heir with Christ, to inherit God, to have a son's interest in God! Eternity alone will teach you what is in that word, "heir of God."

4. *Joy full.*—Other joys are not filling. Creature joys only fill

a small part of the soul. Money, houses, lands, music, entertainments, friends—these are not filling joys; they are just drops of joys. But Christ revealed makes the cup run over. "Thou anointest my head with oil: my cup runneth over. Believing in a manifested Christ, fills the heart full of joy. "In thy presence is fullness of joy." Christ brings the soul into God's presence. One smile of God fills the heart more than ten thousand smiles of the world.

You that have nothing but creature joy, hunting after butterflies, feeding upon carrion: why do you spend money for that which is not bread? You that are afflicted, tempest-tossed, and not comforted, look to a manifested Jesus. According to your faith, so be it unto you. Believe none, and you will have no joy. Believe little, and you will have little joy. Believe much, and you will have much joy. Believe all, and you will have all joy, and your joy will be full. It will be like a bowl lipping over—good measure, pressed down, and running over. Amen.

St. Peter's, 1839.

SERMON VII.

"A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed." —Song iv., 12.

Doctrine.—The Believer is Christ's Garden.

I. *The name here given to Believers.* "My sister, my spouse," or rather, "my sister spouse." There are many sweet names from the lips of Christ addressed to believers: "O thou fairest among women," i., 8; "My love," ii., 2; "My love, my fair one," ii., 10; "O my dove," ii., 14; "My sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled," v., 2; "O prince's daughter," vii., 1. But here is one more tender than all, "*My sister, my spouse*," iv., 9; and again, verse 10; and here, verse 12. To be spoken well of by the world, is little to be desired; but to hear Christ speak such words to us, is enough to fill our hearts with heavenly joy. The meaning you will see by what Paul says, 1 Cor. ix., 5, "Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other Apostles?" He means power to marry one who is like-minded, a sister in the Lord, one who will be both a wife and a sister in Christ Jesus; a *wife* by covenant, a *sister* by being born of the same Father in heaven. So Christ here says of believers, "My sister, my spouse;" that they are not only united to him by choice and covenant, but are like-minded also.

I. *These two things are inseparable.*—Some would like to be *the*

spouse of the Saviour, without being the sister. Some would like to be saved by Christ, but not to be made like Christ. When Christ chooses a sinner, and sets his love on the soul, and when he woos the soul and draws it into covenant with himself, it is only that he may make the soul a sister; that he may impart his features, his same heart, his all to the soul. Now many rest in the mere forgiveness of sins. Many have felt Christ wooing their soul, and offering himself freely to them, and they have accepted him. They have consented to the match. Sinful and worthless, and hell-deserving, they find that Christ desires it—that he will not be dishonored by it—that he will find glory in it; and their heart is filled with joy in being taken into covenant with so glorious a bridegroom. But why has he done it? To make you partaker of his holiness, to change your nature, to make you sister to himself, of his own mind and spirit. He has sprinkled you with clean water, only that he may give you a new heart also. He brings you to himself and gives you rest, only that he may make you learn of him, his meekness and lowliness in heart.

1. *Inseparable.*—You cannot be the spouse of Christ without becoming sister also. Christ offers to be the bridegroom of sin-covered souls. He came from heaven for this: took flesh and blood for this. He tries to woo sinners, standing and stretching out his hands. He tells them of all his power, and glory, and riches, and that all shall be theirs. He is a blood-sprinkled bridegroom; but that is his chief loveliness. The soul believes his word, melts under his love, consents to be his. "My beloved is mine, and I am his." Then he washes the soul in his own blood, clothes it in his own righteousness, takes it in with him to the presence of his Father. From that day the soul begins to reflect his image. Christ begins to live in the soul. The same heart, the same spirit, are in both. The soul becomes sister as well as spouse; Christ's not only by choice and covenant, but by likeness also. Some of you Christ has chosen: you have become his justified ones. Do you rest there? No: remember you must be made like him—reflect his image: you cannot separate the two.

2. *The order of the two.*—You must be first the spouse before you can be the sister of Christ; his by covenant before his by likeness. Some think to be like Christ first, that they will copy his features till they recommend themselves to Christ. No: this will not do. He chooses only these that have no comeliness, polluted in their own blood, that he may have the honor of washing them. "When thou wast in thy blood;" Ezek. xvi., 6. Are there any trying to recommend themselves to Christ by their change of life? O how little you know him! He comes to seek those who are black in themselves. Are there some of you poor, defiled, unclean? You are just the soul Christ woos. Proud, scornful? Christ woos you. He offers you his all, and then he will change you.

III. *To what Christ compares Believers: "A garden enclosed."* —The gardens in the East are always enclosed: sometimes by a fence of reeds, such are the gardens of cucumbers in the wilderness; sometimes by a stone wall, as the garden of Gethsemane; sometimes by a hedge of prickly pear. But what is still more interesting is, they are often enclosed out of a wilderness. All around is often barren sand; and this one enclosed spot is like the garden of the Lord. Such is the believer.

1. *Enclosed by election.*—In the eye of God, the world was one great wilderness, all barren, all dead, all fruitless. No part was fit to bear anything but briers. It was nigh unto cursing. One part was no better than another in his sight. The hearts of men were all hard as a rock, dry and barren as the sand. Out of the mere good pleasure of his will, he marked out a garden of delights where he might show his power and grace, that it might be to his praise. Some of you know your election of God by the fruit of it, by your faith, love, and holiness, Be humbled by the thought that it was solely because he chose you. Why me, Lord? why me?

2. *Enclosed by the Spirit's work.*—Election is the planning of the garden. The Spirit's work is the carrying it into effect. Isaiah v., 2, "He fenced it." When the Spirit begins his work, it is separating work. When a man is convinced of sin, he is no more one with the careless, godless world. He avoids his companions, goes alone. When a soul comes to Christ, it is still more separated. It then comes into a new world. He is no more under the curse, no more under wrath. He is in the smile and favor of God. Like Gideon's fleece, he now receives the dew when all around is dry.

3. *Enclosed by the arms of God.*—God is a wall of fire. Angels are around the soul. Elisha's hill was full of horses of fire. God is round about the soul, as the mountains stand round about Jerusalem. The soul is hid in the secret of God's presence. No robber can ever come over the fence. "A vineyard of red wine, I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." (Isaiah xxvii., 2, 3). This is sung over thee.

IV. *Well-watered garden.*—Watered in three ways. 1. By a hidden well. It is the custom in the East to roll a stone over the mouth of a well, to preserve the water from sand. 2. By a fountain of living water, a well always bubbling up. 3. By streams from Lebanon.

1. "*A spring shut up.*—This describes the Spirit in the heart, in his most secret manner of working. In some gardens there is only this secret well. A stone is over the mouth. If you wish to water the garden, you must roll away the stone, and let down the bucket. Such is the life of God in many souls. Some of you

feel that there is a stone over the mouth of the well in you. Your own rocky heart is the stone. Stir up the gift of God which is in thee.

2. *A well of living water.*—This is the same as John iv.—a well that is ever full and running over. Grace new every moment; fresh upspringings from God.—Thus only will you advance.

3. *Streams from Lebanon.*—These are very plentiful. On all sides they fall in pleasant cascades, in the bottom unite into broad, full streams, and on their way water the richest gardens. The garden of Ibrahim Pacha, near Acre, is watered with streams from Lebanon. So believers are sometimes favored with streams from the Lebanon that is above. We receive out of Christ's fulness; drink of the wine of his pleasures. O for more of these streams of Lebanon! Even in the dry season they are full. The hotter the summer, the streams from Lebanon become the fuller; because the heat only melts the mountain snows.

V. *The Fruit.*—The very use of a garden is to bear fruit and flowers. For this purpose it is enclosed, hedged, planted, watered. If it bear no fruit nor flowers, all the labor is lost labor. The ground is nigh to cursing. So is it with the Christian. Three remarkable things are here.

1. *No weeds are mentioned.*—Pleasant fruit-trees, and all the chief spices; but no weeds. Had it been a man that was describing his garden, he would have begun with the weeds; the unbelief, corruption, evil tempers, &c. Not so Christ. He covers all the sins. The weeds are lost sight of. He sees no perversity. As in John xvii., "They have kept thy word; they are not of the world." As in Rev. ii., 2, "I know thy works."

2. *Fruits.*—The pomegranate, the very best; all pleasant fruits. And all his own. "From me is thy fruit found;" "His pleasant fruits;" verse 16. The graces that Christ puts into the heart and brings out of the life are the very best, the richest, most pleasant, most excellent that a creature can produce. Love to Christ, love to the brethren, love to the Sabbath, forgiveness of enemies, all the best fruits that can grow in the human heart. Unreasonable world! to condemn true conversion, when it produces the very fruits of paradise, acceptable to God, if not to you. Should not this make you stand and consider?

3. *Spices.*—These spices do not naturally grow in gardens. Even in the East, there never was such a display as this. So the fragrant graces of the Spirit are not natural to the heart. They are brought from a far country. They must be carefully watched. They need the stream, and the gentle zephyr. Oh! I fear most of you should hang your heads when Christ begins to speak of fragrant spices in your heart. Where are they? Are there not talkative, forward Christians? Are there not self-seeking, praise-seeking, man-pleasing Christians? Are there not proud-

praying Christians? Are there not ill-tempered Christians? Are there not rash, inconsiderate ones? Are there not idle, lazy, bad-working Christians? Lord, where are the spices? Verily, Christ is a bundle of myrrh. O to be like him! O that every flower and fruit would grow! They must come from above. Many there are of whom one is forced to say, "Well, they may be Christians; but I would not like to be next them in heaven!" Cry for the wind; "Awake, O north wind, and come, thou south; blow upon my garden that the spices thereof may flow out."

SERMON VIII.*

"(Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness leaning upon her beloved?) I raised thee up under the apple-tree; there thy mother brought thee forth; There she brought thee forth that bare thee. 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; the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame. 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." Song viii., 5, 6, 7.

We are introduced to the great Redeemer and a believing soul, and are made to hear their converse.

I. *The posture of the Church.*

1. *From the Wilderness.*—To a child of God this world is a wilderness. *First, Because everything is fading here.* Here is nothing abiding; money takes wings and flees away; friends die. All are like grass, and if some are more beautiful, or more engaging than others, still they are only like the flower of the grass: a little more ornamented, but withering often sooner. Sometimes a worldly comfort is like Jonah's gourd; it came up over his head to be a shadow to deliver him from his grief. So Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd. But God prepared a worm, when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd that it withered. So our worldly comfort sometimes grows up over our head like a shadow, and we are exceeding glad of our gourd; but God prepares a worm, we faint, and are ready to die. Here we have no continuing city; but we seek one to come. This is a wilderness: "Arise, depart, this is not thy rest, for it is polluted." An experienced Christian looks upon everything here as not abiding; for the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal. *Second, Because everything is stained with sin here.* Even the natural scenery of this world is stained

*This is all that exists of this Sermon, which was memorable to many. It is little more than a sketch.

with sin. The thorns and thistles tell of a cursed earth. Above all, when you look at the floods of ungodly men, "We are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness." The world does not know a Christian, and does not love him. Though you love them, and would lay down your body that they might pass over to glory, yet they will not hear. Above all, the sin in our own heart makes us bend down under our burden, and feel this to be a valley of weeping. Ah, wretched man! if we had no body of sin, what a sweet glory would appear in everything; we would sing like the birds in spring.

2. *Coming out of it.*—Unconverted souls are going down into the wilderness to perish there. All Christians are coming up out of it. Sabbath-days are like milestones—marking our way; or rather they are like the wells we used to come to at evening. Every real Christian is making progress. If the sheep are on the shoulder of the shepherd, it is always getting nearer the fold. With some the shepherd takes long steps. Dear Christians, you should be advancing, getting higher, nearer to Canaan, riper for glory. In the south of Russia, the country is of vast plains, rising by steps. Dear friends, you should get on to a higher place, up another step every Sabbath-day. In travelling, you never think of making a house in the wilderness. So, dear friends, do not take up your rest here, we are journeying. Let all your endeavors be to get on in your journey.

3. *Leaning upon her Beloved.*—It is very observable that there is none here but the bride and her beloved, in a vast wilderness. She is not leaning upon him with one arm, and upon somebody else with the other; but she is leaning upon him alone. So it is with the soul taught of God; it feels alone with Christ in this world; it leans as entirely upon Christ as if there were no other being in the universe. She leans all her weight upon her husband. When a person has been saved from drowning, they lean all their weight upon their deliverer. When the lost sheep was found, he took it upon his shoulder. You must be content then to lean all your weight upon Christ. *Cast the burden of temporal things upon him. Cast the care of your soul upon him.* If God be for us, who can be against us? They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. The eagle soars so directly upward that poets have fancied it was aiming at the sun. So does the soul that waits on Christ.

II. *Christ's Word to the leaning soul.*

1. "*I raised thee up,*" &c.—He reminds the believer of his natural state. Every soul now in Christ was once like an exposed infant (Ezek. xvi.), cast out into the open field. "Behold I was shapen in iniquity." Do not forget what you were. If ever you come to forget what you were, then you may be sure you are not right with God. Observe when the contrition comes. When

you are leaning on Christ, then he tells you of your sin and misery. Ezek. xxxvi., 31.

2. He reminds you of his love, "I raised thee up." *He himself* is the apple-tree, open on all sides round, affording shadow and fruit. *I raised* thee. Christ not only shelters, but draws into the shelter. "*To him* be glory." Are there not some who feel like an infant—cast out? Turn your eye to Christ, he only can raise up your soul under the apple-tree.

III. *The leaning soul cries for continued grace.*

Set me as a seal.—It is a sure mark of grace to desire more. The High Priest had a beautiful breast-plate over his breast, adorned with jewels—make me one of these. He had also a jewel on each shoulder—make me one of these. These were bound with chains of gold; but the believer with chains of love. This is a true mark of grace. If you be contented to remain where you are, without any more nearness to God, or any more holiness, this is a clear mark you have got none. Hide me deeper, bind me closer, and carry me more completely.

1. *The love of Christ is strong as death.*—Death is awfully strong. When he comes upon a stout young man, he brings him down. So is the love of Christ.

2. *Cruel, or stubborn, as the grave.*—The grave will not give up its dead, nor will Christ give up his own. O pray that this love may embrace you. Vehement as hell—unquenchable fire. You have your choice, dear friends, of two eternal fires—"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ," &c. Rom. viii. Floods cannot drown it—afflictions cannot.

3. *It cannot be bought.*—"If a man would give all the substance." &c. You must accept it free or not at all.

Dundee, 1840.

SERMON IX.

'After this 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. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God, for ever and ever. Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said unto 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."—Rev. vii., 9 to the end.

It is one thing to read these words with a poet's eye, and another thing to read them with the eye of a Christian. O pray, dear friends, that the Spirit may tear away the veil from our hearts, and show us the grand realities that are here. It is sweet and profitable.

1. *For the awakening of the ungodly*, that you may see what are the exercises of the heavenly world, and how unfit you would be for them. I suppose many of you feel that you have not washed your robes, and that you could not sing their song. Then you must be on the road to hell.

2. *For the instruction of believers.*—It shows you what are the chief employments of that happy world, where we shall so soon be; it gives you the key-note of the heavenly song; it teaches you to spend much of your time in the same exercises in which you shall spend eternity.

3. *For comfort to afflicted believers.*—It shows you how short your trials will be. These light afflictions are but for a moment; you need not murmur nor grieve; a little while and we shall be with Christ, and God shall wipe away all your tears. For this end it was given to John.

I. *What John saw and heard.*

1. *A great multitude of all nations.*—When John was on earth he saw but few believers; "we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness." The Church was like a lily in a field of thorns, lambs in the midst of wolves; but now quite different; thorns are plucked away; the lilies innumerable. "*Out of all nations.*"—Perhaps he could discern his fellow-apostles, his own brother James, and holy Paul, and angel-faced Stephen, the dark Egyptian, the swarthy Ethiopian, the wool-headed negro, the far distant Chinese, the Burman, the Hindoo, the blue-eyed German, the dark-eyed Italian, and multitudes perhaps from a distant island of the sea. Every country had its representatives there, some saved out of every land. All were like Christ, and yet all retained their different peculiarities. *Learn that Christ will have a glorious crown.* He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied. Often, when I look at a large town like Dundee, and see so few converted to Christ, my heart sickens with me; I often feel as if we were laboring for naught and in vain. Although there has been so much blessing, yet such masses of ungodly families! But O cheer up, Christ shall have his full crown. Though there should not be another saved out of this place, Christ will have his full reward. We shall be quite satisfied when we see the whole. He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy. Learn the power

of his blood. It blots out the sins of all that multitude, sins of every name and dye. Why not yours? Oh! when such a glorious company are saved, why should you be lost? When so many are going out of this place, why should you keep back?

2. *Their position.*—They stood before the throne, yea, nearer than the angels, for they stood round about. The redeemed stood next the throne, the angels round them. This marks their complete righteousness. But the ungodly cannot stand in the judgment. If God were only to bring an ungodly man into his presence, he would die. You greatly mistake if you think God needs to put out great strength to destroy you. As a cloud is dried up by being in the light of the sun, so you would perish at the presence of God as a moth in a candle. But this great company stand next the throne, God's eye full upon them. In Christ they stand, not in themselves. Nearer than angels; the angels have only creature-righteousness, these have on Creator-righteousness. The righteousness of Christ is a million times more lovely than that of the highest angel, therefore they stand nearer. The righteousness of God is upon them all, who shall condemn? If you are ever to be near God, you may come freely to him now. Why keep so far away?

3. *Their dress; white robes and palms.*—They have all the same dress, there is no difference. It is the garment of Christ. One was a far greater believer than another, made far greater advances in holiness, yet the same dress. *Whiter than the angels*, v. 13.—The angels also are represented as dressed in white; yet it would appear that their robes were far outshone by the bright shining raiment of the redeemed. The angels have on creature righteousness, the redeemed the righteousness of God. This is what is now offered to you, sinners. Awakened persons are sometimes led to cry, "O that I had never sinned;" but here is something better than if you had never sinned. *Palms* are signs of victory. The Jews used to take branches of palms at the feast of tabernacles, or ingathering, which was a type of heaven. The angels have no palms; for they have fought no fight, they have gained no victory. Every one that has a white robe has a palm. Every one that is in Christ shall overcome. Be not afraid of your enemies.

4. *Their song.—The substance of it—Salvation.*—They give God all the glory. On earth, there are many that cannot believe in an *electing* God, that God chose them for no good in them; but in heaven they all feel it, and give him all the praise. On earth, many speak of making themselves willing; but in heaven they sing "Salvation to God." On earth, many go about to establish their own righteousness; in heaven, "glory to the Lamb." On earth, many take Christ as part of their righteousness, and their duties as part; in heaven all give glory to the Lamb. What say you to this song? Does it find an echo in your heart? Remember you

must begin it now, if you are to sing it afterwards. *The effect of it—it stirs up the hearts of the angels, verses* 11, 12.—Often on earth, when one believer begins to praise God for what he has done for his soul, it stirs up the hearts of others. So in heaven, when the angels hear the voice of redeemed sinners, brands plucked out of the fire, standing in near the throne, they will obtain a ravishing view of the glory of God, his mercy and grace; they will fall down and worship God. They will not envy the redeemed their place; but on the contrary, be filled with intense praise by hearing of what God has done for their souls. How do you feel when you hear of others being saved and brought nearer to God than you? Do you envy and hate them, or do you fall down and praise God for it?

II. *Their past history*, verses 13, 14.

Two particulars are given. Each had a different history; still in these two they were alike.

1. *They had washed their robes.*—This leads us back to their conversion. Once every one of that company had filthy garments. They were like Joshua, their garments were spotted by the flesh. It was like a garment with the leprosy in it. Some stained with blood, spots of blood upon their garments; some with adultery; some with disobedience to parents; some with pride, falsehood, evil speaking; all, all were stained. Every one was convinced that he could not make himself clean; he could not wash his garments nor throw them off, he was brought to see himself lost and helpless. Jesus was revealed to him, and his precious blood shed for sinners, even the chief, saying to the heavy laden, "Come to me." Of all that company there is not one stands there in any other way. All are washed in blood. It is their only way of standing. Have you been washed in blood? You will find not one in heaven who went there in any other way. You think to go to heaven by your own decency, innocency, attention to duties. Well, you would be the only such one there; all are washed in blood. Come and let us reason together.

2. *They came out of great tribulation.*—Every one that gets to the throne must put their foot upon the thorn. The way to the crown is by the cross. We must taste the gall if we are to taste the glory. When justified by faith, God led them into tribulations also. When God brought Israel through the Red Sea, he led them into the wilderness; so when God saves a soul he tries it. He never gives faith without trying it. The way to Zion is through the valley of Baca. You must go through the wilderness of Jordan if you are to come to the Land of Promise. Some believers are much surprised when they are called to suffer. They thought they would do some great thing for God; but all that God permits them to do is *to suffer*. Go round every one in glory, every one has a different story, yet every one has a tale of suffering. One

was persecuted in his family, by his friends and companions; another was visited by sore pains and humbling disease, neglected by the world; another was bereaved of children; another had all these afflictions meeting in one; deep called unto deep. Mark, all are *brought out of them.* It was a dark cloud, but it passed away; the water was deep, but they have reached the other side. Not one of them blames God for the road he led them; "salvation" is their only cry. Is there any of you, dear children, murmuring at your lot? Do not sin against God. This is the way God leads all his redeemed ones. You must have a palm as well as a white robe. No pain, no palm; no cross, no crown; no thorn, no throne; no gall, no glory. Learn to glory in tribulations also. "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us."

III. *Future history.*

1. *Immediate service of God.*—Here, we are allowed to spend much of our time in our worldly callings. It is lawful for a man to win his bread, to plough, sow, reap, to spin and weave. Then, all our strength will be put forth in the immediate service of God. We shall stand before him and he shall dwell among us. It will be a perpetual Sabbath. We shall spend eternity in loving God, in adoring, admiring, and praising God. We should spend much of our present time in this. Some people imagine that they are not serving God unless they are visiting the sick, or engaged in some outward service; whereas the highest of all service is the love of adoration in the soul. Perhaps God gets more glory by a single adoring look of some poor believer on a sick bed, than from the outward labors of a whole day.

2. *Not in the wilderness any more.*—At present we are like a flock in the wilderness, our soul often hungry, and thirsty, and sorely tried. Often we feel as if we could go no further, but must lie down and die. Often we feel temptations too much for us, or persecutions too strong for us to bear. When we are with Christ we shall hunger no more, all our pains shall be ended. Learn to glorify him in the fires, to sing in the wilderness. This is the only world where you can give God the glory.

3. *Father, Son, and Spirit will bless us.*—The Lamb shall feed us—he that died for us. We shall always see our security before us in our Surety; no trembling shall ever come over our soul. He shall be one like us—a *lamb*—like the least of us; we shall learn of God from him. The *Spirit* will be like "living fountains of water." Here, we never have enough; there, without measure. The *Father* will be a father to us. He will wipe away tears; the tears we shed in dying; wilderness tears; the tears over lost friends, and a perishing world. "What manner of persons ought we to be!"

Dundee, 1840.

SERMON X.

"For verily he took not on him the nature of angels: but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted."—Heb. ii., 16-18.

Doctrine.—Christ a merciful High Priest.

I. *The sovereign mercy of Christ in becoming man.*—"For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham." We read of two great rebellions in the history of the universe—the rebellion of the angels, and the rebellion of man. For infinitely wise and gracious purposes God planned and permitted both of these, that out of evil he might bring forth good. The *first* took place in heaven itself. Pride was the sin by which the angels fell, and, therefore, it is called "the condemnation of the devil." "They kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation." "God spared them not, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment." The *next* fall took place on earth. Satan tempted, and man fell; believed the devil rather than God, and so came under the curse. "Thou shalt surely die." Both of these families came under the same frown, under the same condemnation, both were condemned to the same "everlasting fire." But the glorious Son of God resolved, from all eternity, to die for sinners. Now, for which of the two shall he die? Perhaps the angels in heaven would long that he should die for their once brother angels. The angelic nature was higher than that of man. Men had fallen deeper into sin than the rebel angels. Will he not die for angels? Now, here is the answer—"Verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham." Here is sovereign mercy passing by one family and coming to another. Let us wonder and adore the sovereign mercy of Jesus.

1. Do not be surprised if Jesus passes many by. The Lord Jesus has been riding through our country in a remarkable manner, seated on his white horse, and wearing many crowns. He has sent out many arrows and pierced many hearts in this place, and brought many to his feet; but has he not passed many by? Are there not many given up to their own hearts' lust, and walking in their own counsel? Be not surprised. This is the very way he did when he came to this earth; he passed the gate of hell. Although his bosom was full of love and grace, although "God is love," he felt it not inconsistent to pass fallen angels by, and to come and die for men. And so, though Jesus is love still,

yet he can save some, and leave others to be hardened. "Many widows were in Israel in the time of Elijah the prophet; but unto none of them was Elijah sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Zidon, unto a woman that was a widow." And many lepers were in Israel at the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman, the Syrian.

2. If Christ has visited your soul, give him all the glory. "Not unto us, Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory." The only reason why you are saved is the sovereign compassion of Jesus. It is not that you are better than others, that you were less wicked, of better dispositions, more attentive to your Bible. Many who have been left have been much more blameless in their life. It is not that you have sat under a peculiar ministry. God has made the same ministry a means of hardening multitudes. It is the free grace of God. Love God for ever and ever, because he chose you of his own free will. Adore Jesus, that he passed by millions, and died for you. Adore the holy Ghost, that he came out of free sovereign mercy and awakened you. It will be matter of praise through eternity.

3. If Christ is now visiting your soul, do not trifle with him. Some persons, when Christ begins to knock at the door of their heart, put him off from time to time. They trifle with their convictions. They say, I am too young yet, let me taste a little more pleasure of the world; youth is the time for mirth; another time I will open the door. Some say, I am too busy; I have to provide for my family; when I have a more convenient season I will call for thee. Some say, I am strong and healthy; I hope I have many years to live; when sickness comes, then I will open the door. Consider that Christ may not come again. He is knocking now; let him in. Another day he may pass by your door. You cannot command convictions of sin to come when you like. Christ is entirely sovereign in saving souls. No doubt, many of you have had your last knock from Christ. Many of you that were once concerned, are not so now; and you cannot bring it back again. There is no doubt a time in every man's life when, if he opens the door, he will be saved; if he does not he will perish. Probably this may be that time to many of you. Christ may be giving last knocks to some to-day.

II. *Christ made like us in all things.*—Christ not only became man, but it behooved him to be made like us in *all* things. He suffered, being tempted.

In my last lecture, I showed you the only two points in which he was different from us. 1. *In being God as well as man.* In the manger at Bethlehem, there lay a perfect infant, but there also was Jehovah. That mysterious being who rode on an ass's colt, and wept over Jerusalem, was as much a man as you are, and as much God as the Father is. The tears he shed were human tears,

yet the love of Jehovah swelled below his mantle. That pale being that hung quivering on the cross was indeed man, it was human blood that flowed from his wounds, but he was as truly God. 2. *In being without sin.* He was the only one in human form of whom it can be said, He was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners; the only one on whom God could look down from heaven and say, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Every member of our body and faculty of our mind we have used as the servants of sin. Every member of his body and faculty of his mind were used only as servants to holiness. *His mouth* was the only human mouth from which none but gracious words ever proceeded. *His eye* was the only human eye that never shot forth flames of pride, or envy, or lust. *His hand* was the only human hand that never was stretched forth but in doing good. *His heart* was the only human heart that was not deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. When Satan came to him, he found nothing in him. Now, in these two things it behooved him to be unlike his brethren, or he could not have been a Saviour at all. In all other things it behooved him to be made like us. There was no part of our condition that he did not humble himself unto.

1. He passed through all the terms of our life from childhood to manhood. 1*st*, He was an infant of days, exposed to all the pains and dangers of infancy. "Ye shall find the babe, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." 2*d*, He bore the trials and pains of boyhood. Many a one, no doubt, would wonder at the holy boy in the carpenter's shop at Nazareth. He grew in wisdom, and in stature, and in favor with God and man. 3*d*, He bore the afflictions and anxieties of manhood, when he began to be about thirty years of age.

2. He tasted the difficulties of many situations in life. The first thirty years, it is probable, he shared the humble occupation of Joseph the carpenter; he tasted the trials of working for his daily bread. Then he subsisted on the kindness of others. Certain women, which followed him, ministered unto him of their substance. He had not where to lay his head. Many a night he spent on the Mount of Olives, or on the hills of Galilee. Then, he bore the trials of a gospel minister. He preached from morning till night, and yet with how small success; so that he could say, "I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for naught and in vain." How often he was *grieved by their unbelief;* he marvelled at their unbelief! "O faithless generation! how long shall I be with you, how long shall I suffer you?" How often he *offended many* by his preaching! "Many said, this is an hard saying; who can bear it?" "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with Jesus;" John vi., 66. How often *they hated* him for his love! "For my love they are my adversaries: but I gave myself unto prayer;" Ps. cix., 4. How

his own disciples grieved him by their want of faith! "O ye of little faith, have I been so long time with you!" The unbelief of Thomas—their sleeping in the garden—forsaking him and fleeing—Peter denying—Judas betraying him!

3. What trials he had from his own family! Even his own brothers did not believe on him, but mocked. The people of his town tried to throw him over the rocks. What pain he suffered from his mother, when he saw the sword piercing her fond heart! Now he said to John, "Behold thy mother!" and to his mother, "Behold thy son!" even in the midst of his dying agonies.

4. What trials from Satan! Believers complain of Satan, but they never felt his power as Christ did. What an awful conflict was that during forty days in the wilderness! How fearfully did Satan urge on Pharisees, and Herod, and Judas, to torment him! What an awful hour was that, when he said, "This is your hour, and the power of darkness!" What an awful cry was that, "Save me from the lion's mouth!" (Psalm xxii., 22) when he felt his soul in the very jaws of Satan!

5. What trials from God! Believers often groan under the hidings of God's countenance, but ah! they seldom taste even a drop of what Christ drank. What dreadful agony was that in Gethsemane, when the blood gushed through the pores! How dreadful was that frown of God on the cross, when he cried, "My God, my God!" In all these things, and a thousand more, he was made like unto his brethren. He came into our place. Through eternity we shall study these sufferings.

1*st*, Learn the amazing love of Christ, that he should leave glory for such a condition.

2*d*, Learn to bear sufferings cheerfully. You have not yet suffered as he did.

III.—*The end—That he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest.*—The work of Christ as an high priest is here laid down as two-fold. 1. To make an atonement for our sins; 2. To succor his people under temptations.

1. *To make atonement.*—This is the great work of Christ as our high priest. For this it was needful that he should become man, and die. Had he remained God alone in the bosom of his Father, he might have pitied us, but he could not have died for us, nor taken our sins away. We must have perished. Every priest in the Old Testament was a type of Jesus in this: every lamb that was slain typified Jesus offering up his own body a sacrifice for our sins.

Let your eye rest there if you would be happy. Those few dark hours on Calvary, when the great high priest was offering up the amazing sacrifice, give light for eternity to the believing soul. This only will cheer you in dying. Not your graces, nor your love to Christ; not anything in you, but only this—Christ

hath died. He loved me, and gave himself for me. Christ hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

2. *To succor the tempted.*—All believers are a tempted people. Every day they have their trials; every time is to them a time of need. The unconverted are little tempted; they are not in trouble as others, neither are they plagued like other men. They do not feel temptations rising in their heart; nor do they know the power of Satan. Before conversion, a man believes as little in the devil as he believes in Christ. But when a man comes to Christ, then he becomes a tempted soul, "poor and needy, seeking water, and there is none."

He is tempted by God.—God did tempt Abraham; not to sin, for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man. Still, God always tries his children. He never gives faith, but he brings his child into a situation where it will be tried. Sometimes he exalts him, to try if he will turn proud and forget God; sometimes he brings him low, to see if he will murmur against God. Blessed is the man that endureth temptations. Sometimes he brings them into a strait, where the trial is, whether they will believe in him alone, or trust to flesh and blood.

The world tempts a child of God.—They watch for their halting. They love nothing better than to see a child of God fall into sin; it soothes their conscience to think that all are equally bad. They frown, they smile.

Their own heart is a fountain of temptation.—Sometimes it says, What harm is there in that? it is a little sin; or, I will just sin this once, and never again; or, I will repent after and be saved.

Satan hurls his fiery darts.—He terrifies them away from Christ, disturbs them at prayer, fills their mind with blasphemies, hounds on the world against them.

Ah! believers, you are a tempted people. You are always poor and needy. And God intends it should be so, to give you constant errands to go to Jesus. Some may say, it is not good to be a believer; but ah! see to whom we can go.

We have a merciful and faithful High Priest. He suffered being tempted, just that he might succor them that are tempted. The high priest of old not only offered sacrifice at the altar, his work was not done when the lamb was consumed. He was to be a father to Israel. He carried all their names, graven over his heart; he went in and prayed for them within the veil. He came out and blessed the people, saying, "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee. The Lord make his face shine," &c.; Numbers vi., 24–26.

So it is with the Lord Jesus. His work was not all done on Calvary. He that died for our sins lives to pray for us, to help in every time of need. He is still man on the right hand of God. He is still God, and therefore, by reason of his divinity, is present here this day as much as any of us. He knows your every sor-

row, trial, difficulty; every half breathed sigh he hears, and brings in notice thereof to his human heart at the right hand of God. His human heart is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; it pleads for you, thinks on you, plans deliverance for you.

Dear tempted brethren! Go boldly to the throne of grace, to obtain mercy and find grace to help in your time of need.

Are you bereaved of one you loved? Go and tell Jesus; spread out your sorrows at his feet. He knows them all; feels for you in them all. He is a merciful high priest. He is faithful, too, never awanting in the hour of need. He is able to succor you by his word, by his spirit, by his providence. He gave you all the comfort you had by your friends. He can give it you without them. He has taken away the stream that you may go to the fountain.

Are you suffering in body? Go to this high priest. He is intimately acquainted with all your diseases; he has felt that very pain. Remember how, when they brought to him one that was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, he looked up to heaven and sighed, and said, *Ephphatha!* He sighed over his misery. So he sighs over you. He is able to give you deliverance, or patience to bear it, or improvement by it.

Are you sore tempted in soul; put into trying circumstances, so that you know not what to do? Look up; he is able to succor you. If he had been on the earth would you not have gone to him? would you not have kneeled and said, Lord help me? Does it make any difference that he is at the right hand of God? He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

SERMON XI.

ORDINATION SERMON.

At the Ordination of the Rev. P. L. Miller, Wallacetown, Dundee, 1840.

"I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, and his kingdom; preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine."—2 Tim. iv., 1, 2.

I. *Where faithful ministers stand*—"*Before God and the Lord Jesus Christ.*"—There is not a more awfully affecting situation in the whole world than that in which a faithful minister stands.

1. *Before God.*—This is true in two ways:

1*st*, As a sinner saved by grace. He was once far off, but is now brought nigh by the blood of Jesus. Having "boldness to

enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say his flesh," he draws near. He stands within the veil, in the holiest of all, in the love of God. He is justified before God. A faithful minister is *an example to his flock of a sinner saved.* God says to him as he did to Abraham, "Walk before me and be thou perfect." He can say with Paul, "I was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious, but I obtained mercy." A faithful minister is like Aaron's rod that was laid up beside the ark of God, and budded there.

2*d*, *As a servant.*—In the East, servants always stand in the presence of their master, watching his hand. The Queen of Sheba said to Solomon, "Happy are these thy servants which stand continually before thee and hear thy wisdom." So it is said of the angels that "they do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." Even when most engaged in the service of the saints, they feel under his all-seeing, holy, living eye. *So ought* faithful ministers to feel. They should feel constantly in his presence, under his soul-piercing, gentle-guiding, holy, living eye. "I will guide thee with mine eye." "The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous." Ah! how often we feel we are before *man.* Then all power withers, and we become weak as other men; but oh! how sweet to feel in the presence of God, as if there were no eye on us but God's. *In prayer*, how sweet to feel before Him: to kneel at his footstool, and to put our hand upon the mercy-seat—no curtain, no veil, no cloud between the soul and God. *In preaching*, how sweet to say, like Elijah, when he stood before Ahab, "I stand before the Lord God of Israel." To stand at his feet, in his family, in his pavilion, O believers, it is then we get above the billows. The applause of men, the rage and contempt of men, then pass by us like the idle wind which we regard not. Thus is a minister like a rock in the ocean; the mountain-billows dash upon its brow, and yet it stands unshaken.

2. *Before Jesus Christ.*—This is also true in two ways:

1*st*, The faithful minister has a present sight of Christ as his Righteousness. He is like John the Baptist, "Seeing Jesus coming unto him he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!" Or like Isaiah, "He saw his glory and spake of him." His own soul is ever watching at Gethsemane and Golgotha. O brethren, it is thus only we can ever speak with feeling, or with power, or with truth, of the unsearchable riches of Christ. We must have the taste of the manna in our mouth, "Milk and honey under our tongue," else we cannot tell of its sweetness. We must be drinking the living water from the smitten rock, or we cannot speak of its refreshing power. We must be hiding our guilty souls in the wounds of Jesus, or we cannot with joy speak of the peace and rest to be found there. This is the reason why unfaithful

ministers are cold and barren in their labor. They speak, like Balaam, of a Saviour whose grace they do not feel. They speak like Caiaphas, of the blood of Christ, without having felt its power to speak peace to the troubled heart. This is the reason why many good men have a barren ministry. They speak from clear head-knowledge, or from past experience, but not from a present grasp of the truth, not from a present sight of the Lamb of God. Hence their words fall like a shower of snow, fair and beautiful, but cold and freezing. The Lord give us to stand in the presence of the Lord Jesus.

2*d*. The faithful minister should feel the presence of a living Saviour. A minister should be like the bride in the song, "Leaning upon her beloved." This was Jeremiah's strength (i., 8), "Be not afraid of their faces, for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord." So it was with Paul (Acts xviii., 10), "Be not afraid, but speak and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee; for I have much people in this city." So Jesus told all the disciples, "Yet a little while and the world seeth me not, but ye see me. Because I live ye shall live also." And again he says expressly, "Lo. I am with you alway, even to the end of the world." Yes, brethren, Christ is as truly walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, as truly in this place to-day, as if you saw him with your bodily eyes. His humanity is at the right hand of God, appearing in the presence of God for us. His Godhead fills all in all. Thus he is with us, standing at our right hand, so that he cannot be moved. It is sweet to know and feel this. Thus only can we be sustained amid all the trials of the ministry. Are we weary? we can lean, like John, upon his bosom. Are we burdened with a sense of sin? we can hide in the clefts of that rock of ages. Are we empty? we can look up to him for immediate supply. Are we hated of all men? we can hide under his wings. Stand before the Lord Jesus Christ, and then you may smile at Satan's rage, and face a frowning world. Learn here also the guilt of refusing a gospel ministry. "He that refuseth you refuseth me; and he that refuseth me refuseth Him that sent me."

3. *Within sight of judgment*,—"*Who shall judge the quick and dead*."—Ministers and their flocks shall meet together before the throne of the Lord Jesus. That will be a solemn day. They have many solemn meetings on earth. An Ordination day is a solemn day. Their meetings from Sabbath to Sabbath are solemn meetings; and Sacrament days are very solemn days. But their meeting at the judgment seat will be by far the most solemn of all. Then,

1*st*, The minister will give in his account either with joy or with grief. He will no more meet to plead with the people, or to pray with them, but to bear witness how they received the word. Of some he will give account with a joyful countenance, that they

received the word with all readiness of mind, that they were converted and became like little children; these will be his joy and crown. Of most with grief, that he carried the message to them, but they would not come, they made light of it; or perhaps they listened for awhile, but drew back into perdition. He will be a swift witness against them in that day. "Depart, ye cursed."

2*d*, Then the people will give in their account of the minister. If he was faithful; if he made it his meat and drink to do the will of God; if he preached the whole truth with seriousness, urgency, love; if he was holy in his life; if he preached publicly, and from house to house: then that minister shall shine like the stars. If he was unfaithful; if he fed himself but not the flock; if he did not seek the conversion of souls; did not travail in birth; if he sought his own ease, his own wealth, his own praise, and not their souls: then shall the loud curses of ruined souls fall on that wretched man, and God shall say, Take the unfaithful servant, and bind him hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness. O believers, it is the duty of ministers to preach with this solemn day in their eye. We should stand, like Abraham, looking down on the smoke of Sodom; like John, listening to the new song and golden harps of the New Jerusalem. Would not this take away the fear of man? Would not this make us urgent in our preaching? You must either get these souls into Christ, or you will yet see them lying down in everlasting burnings. O brethren, did I not say truly that the place where a minister stands is the most solemn spot in all this world?

II. *The grand business of the faithful minister*—Described in two ways: 1. Generally—Preach the Word. 2. More in detail—Reprove, rebuke, exhort.

1. *Preach the Word.*—The grand work of the minister, in which he is to lay out his strength of body and mind, is preaching. Weak and foolish as it may appear, this is the grand instrument which God has put into our hands, by which sinners are to be saved, and saints fitted for glory. It pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe. It was to this *our blessed Lord* devoted the years of his own ministry. Oh! what an honor has he put upon this work, by preaching in the synagogues, in the temple, and by the blue waves of Galilee, under the canopy of heaven. Has he not consecrated this world as preaching ground? This was the grand work of Paul and all the apostles; for this was our Lord's command, "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel." O brethren, this is our great work. It is well to visit the sick, and well to educate children, and clothe the naked. It is well to attend Presbyteries. It is well to write books or read them; but here is the main thing—Preach the Word. The pulpit is, as George Herbert says, "our joy and throne." This is our watch-tower. Here we must warn the people. The silver

trumpet is put into our hand. Woe be unto us if we preach not the Gospel.

The Matter—the Word.—It is in vain we preach, if we preach not the word—the truth as it is in Jesus.

1*st*, Not other matters. "Ye are my *witnesses*." "The same came to *bear witness* of that light." We are to speak of nothing but what we have seen and heard from God. It is not the work of the minister to open up schemes of human wisdom or learning, nor to bring his own fancies, but to tell the acts and glories of the Gospel. We must speak of what is within the Word of God.

2*d*, Preach the Word; the most essential parts especially. If you were with a dying man, and knew he had but half an hour to live, what would you tell him? Would you open up some of the curiosities of the Word, or enforce some of the moral commands of the Word? Would you not tell him his undone condition by nature and by wicked works? Would you not tell him of the love and dying of the Lord Jesus? Would you not tell him of the power of the Holy Spirit? These are the essential things which a man must receive or perish. These are the great subject-matters of preaching. Should we not preach as Jesus did when he went to Emmaus, when he began at Moses and all the prophets, and expounded to them the things concerning himself? Let there be much of Christ in your ministry, says the excellent Eliot. Rowland Hill used to say, See there be no sermon without *three R's* in it: Ruin by the fall, Righteousness by Christ, and Regeneration by the Spirit. Preach Christ for awakening, Christ for comforting, Christ for sanctifying. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

3*d*, Preach as the Word. I would humbly suggest for the consideration of all ministers, whether we should not preach more in the manner of God's Word. Is not the Word the sword of the Spirit? Should not our great work be to take it from its scabbard, to cleanse it from all rust, and then apply its sharp edge to the consciences of man? It is certain the fathers used to preach in this manner. Brown, of Haddington, used to preach as if he had read no other book than the Bible. It is the truth of God in its naked simplicity that the Spirit will most honor and bless. "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy Word is truth."

2. *Reprove, rebuke, exhort.*—The first work of the Spirit on the natural heart is to *reprove the world of sin.* Although he is the Spirit of love, although a dove is his emblem, although he be compared to the soft wind and gentle dew, still his first work is to convince of sin. If ministers are filled with the same Spirit, they will begin in the same way. It is God's usual method to awaken them, and bring them to despair of salvation by their own righteousness, before he reveals Christ to them. So it was with the jailor. So it was with Paul; he was blind three days. A faithful minister must lay himself out for this. Plough up the fal-

low-ground, and sow not among thorns. Men must be brought down by law work to see their guilt and misery, or all our preaching is beating the air. O brethren, is this our ministry? Let us do this plainly. The most, I fear, in all our congregations, are sailing easily down the stream into an undone eternity, unconverted and unawakened. Brethren, they will not thank us in eternity for speaking smooth things—for sewing pillows to their arm-holes, and crying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace. No; they may praise us now, but they will curse our flattery in eternity. O for the bowels of Jesus Christ in every minister, that we might long after them all! *Exhort.*—The original word means to comfort, to speak as the Comforter does. This is the second part of the Spirit's work, to lead to Christ, to speak good news to the soul. This is the most difficult part of the Christian ministry. Thus did John, "Behold the Lamb of God." Thus did Isaiah, "Comfort ye, comfort ye." Thus did our Lord command, "Go, preach the gospel to every creature." It is true this makes the feet of the gospel messenger beautiful on the mountains. He has to tell of a full, free, Divine Saviour.

And here I would observe, what appears to me *a fault in the preaching of our beloved Scotland.* Most ministers are accustomed to set Christ before the people. They lay down the gospel clearly and beautifully, but they do not urge men to enter in. Now, God says, exhort, beseech men, persuade men; not only point to the open door, but compel them to come in. O to be more merciful to souls, that we would lay hands on men, and draw them into the Lord Jesus!

III. *The manner.*

1. *With long-suffering.*—There is no grace more needed in the Christian ministry than this. This is the heart of God the Father towards sinners; "he is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish." This is the heart of the Lord Jesus. How tenderly does he cry, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I," &c. This is the mind of the Holy Spirit in striving with men. He will not always strive, but, oh! how long he does strive with men! Dear believers, had he not striven long with us, we would this day have been like Lot's wife, monuments of grace resisted. Now, such ought ministers to be. Above all men we need "love that suffers long and is kind." Sometimes, when sinners are obstinate and hard-hearted, we are tempted to give up in despair, or to lose temper and scold them—like the disciples calling down fire from heaven. But, brethren, we must be of another spirit. The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. Only be filled with the spirit of Christ, and it will make us patient toward all. It will make us cry, "How often would I," &c.

2. *With doctrine.*—Some good men cry, Flee, flee, without showing the sinner what he is to flee from; and again, they cry,

Come, come, without showing plainly the way of pardon and peace. These men act as one would do who should run through the streets crying, Fire, fire, without telling where. In the preaching of the Apostles, you will observe the clear and simple statement of the truth preceding the warm and pathetic exhortation. This has always been followed by the most judicious and successful divines.

It behooves ministers to unite the cherub and the seraph in their ministry—the angel of knowledge and the angel of burning zeal. If we would win souls, we must point clearly the way to heaven, while we cry, Flee from the wrath to come. I believe we cannot lay down the guilt of man, his total depravity, and the glorious gospel of Christ, too clearly; that we cannot urge men to embrace and flee too warmly. O for a pastor who unites the deep knowledge of Edwards, the vast statements of Owen, and the vehement appeals of Richard Baxter!

3. *With urgency.*—If a neighbor's house were on fire, would we not cry aloud and use every exertion? If a friend were drowning, would we be ashamed to strain every nerve to save him? But alas! the souls of our neighbors are even now on their way to everlasting burnings—they are ready to be drowned in the depths of perdition. Oh! shall we be less earnest to save their never-dying souls, than we would be to save their bodies? How anxious was the Lord Jesus in this—when he came near and beheld the city, he wept over it! How earnest was Paul, "Remember that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." Such was George Whitfield; that great man scarcely ever preached without being melted into tears. Brethren, there is need of the same urgency now. Hell is as deep and as burning as ever. Unconverted souls are as surely rushing to it. Christ is as free—pardon as sweet as ever! Ah! how we shall be amazed at our coldness when we do get to heaven!

4. *At all times.*—Our Lord went about continually doing good; he made it his meat and drink. "Daily in the temple." So should we. *Satan is busy* at all times; he does not stand upon ceremony, he does not keep himself to Sabbath-days, or canonical hours. *Death is busy.* Men are dying while we are sleeping. About fifty die every minute; nearly one every second entering into an unchangeable world! *The Spirit of God is busy.* Blessed be God, he hath cast our lot in times when there is the moving of the great Spirit among the dry bones. Shall ministers then be idle, or stand upon ceremony? O that God would baptize us with the Holy Ghost and with fire, that we might be all changed as into a flame of fire, preaching and building up Christ's Church till our latest, our dying hour.

CHARGE TO THE MINISTER.

My Dear Brother—It is not many years ago since you and I

played together as children, and now, by the wonderful providence of God, I have been appointed to preside at your ordination to the office of the holy ministry. Truly His way is in the sea, and His path in the deep waters. Do not think, then, that I mean to assume an authority which I have not. I cannot speak to you as a father, but, as a brother beloved in the Lord, let me address a few words of counsel to you.

1. *Thank God for putting you into the ministry.* "I thank Christ Jesus my Lord for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry." "To me who am less than the least of all saints," &c. O brother, thank God for saving your soul—for sending His spirit into your heart, and drawing you to Christ. But this day you have a new cause of thankfulness in being put into the ministry. It is the greatest honor in this world. "Had I a thousand lives. I would willingly spend them in it; and had I a thousand sons, I would gladly devote them to it." True, it is an awfully responsible office: the eternity of thousands depends on your faithfulness; but ah! the grace is so full, and the reward so glorious. If, said the dying Payson, "If ministers only saw the preciousness of Christ, they would not be able to refrain from clapping their hands with joy, and exclaiming, I am a minister of Christ! I am a minister of Christ!" Do not forget, then, dear brother, amid the broken accents of confession from a broken heart, to pour out a song of thankfulness. Thanks be to God, for my own part, during the few years I have been a minister, I can truly say, that I desire no other honor upon earth than to be allowed to preach the everlasting gospel. Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift.

2. *Seek the anointing of the Holy Spirit.*—The more anointing of the Holy Spirit you have, the more will you be a happy, holy, and successful minister. You remember *the two olive trees* that stood close by the golden candlestick, and emptied the golden oil out of themselves. These represent successful ministers, anointed ones that stand by the Lord of the whole earth. The Lord make you like one of them. Remember John the Baptist—"He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, and many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God." The Lord fill you in like manner, and then you will be a converting minister. Remember the Apostles; before the day of Pentecost they were dry, sapless trees—they had little fruit; but when the Spirit came on them like a mighty rushing wind, then three thousand were pricked to the heart.

Oh! brother, plead with God to fill you with the Spirit, that you may stand in his counsel, and cause the people to hear His words, and turn many from the evil of their ways. You know that a heated iron, though blunt, can pierce its way even where a much sharper instrument, if cold, could not enter. Pray that you may be filled with the fire of the Spirit, that you may pierce into the hard hearts of unconverted sinners.

3. *Do not rest without success in your ministry.*—Success is the rule under a living ministry; want of success is the exception. "*The want of ministerial success,*" says Robinson, "*is a tremendous circumstance, never to be contemplated without horror.*" Your people will be of two kinds:—

(1*st*,) The Lord's people.—Those who are already in Christ, seek for success among them. He gave some pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints. Never forget Christ's words, "Feed my sheep, feed my lambs." Be like Barnabas, a son of consolation. Exhort them to cleave to the Lord. Do not say, "They are safe and I will let them alone." This is a great mistake. See how Paul laid out his strength in confirming the disciples. Be a helper of their joy. Do not rest till you get them to live under the pure, holy rules of the Gospel.

(2*d*,) The great mass you will find to be unconverted. Go, brother, leaving the ninety-nine, go after the one sheep that was lost. Leave your home, your comforts, your bed, your ease, your all, to feed lost souls. The Lord of Glory left heaven for this; it is enough for the disciple to be as his Master. It is said of Alleine, that "he was infinitely and insatiably greedy of the conversion of souls." Rutherfurd wrote to his dear people, "My witness is above, that your heaven would be two heavens to me, and the salvation of you all as two salvations to me." The Lord give you this heavenly compassion for this people. Do not be satisfied without conversion. You will often find that there is a shaking among the dry bones, a coming together bone to his bone; skin and flesh come upon them, but no breath in them. Oh! brother, cry for the breath of heaven. Remember a moral sinner will lie down in the same hell with the vilest.

4. *Lead a holy life.*—I believe, brother, that you are born from above, and, therefore, I have confidence in God touching you, that you will be kept from the evil. But, oh! study universal holiness of life. Your whole usefulness depends on this. Your sermon on Sabbath lasts but an hour or two; your life preaches all the week. Remember, ministers are standard-bearers. Satan aims his fiery darts at them. If he can only make you a covetous minister, or a lover of pleasure, or a lover of praise, or a lover of good eating, then he has ruined your ministry for ever. Ah! let him preach on fifty years, he will never do me any harm. Dear brother, cast yourself at the feet of Christ, implore his Spirit to make you a holy man. Take heed to thyself and to thy doctrine.

5. *Last of all, be a man of prayer.*—Give yourself to prayer and to the ministry of the Word. If you do not pray, God will probably lay you aside from your ministry, as he did me, to teach you to pray. Remember Luther's maxim, "*Bene orâsse est bene studuisse.*" Get your texts from God, your thoughts, your words, from God. Carry the names of the little flock upon your breast like the High Priest, wrestle for the unconverted. Luther spent

his three best hours in prayer. John Welch prayed seven or eight hours a day. He used to keep a plaid on his bed that he might wrap himself in it when he rose during night. Sometimes his wife found him on the ground lying weeping. When she complained, he would say, "O, woman! I have the souls of three thousand to answer for, and I know not how it is with many of them." Oh! that God would pour down this spirit of prayer on you and me, and all the ministers of our beloved Church, and then we shall see better days in Scotland. I commend you to God, &c.

CHARGE TO THE PEOPLE.

Dear Brethren—I trust that this is to be the beginning of many happy days to you in this place. Gifts in answer to prayer are always the sweetest. I believe your dear pastor has been given you in answer to prayer, for I do not think your wonderful unanimity can be accounted for in any other way.

1. *Love your pastor.*—So far as I know him he is worthy of your love. I believe he is one to whom the Lord has been very merciful, that God has already owned his labors, and I trust, will a thousand times more. Esteem him very highly in love for his work's sake. You little know the anxieties, temptations, pains, and wrestlings, he will be called to bear for you. Few people know the deep wells of anxiety in the bosom of a faithful pastor. Love and reverence him much. *Do not make an idol of him;* that will destroy his usefulness. It was said of the Erskines that men could not see Christ over their heads. Remember, look beyond him and above him. Those that would have worshipped Paul were the people who stoned him. Do not stumble at his infirmities. There are spots upon the sun, and infirmities in the best of men. Cover them, do not stumble at them. Would you refuse gold because it was brought you in a ragged purse? Would you refuse pure water because it came in a chipped bowl? The treasure is in an earthen vessel.

2. *Make use of your pastor.*—He has come with good news from a far country. Come and hear.

(1*st*,) Wait patiently on his ministry.—He does not come in his own name. The Lord is with him. If you refuse him, you will refuse Christ; for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts.

(2*d*,) Welcome him into your houses.—He is coming, like his Master, to seek that which was lost, and to bind up that which is broken; to strengthen that which was sick, and to bring again that which was driven away. You have all need of him, whether converted or not. Remember there is an awful curse against those who receive not gospel messages. He will shake the dust off his feet against you, and that dust will rise against you in judgment.

(3*d*,) Do not trouble him about worldly matters.—His grand

concern is to get your soul saved. He is not a man of business, but a man of prayer. He has given himself to prayer, and to the ministry of the Word.

(*4th*,) Go freely to him about your souls.—"The minister's house was more thronged than ever the tavern had wont to be." These were happy days. There is no trade I would like to see broken in this place but that of the taverners. It is a soul-destroying trade. I would like to see the taverns emptied, and the minister's house thronged. Do not hesitate to go to him. It is your duty and your privilege. It is your duty—it will encourage him, and show him how to preach to your souls. It is your privilege—I have known many get more light from a short conversation than from many sermons.

(*5th*,) Be brief.—Tell your case. Hear his word and be gone. Remember his body is weak, and his time precious. You are stealing his time from others or from God. I cannot tell you what a blessing it will be if you will be very short in your calls. The talk of the lips tendeth to penury.

3. *God's children pray for him.*—Pray for his body, that he may be kept strong, and spared for many years. Pray for his soul, that he may be kept humble and holy, a burning and a shining light, that he may grow. Pray for his ministry, that it may be abundantly blessed, that he may be anointed to preach good tidings. Let there be no secret prayer without naming him before your God, no family prayer without carrying your pastor in your hearts to God. Hold up his hands, so Israel will prevail against Amalek.

4. *Unconverted souls, prize this opportunity.*—I look on this ordination as a smile of heaven upon you. God might have taken away ministers from this town instead of giving us more. I believe the Lord Jesus is saying, "I have much people in this city." The door is begun to be opened this day. The Spirit is beginning to shine. O that you would know the day of your visitation! This is the market-day of grace beginning in this end of the town, and you should all come to buy. O that you knew the day of your visitation! Some, I fear, will be the worse of this ministry, and not the better. The election will be saved, and the rest be blinded. Some will yet wish they had died before this church was opened. Be sure, dear souls, that you will either be saved, or more lost, by this ministry. Your pastor comes with the silver trumpet of mercy. Why will ye turn it into the trumpet of judgment? He comes with glad tidings of great joy. Why should you turn them into sad tidings of endless woe? He comes to preach the acceptable day of the Lord. Why will ye turn it into the day of vengeance of our God?

16*th Dec.*, 1840.

SERMON XII.

"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. We love him, because he first loved us. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God loves his brother also."—1 John iv., 18–21.

Doctrine.—*Perfect love casteth out fear.*

I. *The state of an awakened soul.*—"*Fear hath torment.*"

There are two kinds of fear mentioned in the Bible very opposite from one another. The one is the very atmosphere of heaven, the other is the very atmosphere of hell.

1. *There is the fear of love.*—This is the very temper of a little child: the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. This was the mind of Job. "He feared God and hated evil." Nay, it is the very spirit of the Lord Jesus. On him rested "the spirit of the fear of the Lord, and made him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord."

2. *There is the fear of terror.*—This is the very temper of devils; "the devils believe and tremble." This is what was in Adam and Eve after the fall; they fled from the voice of God, and tried to hide themselves in one of the trees of the garden. This was the state of the Jailor when he trembled, and sprang in and brought them out, and fell at their feet, saying, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" This is the fear here spoken of; tormenting fear. "Fear hath torment." Some of you have felt this fear that hath torment. Many more might feel it this day; you are within reach of it. Let me explain its rise in the soul.

1*st*, A natural man casteth off fear, and restrains prayer before God. "They have been at ease from their youth, and settled down upon their lees, they have not been emptied from vessel to vessel; therefore, their taste remains in them, and their scent is not changed." They are like fallow-ground, that has never been broken up by the plough, but is overrun with briers and thorns. Are there not some among you that never trembled for your soul? You think you are as good as your neighbors. Ah! well, your dream will be broken up one day soon.

2*d*, When the Spirit of God opens the eyes, he makes the stoutest sinner tremble. He shows him *the number of his sins*, or rather that they cannot be numbered. Before, he had a memory that easily forgot his sins; oaths slipped over his tongue and he knew it not; every day added new sins to his page on God's book, yet he remembered not. But now, the Spirit of God sets all his sins straight before him. All unpardoned, long-forgotten enormities, rise up behind him. Then he begins to tremble. "Innumerable evils have compassed me about."

3*d*, The Spirit makes him feel the greatness of sin, the exceeding sinfulness of it. Before, it seemed nothing; but now, it rises like a flood over the soul. The wrath of God he feels abiding on him; a terrible sound is in his ears. He knows not what to do; his fear hath torment. Sin is seen now as done against a holy God, done against a God of love, done against Jesus Christ and his love.

4*th*, A third thing which awfully torments the soul is, corruption working in the heart. Often persons under conviction are made to feel the awful workings of corruption in their heart. Often temptation and conviction of sin meet together, and awfully torment the soul, rending it in pieces. Conviction of sin is piercing his heart, driving him to flee from the wrath to come, and yet at the same moment some raging lust, or envy, or horrid malice, is boiling in his heart, driving him towards hell. Then a man feels a hell within him. In hell there will be this awful mixture; there will be an overwhelming dread of the wrath of God, and yet corruption boiling up within, will drive the soul more and more into the flames. This is often felt on earth. Some of you may be feeling it. This is the fear that hath torment.

5*th*, Another thing the Spirit convinces the soul of is, his inability to help himself. When a man is first awakened, he says, I shall soon get myself out of this sad condition. He falls upon many contrivances to justify himself. He changes his life; he tries to repent, to pray. He is soon taught that "his righteousnesses are filthy rags;" that he is trying to cover rags with filthy rags; he is brought to feel that all he can do signifies just nothing, and that he never can bring a clean thing out of an unclean. This sinks the soul in gloom. This fear hath torment.

6*th*, He fears he shall never be in Christ. Some of you perhaps know that this fear hath torment. The free offer of Christ is the very thing that pierces you to the heart. You hear that he is altogether lovely, that he invites sinners to come to him, that he never casts out those that do come. But you fear you will never be one of these. You fear you have sinned too long or too much, you have sinned away your day of grace. Ah! this fear hath torment.

Some will say, "It is not good to be awakened then."

Ans. 1. It is the way to peace that passeth understanding. It is God's chosen method, to bring you to feel your need of Christ before you come to Christ. At present your peace is like a dream: when you awake you will find it so. Ask awakened souls if they would go back again to their slumber. Ah! no; if I die, let me die at the foot of the cross; let me not perish unawakened.

Ans. 2. You must be awakened one day. If not now, you will afterwards, in hell. After death, fear will come on your secure souls. There is not *one* unawakened soul in hell; all are trem-

bling there. The devils tremble; the damned spirits tremble. Would it not be better to tremble now, and flee to Jesus Christ for refuge? *Now*, he is waiting to be gracious to you. *Then*, he will mock when your fear cometh. You will know to all eternity that "fear hath torment."

II. *The change on believing.*—"There is no fear in love." "Perfect love casteth out fear."

1. The love here spoken of is not our love to God, but *his love to us;* for it is called *perfect love.* All that is ours is imperfect. When we have done all, we must say, "We are unprofitable servants." Sin mingles with all we think and do. It were no comfort to tell us that, if we would love God perfectly, it would cast out fear; for how can we work that love into our souls? It is the Father's love to us that casteth out fear. He is *the Perfect One.* All his works are perfect. He can do nothing but what is perfect. His knowledge is perfect knowledge: his wrath is perfect wrath; his love is *perfect love.* It is this perfect love which casteth out fear. Just as the sunbeams cast out darkness wherever they fall, so does this love cast out fear.

2. But where does this love fall?—On Jesus Christ. Twice God spake from heaven, and said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." God perfectly loves his own Son. He sees infinite beauty in his person. God sees himself manifested. He is infinitely pleased with his finished work. The infinite heart of the infinite God flows out in love towards our Lord Jesus Christ. And there is no fear in the bosom of Christ. All his fears are past. Once he said, "While I suffer thy terrors I am distressed;" but now he is in perfect love, and perfect love casteth out fear. *Hearken, trembling souls!* Here you may find rest to your souls. You do not need to live another hour under your tormenting fears. Jesus Christ has borne the wrath of which you are afraid. He now stands a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in the time of trouble. Look to Christ, and your fear will be cast out. Come to the feet of Christ, and you will find rest. Call upon the name of the Lord, and you will be delivered. You say, you cannot look, nor come, nor cry, for you are helpless. Hear, then, and your soul shall live. Jesus is a Saviour to the helpless. Christ is not only a Saviour to those who are naked, and empty and have no goodness to recommend themselves, but he is a Saviour to those who are unable to give themselves to him. You cannot be in too desperate a condition for Christ. As long as you remain unbelieving, you are under his perfect wrath; wrath without any mixture. The wrath of God will be as amazing as his love. It comes out of the same bosom. But the moment you look to Christ, you will come under his perfect love—love without any coldness, light without any shade, love without any cloud or mountain between. God's love will cast out all your fears.

III. *His love gives boldness in the Day of Judgment*, verse 17. There is a great day coming, often spoken of in the Bible—the Day of Judgment—the day when God shall judge the secrets of men's hearts by Christ Jesus. The Christless will not be able to stand in that day. The ungodly shall not stand in the judgment. At present, sinners have much boldness; their neck is an iron sinew, and their brow brass. Many of them cannot blush when they are caught in sin. Amongst ourselves, is it not amazing how bold sinners are in forsaking ordinances? With what a brazen face will some men swear! How bold some ungodly men are in coming to the Lord's Table! But it will not be so in a little while. When Christ shall appear—the holy Jesus, in all his glory, then brazen-faced sinners will begin to blush. Those that never prayed will begin to wail. Sinners, whose limbs carried them stoutly to sin and to the Lord's Table last Sabbath, will find their knees knocking against one another. Who shall abide the day of his coming, and who shall stand when he appears? When the books are opened—the one the book of God's remembrance, the other the Bible—then the dead will be judged out of those things written in the books. Then the heart of the ungodly will die within them; then will begin "their shame and everlasting contempt." Many wicked persons comfort themselves with this, that their sin is not known, that no eye sees them; but in that day the most secret sins will be all brought out to the light. "Every idle word that men shall speak they shall give an account thereof in the Day of Judgment." How would you tremble and blush, O wicked man, if I were now to go over before this congregation the secret sins you have committed during the past week; all your secret fraud and cheating; your secret uncleanness; your secret malice and envy; how you would blush and be confounded! How much more in that day, when the secrets of your whole life shall be made manifest before an assembled world! What eternal confusion will sink down your soul in that day! You will be quite chop-fallen; all your pride and blustering will be gone.

All in Christ will have boldness.

1. *Because Christ shall be Judge.*—What abundant peace will it give you in that day, believer, when you see Christ is judge! He that shed his blood for you. He that is your surety, your shepherd, your all. It will take away all fear. You will be able to say, who shall condemn, for Christ hath died. In the very hand that opens the books, you will see the marks of the wounds made by your sins. Christ will be the same to you in the judgment that he is now.

2. *Because the Father himself loveth you.* Christ and the Father are one. The Father sees no sin in you; because as Christ is, so are you in this world. You are judged by God according to what the surety is; so that God's love will be with you in that

day. You will feel the smile of the Father, and you will hear the voice of Jesus saying, "Come, ye blessed of my Father."

Learn to fear nothing between this and judgment. Fear not, wait on the Lord and be of good courage.

IV. *The consequences of being in the love of God.*

1. "*We love him because he first loved us;*" v. 19. When a poor sinner cleaves to Jesus, and finds the forgiving love of God, he cannot but love God back again. When the prodigal returned home and felt his Father's arms around his neck, then did he feel the gushings of affection toward his father. When the summer sun shines full down upon the sea, it draws the vapors upward to the sky. So when the sunbeams of the Son of Righteousness fall upon the soul, they draw forth the constant risings of love to him in return.

Some of you are longing to be able to love God. Come into his love then. Consent to be loved by him, though worthless in yourself. It is better to be loved by him than to love, and it is the only way to learn to love him. When the light of the sun falls upon the moon, it finds the moon dark and unlovely, but the moon reflects the light, and casts it back again. So let the love of God shine into your breast, and you will cast it back again. The love of Christ constraineth us. "We love him because he first loved us." The only cure for a cold heart is to look at the heart of Jesus.

Some of you have no love to God because you love an idol. You may be sure you have never come into his love: that curse rests upon you, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ let him be Anathema maranatha."

2. *We love our brother also.* If you love an absent person you will love their picture. What is that the sailor's wife keeps so closely wrapped in a napkin, laid up in her best drawer among sweet smelling flowers? She takes it out morning and evening, and gazes at it through her tears. It is the picture of her absent husband. She loves it because it is like him. It has many imperfections, but still it is like. Believers are the pictures of God in this world. The spirit of Christ dwells in them. They walk as he walked. True, they are full of imperfections; still they are true copies. If you love him, you will love them. You will make them your bosom friends.

Are there none of you that dislike real Christians? You do not like their look, their ways, their speech, their prayers. You call them hypocrites, and keep away from them. Do you know the reason? You hate the copy, because you hate the original; you hate Christ, and are none of his.

St. Peter's, 1840.

SERMON XIII.

ACTION SERMON.—*October* 25, 1840.

"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."—Gal. vi., 14.

Doctrine—Glorying in the Cross.

I. *The subject here spoken of by Paul. The Cross of Christ.*—This word is used in three different senses in the Bible. It is important to distinguish them.

1. It is used to signify *the wooden cross;* the tree upon which the Lord Jesus was crucified. The punishment of the cross was a Roman invention. It was made use of only in the case of slaves, or very notorious malefactors. The cross was made of two beams of wood crossing each other. It was laid on the ground and the criminal stretched upon it. A nail was driven through each hand, and one nail through both the feet. It was then lifted upright, and let fall into a hole, where it was wedged in. The crucified man was then left to die, hanging by his hands and feet. This was the death to which Jesus stooped. "He endured *the cross*, despising the shame." "He became obedient unto death, even the death of *the cross*." Matt. xxvii., 40, 42; Mark xv., 30, 32; Luke xxiii., 26; John xix., 17, 19, 25, 31; Eph. ii., 16.

2. It is used to signify *the way of salvation by Jesus Christ crucified.* So 1 Cor. i., 18, "The preaching of the Cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us who are saved it is the power of God;" compared with verse 23, "We preach Christ crucified," &c. Here it is plain the preaching of the Cross and the preaching of Christ crucified are the same thing. This is the meaning in the passage before us, "God forbid that I should glory, &c." It is the name given to the whole plan of salvation by a crucified Redeemer. That little word implies the whole glorious work of Christ for us. It implies the love of God in giving his Son (John iii., 16); the love of Christ in giving himself (Eph. v., 2); the incarnation of the Son of God; his substitution, one for many; his atoning sufferings and death. The whole work of Christ is included in that little word, *the Cross of Christ.* And the reason is plain; his dying on the cross was the lowest point of his humiliation. It was there he cried, It is finished; the work of my obedience is finished! my sufferings are finished; the work of redemption is complete; the wrath of my people is finished; and he bowed the head and gave up the ghost. Hence his whole finished work is called *the Cross of Christ.*

3. It is used to signify *the sufferings borne in following Christ.*

"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me," Matt. xvi., 24. When a man determines to follow Christ, he must give up his sinful pleasures, his sinful companions; he meets with scorn, ridicule, contempt, hatred; the persecution of early friends; his name is cast out as evil. "He that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution." Now, to meet all these is "to take up the cross." "He that taketh not up his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me."

In the passage before us the words are used in the second meaning; the plan of salvation by a crucified Saviour.

Dear friends, it is this that is set before you in the broken bread and poured out wine; the whole work of Christ for the salvation of sinners. The love and grace of the Lord Jesus are all gathered into a focus there. The love of the Father; the covenant with the Son; the love of Jesus; his incarnation, obedience, death; all are set before you in that broken bread and wine. It is a sweet, silent sermon. Many a sermon contains not Christ from beginning to end. Many show him doubtfully and imperfectly. But here is *nothing else* but Christ and him crucified. Most rich and speaking ordinance! Pray that the very sight of that broken bread may break your hearts, and make them flow to the Lamb of God. Pray for conversions from the sight of the broken bread and poured out wine. Look attentively, dear souls and little children, when the bread is broken and the wine poured out. It is a heart-affecting sight. May the Holy Spirit bless it. Dear believers, look you attentively, to get deeper, fuller views of the way of pardon and holiness. A look from the eye of Christ to Peter broke and melted his proud heart; he went out and wept bitterly. Pray that a single look of that broken bread may do the same for you. When the Roman centurion, that watched beside the cross of Jesus, saw him die, and the rocks rend, he cried out, Truly this was the Son of God! Look at this broken bread, and you will see the same thing, and may your heart be made to cry after the Lord Jesus. When the dying thief looked on the pale face of Immanuel, and saw the holy majesty that beamed from his dying eye, he cried, Lord, remember me! This broken bread reveals the same thing. May the same grace be given you, and may you breathe the cry, Lord remember me!

O get ripening views of Christ, dear believers. The corn in harvest sometimes ripens more in one day than in weeks before. So some Christians gain more grace in one day than for months before. Pray that this may be a ripening harvest day in your souls.

II. *Paul's feelings towards the Cross of Christ: "God forbid," &c.*

1. It is implied that he had utterly forsaken the way of right-

cousness by deeds of the law. Every natural man seeks salvation by making himself better in the sight of God. He tries to mend his life; he puts a bridle on his tongue; he tries to command his feelings and thoughts, all to make himself better in the sight of God. Or he goes further; tries to cover his past sins by religious observances; he becomes a religious man; prays, weeps, reads, attends sacraments, is deeply occupied in religion, and tries to get it into his heart, all to make himself appear good in the eye of God, that he may lay God under debt to pardon and love him. Paul tried this plan for long. He was a Pharisee, touching the righteousness in the law blameless; he lived an outwardly blameless life, and was highly thought of as a most religious man. "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." When it pleased God to open his eyes, he gave up this way of self-righteousness for ever and ever; he had no more any peace from looking in: "we have no confidence in the flesh;" he bade farewell for ever to that way of seeking peace. Nay, he trampled it under his feet. "I do count them but dung that I may win Christ. Oh! it is a glorious thing when a man is brought to trample under feet his own righteousness; it is the hardest thing in the world.

2. *He betook himself to the Lord Jesus Christ.*—Paul got such a view of the glory, brightness, and excellency of the way of salvation by Jesus, that it filled his whole heart. All other things sunk into littleness. Every mountain and hill was brought low, the crooked was made straight, the rough places smooth, and the glory of the Lord was revealed. As the rising sun makes all the stars disappear, so the rising of Christ upon his soul made everything else disappear. Jesus suffering for us filled his eye; filled his heart. He saw, believed, and was happy. Christ for us, answered all his need. From the Cross of Christ a ray of heavenly light flamed to his soul, filling him with light and joy unspeakable. He felt that God was glorified, and he was saved; he cleaved to the Lord with full purpose of heart. Like Edwards, "I was unspeakably pleased."

3. *He gloried in the Cross.*—He confessed Christ before men; he was not ashamed of Christ before that adulterous generation; he gloried that this was his way of pardon, peace, and holiness. Ah! what a change! once he blasphemed the name of Jesus, and persecuted to the death those that called on his name; now it is all his boast, "Straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God." Once he gloried in his blameless life when he was among Pharisees; now he glories in this, that he is the chief of sinners, but that Christ died for such as he. Once he gloried in his learning, when he sat at the feet of Gamaliel; now he glories in being reckoned a fool for Christ's sake, in being a little child led by the hand of Jesus. At the Lord's table, among his friends, in heathen cities, at Athens, at Rome, among the wise

or unwise, before kings and princes, he glories in it as the only thing worthy of being known; the way of salvation by Jesus Christ and him crucified.

Dear friends, have you been brought to glory only in the Cross of Christ?

1. Have you given over the old way of salvation by the deeds of the law? Your natural heart is set upon that way. You are always for making yourself better and better till you can lay God under obligation to pardon you. You are always for looking *in* for righteousness. You are looking in at your convictions, and sorrow for past sins, your tears and anxious prayers; or you are looking in at your amendment, forsaking of wicked courses, and struggles after a new life; or you are looking at your own religious exercises, your fervency, and enlarged heart in prayer or in the house of God; or you are looking at the work of the Holy Spirit in you, the graces of the spirit. Alas! alas! The bed is shorter than that you can stretch yourself on it, the covering is narrower than that you can wrap yourself in it. Despair of pardon in that way. Give it up for ever. Your heart is desperately wicked. Every righteousness in which your heart has anything to do is vile and polluted, and cannot appear in his sight. Count it all loss, filthy rags, dung, that you may win Christ.

2. Betake yourself to the Lord Jesus Christ. Believe the love of the Lord Jesus Christ. He delighteth in mercy; he is ready to forgive; in him compassions flow; he justifies the ungodly. Have you seen the glory of the cross of Jesus? Has it attracted your heart? Do you feel unspeakably pleased with that way of salvation? Do you see that God is glorified when you are saved? that God is a God of majesty, truth, unsullied holiness, and inflexible justice, and yet you are justified? Does the cross of Christ fill your heart? Does it make a great calm in your soul, a heavenly rest? Do you love that word, "the righteousness of God;" "the righteousness which is by faith," the righteousness without works? Do you sit within sight of the cross? Does your soul rest there?

3. Glory only in the Cross of Christ. Observe, there cannot be a secret Christian. Grace is like ointment hid in the hand, it bewrayeth itself. A lively Christian cannot keep silence. If you truly feel the sweetness of the Cross of Christ, you will be constrained to confess Christ before men. "It is like the best wine, that goeth down sweetly, causing lips to speak." Do you confess him in your family? Do you make it known there that you are Christ's? Remember, you must be decided in your own house. It is the mark of a hypocrite to be a Christian everywhere except at home. Among your companions, do you own him a friend whom you have found? In the shop and in the market, are you willing to be known as a man washed in the blood of the lamb? Do you long that all your dealings be under the sweet rules of the gospel? Come then to the Lord's Table and confess him that has

saved your soul. Oh! grant that it may be a true, free, and full confession. This is my sweet food, my lamb, my righteousness, my Lord and my God, my all in all. "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross." Once you gloried in riches, friends, fame, sin; now in a crucified Jesus.

III. *The effects.*—"The world is crucified to me, and I unto the world." "If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature," &c. When the blind beggar of Jericho got his eyes opened by the Lord, this world was all changed to him, and he to the world. So it was with Paul; no sooner did he rise from his knees, with the peace of Jesus in his heart, than the world got its death-blow in his eyes. As he hurried over the smooth stones of the streets of Damascus, or looked down from the flat roof of his house upon the lovely gardens on the banks of the Abana, the world and all its dazzling show seemed to his eye a poor, shrivelled, crucified thing. Once it was his all. Once its soft and slippery flatteries were pleasant as music to his ear. Riches, beauty, pleasure, all that the natural eye admires, his heart was once set upon; but the moment he believed on Jesus all these began to die. True, they were not dead, but they were *nailed to a cross.* They no more had that living attraction for them they once had; and now every day they began to lose their power. As a dying man on the cross grows weaker every moment, while his heart's blood trickles from the deep gashes in his hands and feet, so the world, that was once his all, began to lose every moment its attractive power. He tasted so much sweetness in Christ, in pardon, access to God, the smile of God, the indwelling spirit, that the world became every day a more tasteless world to him.

Another effect was, "*I to the world.*"—As Paul laid his hand upon his own bosom he felt that it also was changed. Once it was as a mettled race-horse that paces the ground and cannot be bridled in; once it was like the fox-hounds on the scent impatient of the leash; his heart thus rushed after fame, honor, worldly praise; but now it was nailed to the cross, a broken, contrite heart. True, it was not dead. Many a fitful start his old nature gave that drove him to his knees and made him cry for grace to help; but still, the more he looked to the cross of Jesus, the more his old heart began to die. Every day he felt less desire for sin; more desire for Christ, and God, and perfect holiness.

Some may discover that they have never come to Christ. Has the world been crucified to you? Once it was your all; its praise, its riches, its songs, and merry-makings? Has it been nailed to the cross in your sight? Oh! put your hand on your heart. Has it lost its burning desire after earthly things? They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts. Do you feel that Jesus has put the nails through your lusts? Do you wish they were dead? What answer can you make, sons and daughters of

pleasure, to whom the dance, and song, and the glass, and witty repartee, are the sum of happiness? Ye are none of Christ's. What answer can you make, lovers of money, sordid money-makers, who had rather have a few more sovereigns than the grace of God in your heart? What answer can you make, flesh-pleasers, night-walkers, lovers of darkness? Ye are not Christ's. Ye have not come to Christ. The world is all alive to you, and you are living to the world. You cannot glory in the cross, and love the world. Ah! poor deluded souls, you have never seen the glory of the way of pardon by Jesus. Go on; love the world; grasp every pleasure; gather heaps of money; feed and fatten on your lusts; take your fill. What will it profit you when you lose your own soul?

Some are saying, O that the world was crucified to me and I to the world! O that my heart were as dead as a stone to the world, and alive to Jesus! Do you truly wish it? Look, then, to the cross. Behold the amazing gift of love. Salvation is promised to a look. Sit down like Mary, and gaze upon a crucified Jesus. So will the world become a dim and dying thing. When you gaze upon the sun, it makes everything else dark; when you taste honey, it makes everything else tasteless; so when your soul feeds on Jesus, it takes away the sweetness of all earthly things; praise, pleasure, fleshly lusts, all lose their sweetness. Keep a continued gaze. Run, looking unto Jesus. Look, till the way of salvation by Jesus fills up the whole horizon, so glorious and peace-speaking. So will the world be crucified to you, and you unto the world.

SERMON XIV.

"Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the High God? shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"—Micah vi, 6 8

Doctrine.—The good way of coming before the Lord.

The question of an awakened soul.—"Wherewith shall I come before the Lord?" An unawakened man never puts that question. A natural man has no desire to come before God, or to bow himself before the high God. He does not like to think of God. He would rather think of any other subject. He easily forgets what he is told about God. A natural man has no memory for divine

things, because he has no heart for them. He has no desire to come before God in prayer. There is nothing a natural man hates more than prayer. He would far rather spend half an hour every morning in bodily exercise or in hard labor, than in the presence of God. He has no desire to come before God when he dies. He knows that he must appear before God, but it gives him no joy. He had rather sink into nothing; he had rather never see the face of God. Ah! my friends, is this your condition? How surely you may know that you have "the carnal mind which is enmity against God." You are like Pharaoh; "Who is the Lord that I should obey him?" You say to God, "Depart from me, for I desire not the knowledge of thy ways." What an awful state it is to be in to have no desire after him who is the fountain of living waters!

I. *Here is the piercing question of every awakened soul.*

1. An awakened soul feels that his chief happiness is in coming before God. This was *unfallen Adam's* happiness. He felt like a child under a loving father's eye. It was his chief joy to come before God, to be loved by him, to be like a mote in the sunbeam, to be continually basked in the sunshine of his love, no cloud or veil coming between. This is *the joy of holy angels*, to come before the Lord, and bow before the high God. In his presence is fulness of joy. "The angels do always behold the face of my Father." On whatever errand of love they fly, they still feel that his eye of love is on them; this is their daily, hourly joy. This is the true happiness of a believer. Hear David (Psalm xlii.), "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God: my soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?" He panted not after the gifts of God, not his favors or comforts, but after himself. A believer longs after God, to come into his presence, to feel his love, to feel near to him in secret, to feel in the crowd that he is nearer than all the creatures. Ah! dear brethren, have you ever tasted this blessedness? There is greater rest and solace to be found in the presence of God for one hour than in an eternity of the presence of man. To be in his presence, under his love, under his eye, is heaven wherever it be. God can make you happy in any circumstances. Without him nothing can.

2. An awakened soul feels difficulties in the way.—"Wherewith," &c. There are two great difficulties.

1*st*, *The nature of the sinner.*—"Wherewith shall I," &c. When God really awakens a soul, he shows the vileness and hatefulness of himself. He directs the eye within. He shows him that every imagination of his heart has been only evil continually: that every member of his body he has used in the service of sin; that he has treated Christ in a shameful man-

ner; that he has sinned both against law and love; that he has kept the door of his heart barred against the Lord Jesus, till his head was filled with dew, and his locks with the drops of the night. O brethren, if God has ever discovered yourself to you, you would wonder that such a lump of hell and sin should have been permitted to breathe so long; that God should have had patience with you till this day. Your cry will be, "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord?" Though all the world should come before him, how can I?

2*d*, *The nature of God.*—"The high God." When God really awakens a soul, he generally reveals to him something of his own holiness and majesty. Thus he dealt with Isaiah (vi.), "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim; one cried to another, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is filled with his glory. Then said I, Woe is me, for I am undone." When Isaiah saw that God was so great a God, and so holy, he felt himself undone. He felt that he could not stand in the presence of so great a God. O brethren! have you ever had a discovery of the highness and holiness of God, so as to lay you low at his feet? O pray for such a discovery of God as Job had, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Alas! I fear that most of you will never know that God with whom you have to do, till you stand guilty and speechless before his great white throne. O that you would pray for a discovery of him now, that you may cry, "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God!"

3*d*, The anxiety of the awakened soul leads to the question, "Wherewith?" Ah! it is a piercing question. It is the question of one who has been made to feel that "one thing is needful." Anything he has he would give up to get peace with God. If he had a thousand rams, or ten thousand rivers of oil, he would gladly give them. If the life of his children, the dearest objects on this earth, would attain it, he would give them up. If he had a thousand worlds, he would give all for an interest in Christ. Woe to you that are at ease in Zion. Woe to those of you that never asked this question, Wherewith shall I come before the Lord? Ah! foolish triflers with eternal things! Poor butterflies, that flutter on from flower to flower, and consider not the dark eternity that is before you! Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel! Ye are hastening on to death and judgment, yet never ask, What garment shall cover me when I stand before the great white throne? If you were going to appear before an earthly monarch, you would ask beforehand, Wherewith shall I be attired? If you were to be tried at an earthly bar, you would make sure of an advocate. How is it

you press on so swiftly to the bar of God, and never ask the question, Wherewith shall I appear? "If the righteous scarcely are saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?"

II. *The answer of peace to the awakened soul.*—"He hath showed thee, O man, what is good." Nothing that man can bring with him will justify him before God. The natural heart is always striving to bring something to be a robe of righteousness before God. There is nothing a man would not do, nothing he would not suffer, if he might only cover himself before God. Tears, prayers, duties, reformations, devotions—the heart will do anything to be righteous before God. But all this righteousness is filthy rags. For,

1. The heart remains an awful depth of corruption. Everything in which that heart has any share is polluted and vile. These very tears and prayers would need to be washed.

2. Supposing this righteousness perfect, it cannot cover the past. It answers only for the time in which it was done. Old sins, and the sins of youth, still remain uncovered.

Oh! dear brethren, if Jesus is to justify you, he must do as he did to Joshua (Zech. iii., 4), "Take away the filthy garments from him;" and, "I will clothe thee with change of raiment." The hand of Jesus alone can take off your filthy garments. The hand of Jesus alone can clothe you with change of raiment.

Christ is the good way.—"He hath showed thee," &c. "Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." Christ is the good way to the Father. 1. Because he is so suitable. He just answers the case of the sinner; for every sin of the sinner he has a wound, for every nakedness he has a covering, for every emptiness he has a supply. There is no fear but he will receive the sinner, for he came into the world on purpose to save sinners. There is no fear but the Father will be well pleased with us in him, for the Father sent him, laid our iniquity upon him, raised him from the dead, and points you to him. "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good." 2. He is so free.—"As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." As far as the curse by Adam extends, so far does the offer of pardon by Jesus extend. Here is good news to the vilest of men. You may be covered just as completely and as freely as those that have never sinned as you have done. "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good." 3. He is so God-glorifying.—All other ways of salvation are man-glorifying, but this way is God-glorifying; therefore, it is good. That way is good and best which gives the glory to the Lamb. The way of righteousness by Jesus is good, on this account, that Jesus gets all the praise. To him be glory. It is of faith that it might be by grace. If a man could justify him-

self, or if he could believe of himself and draw the righteousness of Christ over his soul, that man would glory. But when a man lies dead at the foot of Jesus, and Jesus spreads his white robe over him, out of free sovereign mercy, then Jesus gets all the praise.

Have you chosen the good way of being justified? This is the way which God has been showing from the foundation of the world. He showed it in Abel's lamb, and in all the sacrifices, and by all the prophets. He shows it by his spirit to the heart. Has this good way been revealed to you? If it has, you will count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of it. Oh, sweet, divine way of justifying a sinner! Oh, that all the world but knew it! Oh, that we saw more of it! Oh, that you could make use of it! "Walk therein and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

III. *God's requirement of the justified.*—When Jesus healed the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda, he said to him, "Behold thou art made whole, sin no more, lest a worse thing happen unto thee." And again, when he covered the sin of the adulteress, John viii., he said, "Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more." So here, when he shows the good way of righteousness, he adds, "And what doth the Lord require of thee?"

1. *God requires his redeemed ones to be holy.*—If you are his brethren, he will have you righteous, holy men.

1*st*, He requires that you do justly, to be just in your dealings between man and man. This is one of his own glorious features. He is a just God. "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" "He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him." Are you come to him by Jesus? he requires you to reflect his image. Are you his child? you must be like him. O brethren, be exact in your dealings. Be like your God. Take care of dishonesty; take care of trickery in business. Take care of crying up your goods when selling them, and crying them down when buying them. "It is naught, it is naught, sayeth the buyer, but when he is gone his way he boasteth." It shall not be so among you. God requires you to do justly.

2*d*, He requires you to love mercy. This is the brightest feature in the character of Christ. If you are in Christ, drink deep of his spirit; God requires you to be merciful. The world is selfish, unmerciful. An unconverted mother has no mercy on the soul of her own child. She can see it dropping into hell without mercy. O the hellish cruelty of unconverted men. It shall not be so with you. Be merciful, as your father in heaven is merciful.

3*d*, He requires you to walk humbly with thy God. Christ says, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart." If God has covered all your black sins, rebellions, backslidings, outbreakings, then never open your mouth except in humble praise.

God requires this at your hand. Walk with God, and walk humbly.

2. *Remember this is God's end in justifying you.*—He loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it. This was his great end, to raise up a peculiar people to serve him, and bear his likeness, in this world and in eternity. For this he left heaven; for this he groaned, bled, died, to make you holy. If you are not made holy, Christ died in vain for you.

3. *Whatever he requires, he gives grace to perform.*—Christ is not only good as our way to the Father, but he is our fountain of living waters. Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. There is enough in Christ to supply the need of all his people. An old minister says, a child can carry little water from the sea in its two hands, and so it is little we get out of Christ. There are unsearchable riches in him.

Be strong in the grace that is in him. Live out of yourself, and live upon him. Go and tell him, that since he requires all this of thee, he must give thee grace according to your need. My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. He hath showed you one that is good, even the fair Immanuel; now lean upon him, get life from him that shall never die, get living water from him that shall never dry up. Let his hand hold you up amid the billows of this tempestuous sea; let his shoulder carry you over the thorns of this wilderness. Look as much to him for sanctification as for justification.

So will your walk be close with God,
Calm and serene your frame;
So purer light shall mark the road
That leads you to the Lamb.

SERMON XV.

"For I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin."—Rom. vii., 22–25.

A BELIEVER is to be known, not only by his peace and joy, but by his warfare and distress. His peace is peculiar: it flows from Christ; it is heavenly, it is holy peace. His warfare is as peculiar; it is deep-seated, agonizing, and ceases not till death. If the Lord will, many of us have the prospect of sitting down next Sabbath at the Lord's Table. The great question to be answered before sitting down there is, Have I fled to Christ or no?

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

To help you to settle this question, I have chosen the subject of the Christian's warfare, that you may know thereby whether you are a soldier of Christ—whether you are really fighting the good fight of faith.

I. *A believer delights in the law of God.*—Verse 22, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man."

1. Before a man comes to Christ, he hates the law of God, his whole soul rises up against it; viii. 7, "The carnal mind is enmity," &c. (1.) Unconverted men hate the law of God on account of *its purity:* "Thy word is very pure, therefore thy servant loveth it." For the same reason worldly men hate it. The law is the breathing of God's pure and holy mind. It is infinitely opposed to all impurity and sin. Every line of the law is against sin. But natural men love sin, and therefore they hate the law, because it opposes them in all they love. As bats hate the light, and fly against it, so unconverted men hate the pure light of God's law, and fly against it. (2.) They hate it for *its breadth.* "Thy commandment is exceeding broad." It extends to all their outward actions, seen and unseen; it extends to every idle word that men shall speak; it extends to the looks of their eye; it dives into the deepest caves of their heart; it condemns the most secret springs of sin and lust that nestle there. Unconverted men quarrel with the law of God because of its strictness. If it extended only to my outward actions, then I could bear with it; but it condemns my most secret thoughts and desires, which I cannot prevent. Therefore ungodly men rise against the law. (3.) They hate it for *its unchangeableness.* Heaven and earth shall pass away, but one jot or one tittle of the law shall in nowise pass away. If the law would change, or let down its requirements, or die, then ungodly men would be well pleased. But it is unchangeable as God: it is written on the heart of God, with whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning. It cannot change unless God change; it cannot die unless God die. Even in an eternal hell its demands and its curses will be the same. It is an unchangeable law, for He is an unchangeable God. Therefore ungodly men have unchangeable hatred to that holy law.

2. When a man comes to Christ, this is all changed. He can say, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man." He can say with David, "O how I love thy law: it is my meditation all the day." He can say with Jesus, in the 40th Psalm, "I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart."

There are two reasons for this:—

1*st, The law is no longer an enemy.*—If any of you who are trembling under a sense of your infinite sins, and the curses of the law which you have broken, flee to Christ, you will find rest. You will find that he has fully answered the demands of the law as a surety for sinners—that he has fully borne all its curses. You will be able to say, "Christ hath redeemed me from the curse of the law, being made a curse for me, as it is written, 'Cursed,'" &c. You have no more to fear, then, from that awfully holy law: you are not under the law, but under grace. You have no more to fear from the law than you will have after the Judgment Day. Imagine a saved soul after the Judgment Day. When that awful scene is past; when the dead, small and great, have stood before that great white throne; when the sentence of eternal woe has fallen upon all the unconverted, and they have sunk into the lake whose fires can never be quenched; would not that redeemed soul say, I have nothing to fear from that holy law; I have seen its vials poured out, but not a drop has fallen on me? So may you say now, O believer in Jesus. When you look upon the soul of Christ, scarred with God's thunderbolts; when you look upon his body, pierced for sin, you can say, He was made a curse for me; why should I fear that holy law?

2*d, The Spirit of God writes the law on the heart.*—This is the promise (Jer. xxxi., 33), "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." Coming to Christ takes away your fear of the law, but it is the Holy Spirit coming into your heart that makes you love the law. The Holy Spirit is no more frightened away from that heart; he comes and softens it; he takes out the stony heart and puts in a heart of flesh; and there he writes the holy, holy, holy law of God. Then the law of God is sweet to that soul; he has an inward delight in it. "The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." *Now* he unfeignedly desires every thought, word and action, to be according to that law. "O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes: great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing shall offend them." The 119th Psalm becomes the breathing of that new heart. Now also he would fain see all the world submitting to that pure and holy law. "Rivers of waters run down mine eyes because they keep not thy law." O that all the world but knew that holiness and happiness are one! O that all the world were one holy family, joyfully coming under the pure rules of the Gospel! Try yourselves by this. Can you say, "I delight," &c.? Do you remember when you hated the law of God? Do you love it now? Do you long for the time when you shall live fully under it—holy as God is holy, pure as Christ is pure?

O come, sinners, and give up your hearts to Christ, that he may write on it his holy law! You have long enough had the devil's law graven on your hearts; come you to Jesus, and he will both

shelter you from the curses of the law, and he will give you the Spirit to write all that law in your heart; he will make you love it with your inmost soul. Plead the promise with him. Surely you have tried the pleasures of sin long enough. Come now, and try the pleasures of holiness out of a new heart.

If you die with your heart as it is, it will be stamped a wicked heart to all eternity. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still," Rev. xxii., 11. O come and get the new heart before you die; for except you be born again you cannot see the kingdom of God!

II. *A true believer feels an opposing law in his members.*—Verse 23, "I see another law," &c. When a sinner comes first to Christ, he often thinks he will now bid an eternal farewell to sin: now I shall never sin any more. He feels already at the gate of heaven. A little breath of temptation soon discovers his heart, and he cries out, "*I see another law.*"

1. Observe what he calls it, "*another law;*" quite a different law from the law of God, a law clean contrary to it. Verse 25, he calls it a "*law of sin*"—a law that commands him to commit sin—that urges him on by rewards and threatenings: viii., 2, "*A law of sin and death*"—a law which not only leads to sin, but leads to death, eternal death: "the wages of sin is death." It is the same law which in Galatians is called "*the flesh.*" Gal. v., 17, "The flesh lusteth against the spirit," &c. It is the same which, in Eph. iv., 22, is called "*the old man,*" which is wrought according to the deceitful lusts. The same law which, in Col. iii., is called "*your members*"—"mortify, therefore, your members, which are," &c. The same which is called (v. 24) "*a body of death.*" The truth then is, that in the heart of the believer there remains the whole members and body of an old man, or old nature: there remains the fountain of every sin that has ever polluted the world.

2. Observe again what his law is doing—"*warring.*" This law in the members is not resting quiet, but warring—always fighting. There never can be peace in the bosom of a believer. There is peace with God, but constant war with sin. This law in the members has got an army of lusts under him, and he wages constant war against the law of God. Sometimes, indeed, an army are lying in ambush, and they lie quiet till a favorable moment comes. So in the heart the lusts often lie quiet till the hour of temptation, and they war against the soul. The heart is like a volcano; sometimes it slumbers, and sends up nothing but a little smoke; but the fire is slumbering all the while below, and will soon break out again. There are two great combatants in the believer's soul. There is Satan on the one side, with the flesh and all its lusts at his command; then, on the other side, there is the Holy Spirit, with the new creature all at his command. And so

" the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh ; and these two are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."

Is Satan ever successful ? In the deep wisdom of God the law in the members does sometimes bring the soul into captivity. Noah was a perfect man, and Noah walked with God, and yet he was led captive. " Noah drank of the wine, and was drunken." Abraham was " the friend of God," and yet he told a lie, saying of Sarah his wife, " She is my sister." Job was a perfect man, one that feared God and hated evil, and yet he was provoked to curse the day wherein he was born. And so with Moses, and David, and Solomon, and Hezekiah, and Peter and the Apostles.

1. Have you experienced this warfare ? It is a clear mark of God's children. Most of you, I fear, have never felt it. Do not mistake me. All of you have felt a warfare at times between your natural conscience and the law of God. But that is not the contest in the believer's bosom. It is a warfare between the Spirit of God in the heart, and the old man with his deeds.

2. If any of you are groaning under this warfare, learn to be humbled by it, but not discouraged.

1*st*, *Be humbled under it.*—It is intended to make you lie in the dust, and feel that you are but a worm. Oh ! what a vile wretch you must be, that even after you are forgiven, and have received the Holy Spirit, your heart should still be a fountain of every wickedness ! How vile, that in your most solemn approaches to God—in the house of God—in awfully affecting situations, such as kneeling beside the death bed, you should still have in your bosom all the members of your old nature. Let this make you lie low.

2*d*, *Let this teach you your need of Jesus.*—You need the blood of Jesus as much as at the first. You never can stand before God in yourself. You must go again and again to be washed ; even on your dying bed you must hide under Jehovah, our righteousness. You must also lean upon Jesus. He alone can overcome in you. Keep nearer and nearer every day.

3*d*, *Be not discouraged.*—Jesus is willing to be a Saviour to such as you He is able to save you to the uttermost. Do you think your case is too bad for Christ to save ? Every one whom Christ saves had just such a heart as you. Fight the good fight of faith ; lay hold on eternal life. Take up the resolution of Edwards, " Never to give over, nor in the least to slacken, my fight with my corruptions, however unsuccessful I may be." " Him that overcometh will I make a pillar," &c.

III. *The feelings of a believer during this warfare.*

1. *He feels wretched.*—Verse 24th, " O wretched man that I am !" There is nobody in this world so happy as a believer. He has come to Jesus, and found rest. He has the pardon of all his

sins in Christ. He has near approach to God as a child. He has the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. He has the hope of glory. In the most awful times he can be calm, for he feels that God is with him. Still there are times when he cries, O wretched man! When he feels the plague of his own heart, when he feels the thorn in the flesh, when his wicked heart is discovered in all its fearful malignity, Ah, then he lies down, crying, O wretched man that I am! One reason of this wretchedness is, that sin discovered in the heart takes away the sense of forgiveness. Guilt comes upon the conscience, and a dark cloud covers the soul. How can I ever go back to Christ? he cries. Alas! I have sinned away my Saviour. Another reason is, the loathsomeness of sin. It is felt like a viper in the heart. A natural man is often miserable from his sin, but he never feels its loathsomeness; but to the new creature it is vile indeed. Ah! brethren, do you know anything of a believer's wretchedness? If you do not, you will never know his joy. If you know not a believer's tears and groans, you will never know his song of victory.

2. *He seeks deliverance.*—"Who shall deliver me?" In ancient times, some of the tyrants used to chain their prisoners to a dead body; so that, wherever the prisoner wandered, he had to drag a putrid carcass after him. It is believed that Paul here alludes to this inhuman practice. His old man he felt a noisome, putrid carcass, which he was continually dragging about with him. His piercing desire is to be freed from it. Who shall deliver us? You remember once, when God allowed a thorn in the flesh to torment his servant—a messenger of Satan to buffet him—Paul was driven to his knees. "I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me." O this is the true mark of God's children! The world have an old nature; they are all old men together. But it does not drive them to their knees. How is it with you, dear souls? Does corruption felt within drive you to the throne of grace? Does it make you call on the name of the Lord? Does it make you like the importunate widow, "Avenge me of mine adversary? Does it make you like the man coming at midnight for three loaves? Does it make you like the Canaanitish woman, crying after Jesus? Ah, remember, if lust can work in your heart, and you lie down contented with it, you are none of Christ's!

3. *He gives thanks for victory.*—Truly we are more than conquerors through him that loved us; for we can give thanks before the fight is done. Yes, even in the thickest of the battle we can look up to Jesus, and cry, Thanks to God. The moment a soul, groaning under corruption, rests the eye on Jesus, that moment his groans are changed into songs of praise. In Jesus you discover a fountain to wash away the guilt of all your sin. In Jesus you discover grace sufficient for you, grace to hold you up to the end, and a sure promise that sin shall soon be rooted out alto-

gether. "Fear not, I have redeemed thee. I have called thee by my name; thou art mine." Ah, this turns our groans into songs of praise! How often a psalm begins with groans, and ends with praises! This is the daily experience of all the Lord's people. Is it yours? Try yourselves by this. O if you know not the believer's songs of praise, you will never cast your crowns with them at the feet of Jesus! Dear believers, be content to glory in your infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon you. Glory, glory, glory to the Lamb!

SERMON XVI.

THE BROKEN HEART.

"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."—Psalm li., 17.

No psalm expresses more fully the experience of a penitent believing soul:—1*st*, His humbling confession of sin, verses 3, 4, 5; 2*d*, His intense desire for pardon through the blood of Christ, v. 7; 3*d*, His longing after a clean heart, v. 10; 4*th*, His desire to render something to God for all his benefits. 1. He says, I will teach transgressors thy ways; 2. My lips shall show forth thy praise; 3. He will give a broken heart, verses 16, 17. Just as, long ago, they used to offer slain lambs in token of thanksgiving, so he says he will offer up to God a slain and broken heart. Every one of you, who has found the same forgiveness, should come to the same resolution—offer up to God this day a broken heart.

I. *The natural heart is sound and unbroken.*

The law, the gospel, mercies, afflictions, death, do not break the natural heart. It is harder than stone; there is nothing in the universe so hard. Isaiah xlvi., 12, "Ye stout-hearted, that are far from righteousness." Zech. i., 11, "We have walked to and fro through the earth, and behold all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest." Zeph. i., 12, "I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled on their lees." Jer. v., 3, "They have made their faces harder than a rock." Isaiah xxxii., 10, "Careless women;" verse 11, "women that are at ease."

Why?—1*st*, The veil is upon their hearts. They do not believe the Bible, the strictness of the law, the wrath to come—the face of a covering is over their eyes. 2*d*, Satan has possession. Satan carries the seed away. 3*d*, Dead in trespasses and sins. The dead hear not, feel not; they are *past feeling*. 4*th*, They

build a wall of untempered mortar. They hope for safety in some refuge of lies—that they pray, or give alms.

Pray God to keep away from you the curse of a dead, unbroken heart. 1*st*, Because it will not last long—you are standing on slippery places—the waves are below your feet. 2*d*. Because Christ will laugh at your calamity. If you were now concerned, there is hope. Ministers and Christians are ready, Christ is ready; but afterwards he will laugh.

II. *The awakened heart is wounded, not broken.*

1. *The law makes the first wound.*—When God is going to save a soul, he brings the soul to reflect on his sins. "Cursed is every one," &c. "Whatsoever things the law saith," &c. "I was alive without the law once," &c. *Life* and *heart* appear in awful colors.

2. *The majesty of God makes the next wound.*—The sinner is made sensible of the great and holy being against whom he has sinned. "*Against thee*," Psa. li., 4.

3. *The third wound is from his own helplessness to make himself better.*—Still the heart is not broken; the heart rises against God. 1*st*, Because of the strictness of the law; 2*d*, Because faith is the only way of salvation, and is the gift of God; 3*d*, Because God is Sovereign, and may save or not, as he will. This shows the unbroken heart. There is no more miserable state than this.

Learn.—It is one thing to be awakened, and another thing to be saved. Do not rest in convictions.

III. *The believing heart is a broken heart two ways.*

1. *It is broken from its own righteousness.*—When the Holy Spirit leads a man to the Cross, his heart there breaks from seeking salvation by his own righteousness. All his burden of performances and contrivances drops. 1*st*, The work of Christ appears so perfect—the wisdom of God and the power of God—divine righteousness. "I wonder that I should ever think of any other way of salvation. If I could have been saved by my own duties, my whole soul would now have refused it. I wonder that all the world did not see and comply with this way of salvation by the righteousness of Christ."—(*Brainard*, p. 319.) 2*d*, The grace of Christ appears so wonderful. That all this righteousness should be free to such a sinner! That I so long neglected, despised, hated it, put mountains between, and yet that he has come over the mountains! Ezek. xvi., 63, "That thou mayest remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done." Have you this broken heart—broken within sight of the Cross? It is not a look into your own heart, or the heart of hell, but into the heart of Christ that breaks the heart. Oh, pray for this broken heart! Boasting is excluded

To him be glory! Worthy is the Lamb! All the struggles of a self-righteous soul are to put the crown on your own head instead of at the feet of Jesus.

2. *Broken from love of sin.*—When a man believes on Christ, he then sees sin to be hateful. 1*st*, It separated between him and God, made the great gulf, and kindled the fires of hell. 2*d*, It crucified the Lord of Glory; weighed down his soul; made him sweat, and bleed, and die. 3*d*, It is the plague of his heart now. All my unhappiness is from my being a sinner. Now he mourns sore like a dove, that he should sin against so much love. "Then shall ye remember your ways, and all your doings wherein ye have been defiled, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight."

IV. *Advantages of a broken heart.*

1. *It keeps you from being offended at the preaching of the Cross.*—A natural heart is offended every day at the preaching of the Cross. Many of you, I have no doubt, hate it. The preaching of another's righteousness—that you must have it or perish—many, I have no doubt, are often enraged at this in their hearts. Many, I doubt not, have left this church on account of it, and many more, I doubt not, will follow. All the offence of the Cross is not ceased. But a broken heart cannot be offended. Ministers cannot speak too plainly for a broken heart. A broken heart would sit for ever to hear of the righteousness without works.

Many of you are offended when we preach plainly against sin. Many were offended last Sabbath. But a broken heart cannot be offended, for it hates sin worse than ministers can make it. Many are like the worshippers of Baal—"Bring forth thy son that he may die," Judges vi., 30. But a broken heart loves to see the idol stamped upon and beaten small.

2. *A broken heart is at rest.*—The unconverted heart is like the troubled sea—"Who will show us any good?" It is going from creature to creature. The awakened soul is not at rest; sorrows of death, pains of hell, attend those who are forgetting their resting-place. But the broken heart says, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul." The righteousness of Christ takes away every fear—"casts out fear." Even the plague of the heart cannot truly disturb, for he casts his burden on Jesus.

3. *Nothing can happen wrong to it.*—To the unconverted, how dreadful is a sick bed, poverty, death—tossed like a wild beast in a net! But a broken heart is satisfied with Christ. This is enough—he has no ambition for more. Take away all, this remains. He is a weaned child.

SERMON XVII.

"The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born: speaking lies. Their poison is like the poison of a serpent; they are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear, which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely."—Psalm lviii., 3-5.

It has been supposed by some interpreters that this psalm was written as a prophetic description of the unjust judges who condemned our Lord Jesus Christ. 1. It begins by reproving them for their unjust judgment. Verse 1, "Do ye indeed," &c. 2. It opens up the dark recesses of their heart and history; verse 3, "The wicked are estranged from the womb;" &c. And 3. It shows their coming destruction; verse 10, "The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance; he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked." However this may be, they were of the same nature with us. The Scribes and Pharisees who condemned our Lord had hearts of the same kind as ours, so that we may learn this day the awful depravity of the heart of man.

I. *Original depravity.*—Verse 3, "The wicked are estranged from the womb." The expression, "from the womb," occurs frequently in Scripture, and means from the very first period of our existence. The angel of the Lord said to the wife of Manoah, Judges xiii., 5, "The child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb;" that is, from the very first point of existence. God says to Jeremiah (i. 5), "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou comest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee; and ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." Jeremiah was set apart as a prophet before he was born. Paul says, Gal. i., 15, "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me.' Paul was set apart by God for the work of the ministry from the very first. So, in the words before us, it is declared that from the very first we are estranged from God. Now, this estrangement is twofold.

1. *Of the head.*—The whole mind is estranged from God. "At that time ye were without God." The natural man is ignorant of God from the very womb. God is a stranger to him, so that he does not know him. He has no true discovery of God's infinite purity, of his immutable justice, and of the strictness of the law. He does not know the love of God, nor how freely he has provided a Saviour. He is mainly ignorant of God. Psalm x. 4, "God is not in all his thoughts." Either he does not turn his mind upon God at all, or else he thinks him altogether such an one as himself. "There is none that understandeth." Psalm xiv., 2.

2. *Of the heart.*—A new born child will naturally feel after its mother's breast: it naturally seeks the breast. But it does not in

the same manner seek after God. "There is none that seeketh after God." From the very first we dislike God. A child soon comes to relish the presence of its earthly parents, and of other children. It does not relish the *presence* of God. The natural tendency of the heart is to go away from God, and to remain out of his sight. A natural man does not like the presence of a very eminent saint. If he has full liberty, he will leave the room, and seek other company more suited to his taste. This is the very way he treats God. God is too holy for him; he is too pure, and, therefore, he does all he can to leave his company. This is the reason you cannot get unconverted men to pray in secret. They would rather spend half an hour in the tread-mill every morning than go to meet God. This is the true condition of every one of you who is now unconverted; indeed it was the condition of us all, but some of you have been brought out of it. From the time you were in the womb, till now, your whole head and heart have been turned away from God. Gen. viii., 21, "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth," &c. Job xiv., 4, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean, not one?" Your *whole nature* is totally depraved. You are accustomed to think that you have some parts good; that though some part was depraved, yet some part sick, the whole heart is faint. Your *whole history* remained sound; but learn that the whole head is covered with sin. You are accustomed to think that great part of your life has been innocent. You admit that some pages of your life are stained with crimson and scarlet sins; some pages you blush to look back upon; but surely you have some fair leaves also. Learn that you are "estranged from the womb." Every moment you have spent without God, and turning away from God; every page has got this written at the top of it, This day God was not in all his thoughts, he did not like to retain God in his knowledge. Genesis vi., 5, "Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

II. *Actual sin; "They go astray," &c.*—There are two paths from which every natural man goes astray as soon as born.

1. *The way of God's commandments.*—This is the pure way of light in which holy angels walk. They do his commandments, hearkening to the voice of his word, Ps. ciii. It is a pure way, having ten paths in which the feet of the upright love to go. "Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord." "Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight." From this we go astray as soon as born, speaking lies. One of these paths says, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor;" but this is one of the very first that is forsaken; speaking lies; Isaiah liii., 6, "We all like sheep have gone astray, turning every one to his own way."

2. *The way of pardon.*—Jesus saith unto him, "I am the way;"

and again, "Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life." The same, Isaiah xxxv., 9, "The redeemed shall walk there." From this way also "they go astray as soon as born, speaking lies." Life is given to sinners just that they may enter upon this way, but they spend it in going further and further away. The parable of the lost sheep shows the true state of every unconverted soul wandering away from the good shepherd. He is seeking to save the lost; you are wandering further and further away. Romans iii., 12, "They are all gone out of the way." "Destruction and misery are in their ways, and the way of peace have they not known." And oh! what fearful meaning does this give to the declaration "speaking lies!" for it is written, 1 John ii., 22, "Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?" And again, "He that believeth not God, hath made God a liar." No man can go away from Christ without speaking lies.

Learn, the fearful condition of those of you who are natural men.

1*st*, From the day you were born you have gone astray from the path of God's commandments. Every year, month, week, day, hour, minute, has been filled up with sin. Every day has seen you go further from holiness, further from God, nearer to hell. You are treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath. Oh! what a treasure; keeping up fuel to burn you through eternity. If any of you live in drinking or swearing, or any one sin, you are heaping up fuel for your eternal hell. You are getting further on in your sin. You are wreathing your chains more and more round you. By a law of human nature, every time you sin, the habit becomes stronger, so that you are every day becoming more completely like the devil. It is every day more hard to turn. Experience shows that most people are converted when young. Dear young people, every day you live in sin it will be more impossible to turn. "They that seek me early shall find me."

2*d*, From the day you were born you have gone astray from Christ. The good shepherd has been seeking you. Every day you remain unsaved, you are wandering away from him. Every day you are getting nearer to hell and further from Christ. Unbelief gets stronger every day.

III. *The deadly enmity of natural men to God*—"Their poison," &c. For two reasons:—

1. *Because they are the children of the old serpent, the devil.*—All natural men are the seed of the serpent. See Gen. iii, 15. All who oppose and dislike the children of God, do so because they are the seed of the serpent, and the poison of the old serpent remains in them. John the Baptist calls the Pharisees a generation of vipers, Matt. iii., 7, "O generation of vipers." In a still more dreadful manner did our blessed Lord, Matt. xxiii., 33, "Ye

serpents, ye generation of vipers." The Pharisees and Sadducees were not of a different nature from us; they had the same flesh and blood, and the same wicked heart; they were children of their father, the devil, and the lusts of their father they would do: "Their poison was like the poison of a serpent."

2. *Because they have a mortal enmity to God.*—The poison of the serpent is deadly poison. When it darts its envenomed sting into a man it seeks to kill him. Such is the cruel venom of the natural heart against God. He is a mortal enemy to God's holy government. It has been said, "If the throne of God were within your reach, and you knew, it would not be safe one hour." He is a mortal enemy to the very being of God. Psalm xiv., 1, "The fool has said in his heart there is no God." It is in his heart he says this; this is the secret desire of every unconverted bosom. If the breast of God were within the reach of men, it would be stabbed a million of times in one moment. When God was manifest in the flesh, he was altogether lovely: he did no sin; he went about continually doing good: and yet they took him and hung him on a tree; they mocked him and spit upon him. And this is the way men would do with God again.

Learn—1*st*, The fearful depravity of your heart. I venture to say there is not an unconverted man present who has the most distant idea of the monstrous wickedness that is now within his breast. Stop till you are in hell, and it will break out unrestrained. But still let me tell you what it is; you have a heart that would kill God if you could. If the bosom of God were now within your reach, and one blow would rid the universe of God, you have a heart fit to do the deed. 2*d*, The amazing love of Christ; "While we were enemies, Christ died for us."

IV. *Deaf to the voice of the Gospel.*—It is a well known fact that many kinds of serpents can be tamed by the power of music. This is referred to in Ecclesiastes x., 11, and Jeremiah viii., 17. Many travellers in Egypt and India have seen this. But there is said to be one kind of serpent which is either deaf, so that it cannot hear the music, or it has the power of making itself deaf for the time, so that it is not charmed. So it is with unconverted men.

Christ is the great charmer. His voice is like the sound of many waters. Never man spake like this man. When Andrew and Peter heard it, they left all and followed him; so did James, and John, and Matthew. When the bride hears him, she cries, The voice of my beloved! When the sheep hear his voice, they follow him; when the dead hear his voice, they live; when the heavy laden hear it, they find rest.

But unconverted men will not hear. They are like Manasseh; they will not hearken; they are like the Jews when Stephen preached, they stopped their ears and ran.

Ah, how many of you are doing this very thing, stopping your ears? How many of you stop your ears with the noise of the world, its business and care; some with a favorite lust? The voice of the great charmer has been often heard in this place, and some have heard it and followed him; and why are you left behind?

Learn—1*st*, The folly of this. He is charming you to bless you, to bring you to peace, pardon, holiness. "There is no other name given among men whereby you can be saved." 2*d*, The guilt of this. It is the highest sin of all, to refuse him that speaketh from heaven. Heb. xii., 25. It is put last here. It is unpardonable. All manner of sin and blasphemy may be forgiven to you, but if you will not hear the voice of Christ you must perish. Christ is knocking at your door and saying, "If any man hear my voice I will come in." Oh, think of the guilt of letting the Son of God stand at your door? Some would fain lay the blame off themselves, but God washes himself clear of the unbeliever's guilt. It is you that stop your ear; ye do always resist the Holy Ghost. You will one day find that he that believeth not shall be damned.

SERMON XVIII.

"Oh Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness *is* as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away."—Hosea vi., 4.

Doctrine.—The impressions of natural men are fading

In these words, God complains that he did not know what to do with Israel, their impressions were so fading. He says, verse 5, that he had hewed them by the prophets, and slain them by the words of his mouth: and their judgments were as the light that goeth forth. At one time he sent them severe awakening messages of coming wrath; then messages of love and grace, as bright and as many as the beams of the sun. They were a little impressed by them; the cloud of distress began to gather on their brow, the dew of grief seemed to start to their cheek, but it soon dried up. It was like the morning cloud and early dew that goeth away. So it is with all the unconverted persons in this congregation, who will finally perish. God has sent them awakening messages, hewed them by the prophets, and slain them by the words of his mouth. He has sent them also sweet encouraging messages; his judgments have been like the light that goeth forth. They think, and are impressed for a little, but it soon dies away. "O Ephraim, what shall I do," &c.

I. *The fact that the impressions of natural men fade away.*

1. *Prove the fact from Scripture.*—The Scriptures abound with examples of it. 1*st*, *Lot's wife.*—She was a good deal awakened. The anxious faces of the two angelic men, their awful words, and merciful hands, made a deep impression on her. The anxiety of her husband, too, and his words to his sons-in-law, sunk into her heart. She fled with anxious steps; but as the morning brightened, her anxious thoughts began to wear away. She looked back, and became a pillar of salt. 2*d*, *Israel at the Red Sea.*—When Israel had been led through the deep water in safety, and when they saw their enemies drowned, then they sang God's praise. Their hearts were much affected by this deliverance. They sang, "The Lord is my strength and song, he is also become my salvation." They sang his praise, but soon forgot his works. In three days they were murmuring against God because of the bitter waters. 3*d*, Once *a young man* came running to Jesus, and he kneeled down, saying, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" A flash of conviction had passed over his conscience; he was now kneeling at the feet of Christ, but he never kneeled there any more; he went away sorrowful. His goodness was like a morning cloud. 4*th*, Once Paul preached before *Felix*, the Roman Governor; and as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled. The preaching of the gospel made the proud Roman tremble on his throne, but did it save his soul? Ah, no! "Go thy way for this time, when I have a more convenient season I will send for thee." His goodness was like the morning cloud. 5*th*, Again, Paul preached before *King Agrippa* and his beautiful Bernice, with all the captains and chief men of the city. The word troubled Agrippa's heart, the tear started into his royal eye, for a moment he thought of leaving all for Christ. "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." But ah! his goodness was like a morning cloud and early dew. In all these the cloud gathered over them, for a moment the dew glistened in their eye, but soon it passed away, and left the hard rocky heart behind.

2. *Prove the fact from experience.*—Most men under a preached gospel have their times of awakening. If the impressions of natural men were permanent, then most would be saved, but we know that this is not the case. Few there be that find it. Perhaps I would not go far wrong if I were to say, that there may not be ten grown up men in this congregation who have never experienced any concern for their soul, and yet I fear there may be hundreds who will finally perish.

1*st*, How many have had a time of awakening in childhood, when they were prayed over by a believing mother, or warned by a believing father, or taught by a faithful Sabbath-school teacher? How many have had deep impressions made at the

Sabbath-school? But they have passed away like the morning cloud and early dew.

2*d*, At their first communion, when they first spoke to a minister about their soul, and heard his piercing questions and faithful warnings, when they got their token from his hand, when they first received the bread and wine, and sat at the table of the Lord, they trembled, the tear dimmed their eye, they went home to pray. But soon it wore away. The world, pleasure, cares, involved the mind, and all was gone like the cloud and the dew.

3*d*, A first sickness. How many, laid down on a bed of sickness, are made to look over the verge of the grave? They tremble as they think how unprepared they are to die; and now they begin to vow and resolve, if the Lord spare me, I will avoid evil companions, I will pray and read my Bible, &c.; but no sooner are they better than the resolutions are forgotten, like the cloud and dew.

4*th*, First death in a family. What a deep impression this makes on a feeling heart. That lovely circle is broken round the fire, and never will be whole again. Now they begin to pray, to turn to him that smites. Perhaps kneeling beside the cold body, they vow no longer to go back to sin and folly. Or, following the body to the grave, while the big tear stands in the eye, they promise to bury all their sins and follies in the grave of their beloved one. But soon a change comes over them, the tears dry up, and the prayer is forgotten. The world takes its place again and reigns. Their goodness is as the morning cloud.

5*th*, In a time of awakening, many receive deep impressions. Some are alarmed to see others alarmed that are no worse than they. Many have their feelings stirred, their affections moved. Many are brought to desire conversion, to weep and to pray. Mr. Edwards mentions that there was scarcely an individual in the whole town unconcerned; there were tokens of God's promise in every house. So here; and yet, when the time is past, how soon they sink back into former indifference. Their goodness is as the morning cloud.

Dear friends, ye are my witnesses. I do not know, but I believe I am not wrong in stating, that by far the greater number of you have been under remorse at some time or another, and yet God and your own consciences know how fading these impressions have been. Just as the morning cloud passes off the mountain's brow, and the dew is dried up from the rock, and leaves it a rock still, so your impressions have passed away, and left you a rocky heart still. So it is in those that perish. The way to hell is paved with good intentions, and hell is peopled with those who once wept and prayed for their souls. "O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee?"

3. *Let us show the steps of impressions fading away.*—When a

natural man is under concern, he begins to make a very diligent use of the means of grace.

1*st*, *Prayer.*—When a man is under the fear of hell, he begins to pray, and often he has very melting and sweet affections in prayer. As long as his impressions last, he may be very constant in his duty. But will he always call upon God? When his concern ceases, his praying in secret gradually ceases also. Not all at once, but by degrees he gives up secret prayer. Once he has been out in company, another time kept long at business, another time he is sleeping, and so by degrees he gives it up altogether. "O Ephraim," &c.

2*d*, *Hearing the word.*—When a man is first awakened, he comes well out to the preaching of the word. He knows that God blesses especially the preaching of the word—that it pleases God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. He is an arrested hearer; he drinks in the words of the minister; he is lively in his attendance on the word; if there be preaching in the week evening, he puts by his work in order to be there. But, when his concern wears away, he begins to weary first of the week-day service, then of the Sabbath, then perhaps he seeks a more careless ministry, where he may slumber on till death and judgment. Ah, this has been the course of thousands in this place. "O Ephraim," &c.

3*d*, *Asking counsel of ministers.*—When souls are under remorse, they often ask counsel of the under shepherds of Christ. "Going and weeping, they come to seek the Lord their God; they ask the way to Zion." They go to the watchman, saying, Saw ye him whom my soul loveth? This is one of the duties of the faithful pastor, for "the priest's lips should keep knowledge; and they should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts." But when concern dies away, this dies away. Many come once that never come again. "O Ephraim," &c.

4*th*, *Avoiding sin.*—When a man is under convictions, he always avoids open sin, flees from it with all his might. He reforms his life; his soul is swept and garnished. But when his concern dies away, his lusts revive, and he goes back like a dog to his vomit, and like the sow that was washed to its wallowing in the mire. If there was anything saving in the impressions of natural men, they would turn holier; but, on the contrary, they turn worse and worse. Seven devils enter into that man, and the latter end is worse than the beginning. "O Ephraim," &c.

II. *Reasons why the impressions of natural men die away.*

1. *They never are brought to feel truly lost.*—The wounds of natural men are generally skin deep. Sometimes it is just a flash of terror that has alarmed them. Often it is the sense of some one great sin they have committed. Sometimes it is only sympa-

thy with others—fleeing because others flee. They are often brought to say, I am a great sinner; I fear there is no mercy for me. Still they are not brought to feel *undone*, their mouth is not stopped, they do not cover the lip like the leper. They think a little prayer, sorrow, repentance, amendment, will do. If they could only change their way. They are not brought to see that all they do just signifies nothing toward justifying them. If they were brought to feel their utterly lost state, and their need of another's righteousness, they never could rest in the world again.

2. *They never saw the beauty of Christ.*—A flash of terror may bring a man to his knees, but will not bring him to Christ. Ah! no; love must draw. A natural man, under concern, sees no beauty nor desirableness in Christ. He is not brought to look to him whom he pierced, and to mourn. When once a man gets a sight of the supreme excellence and sweetness of Christ; when he sees his fulness for pardon, peace, holiness, he will never draw back. He may be in distress and in darkness, but he will rise and go about the city to seek him whom his soul loveth. The heart that has once seen Christ is smit with the love of him, and never can rest nor take up with others short of him.

3. *He never had heart-hatred of sin.*—The impressions of natural men are generally of terror. They feel the danger of sin, not the filthiness of it. They feel that God is just and true, that the law must be avenged, that the wrath of God will come. They see that there is hell in their sins; but they do not feel their sins to be a hell. They love sin; they have no change of nature. The Spirit of God does not dwell in them; and therefore the impression wears easily away, like as on sand. Those that are brought to Christ are brought to see the turpitude of sin. They cry not, Behold I am undone, but, behold I am vile. As long as sin is in their breast, they are kept fleeing to the cross of Christ.

4. *They have no promises to keep their impressions.*—Those who are in Christ have sweet promises. "I will put my fear in their hearts."—Jer. xxxii., 40. "Being confident that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it."—Phil. i., 6. But natural men have no interest in these promises; and so, in the time of temptation, their anxieties easily wear away.

III. *Sadness of their case.*

1. *God mourns over their case.*—"O Ephraim." It must be a truly sad case that God mourns over. When Christ wept over Jerusalem, it showed it was in a desperate case, because that eye that wept saw plainly what was coming; and accordingly, in a few years, that lovely city was a ruined heap, and multitudes of those then living were in hell, and their children vagabonds. When Christ looked round on the Pharisees with anger, being grieved at the hardness of their hearts, it showed a desperate case; he would not grieve for nothing. So here you may be sure

the case of natural men who lose their impressions is very desperate, from these words of God, "O Ephraim."

2. *God has no new method of awakening.*—God speaks as even at a loss what to do, to show you that there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins. You have heard all the awakening truths in the Bible, and all the winning, comforting truths. You have been at Sinai, and at Gethsemane, and at Calvary: what more can I do unto thee? These have been pressed home upon you by Divine providences, in affliction, by the bed of death, and in a time of wide awakening. You have passed through a season when it was tenfold more likely that you would be truly converted than at any other time. You are sunk back. Ah! the harvest is past, the summer is ended, and you are not saved. God has no more arrows in his quiver, no new arguments, no other hell, no other Christ.

3. *No good by your past impressions.*—When the cloud is dried up off the mountain's brow, and the dew off the rock, the mountain is as great as before, and the rock as hard; but when convictions fade away from the heart of a natural man, they leave the mountain of his sins much greater, and his rocky heart much harder. It is less likely that that man will ever be saved. Just as iron is hardened by being melted and cooled again; just as a person recovering from fever relapses, and is worse than before.

1*st*, You are now older, and every day less likely to be saved; your heart gets used to its old ways of thinking and feeling; the old knee cannot easily learn to bend.

2*d*, You have offended the Spirit; you have missed your opportunity; you have vexed the Holy Spirit; convictions are not in your own power; the Spirit hath mercy on whom he will have mercy.

3*d*, You have got into the way of putting aside convictions. The eyelid naturally closes when any object is coming against it, so does the heart of a practised worldling close and shut out convictions.

4*th*, When you come to hell, you will wish you never had had convictions, they will make your punishment so much the greater.

I would now entreat all who have any impressions, not to let them slip. It is a great mercy to live under a gospel ministry; still greater to live in a time of revival; still greater to have God pouring the Spirit into your heart, awakening your soul. Do not neglect it, do not turn back, remember Lot's wife. Escape for thy life; look not behind thee; tarry not in all the plain. Escape to the mountain lest thou be consumed.

SERMON XIX.

"She hath done what she could; she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying."—Mark xiv., 8.

Doctrine.—Do what you can.

From the gospel of John (xi., 2) we learn that this woman was Mary, the sister of Lazarus and Martha. We have already learned that she was an eminent believer: "She sat at the feet of Christ and heard his word." Jesus himself said of her, "Mary hath chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her." Now, it is interesting to see this same Mary eminent in another way, not only as a *contemplative believer* but as an *active believer.*

Many seem to think, that to be a believer is to have certain feelings and experiences; forgetting all the time that these are but the flowers, and that the fruit must follow. The engrafting of the branch is good, the inflowing of the sap good, but the fruit is the end in view. So faith is good, and peace and joy are good, but holy fruit is the end for which we are saved.

I trust many of you, last Sabbath, were like Mary, sitting at the Redeemer's feet, and hearing his word. Now I would persuade you to be like Mary, *in doing what you can for Christ.* If you have been bought with a price, then glorify God in your body and spirit, which are his. I beseech you by the mercies of God—

I. *These are things which we can do.*

1. *We could love Christ, pray and praise more.*—What this woman did, she did to Christ. Jesus had saved her soul, had saved her brother and sister, and she felt that she could not do too much for him. She brought an alabaster box of ointment, very costly, and brake the box and poured it on his head. No doubt she loved his disciples, holy John and frank Peter, yet still she loved Christ more. No doubt she loved Christ's poor, and was often kind to them, yet she loved Jesus more. On his blessed head, that was so soon to be crowned with thorns; on his blessed feet, that were so soon to be pierced with nails, she poured the precious ointment. This is what we should do. If we have been saved by Christ, we should pour out our best affections on him. It is well to love his disciples, well to love his ministers, well to love his poor, but it is best to love himself. We cannot now reach his blessed head, nor anoint his holy feet, but we can fall down at his footstool and pour out our affections towards him. It was not the ointment Jesus cared for: what does the King of Glory care for a little ointment? but it is the loving heart poured out upon his feet; it is the adoration, praise, love, and

prayers of a believer's broken heart, that Christ cares for. The new heart is the alabaster box that Jesus loves.

Oh, brethren, could you not do more in this way? could you not give more time to pouring out your heart to Jesus—breaking the box and filling the room with the odor of your praise? Could you not pray more than you do to be filled with the Spirit, that the Spirit may be poured down on ministers, and God's people, and on an unconverted world? Jesus loves tears and groans from a broken heart.

2. *We could live holier lives.*—The Church is thus described in the song of Solomon, "Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powers of the merchant?" The holiness of the believer is like the most precious perfume. When a holy believer goes through the world, filled with the Spirit, made more than conqueror, the fragrance fills the room, "'tis as if an angel shook his wings." If the world were full of believers it would be like a bed of spices; but, oh! how few believers carry much of the odor of heaven along with them. How many you might be the means of saving, if you lived a holy, consistent life—if you were evidently a sacrifice bound upon God's altar. Wives might thus, *without the word*, win their husbands, when they see your chaste conversation coupled with fear; parents might in this way save their children, when they saw you holy and happy; children have often thus saved their parents. Servants, adorn the doctrine of God your Saviour in all things; let your light shine before men. The poorest can do this as well as the richest, the youngest as well as the oldest. Oh, there is no argument like a holy life.

3. *You could seek the salvation of others.*—If you have really been brought to Christ and saved, then you know there is a hell, you know that all the unconverted around you are hastening to it; you know there is a Saviour, and that he is stretching out his hands all the day long to sinners. Could you do no more to save sinners than you do? Do you do all you can? You say you *pray for them;* but is it not hypocrisy to pray and do nothing? Will God hear these prayers? Have you no fears that prayers without labors are only provoking God? You say you *cannot speak*, you are not learned. Will that excuse stand in the judgment? Does it require much learning to tell fellow-sinners that they are perishing? If their house was on fire, would it require much learning to wake the sleepers?

Begin at home.—Could you not do more for the salvation of those at home? If there are children or servants, have you done all you can for them? Have you done all you can to bring the truth before them, to bring them under a living ministry, to get them to pray and give up sin?

Do you do what you can for your neighbors? Can you pass your neighbors for years together, and see them on the broad

way, without warning them? Do you make a full use of tracts, giving suitable ones to those that need them? Do you persuade Sabbath-breakers to go to the house of God? Do you do anything in Sabbath Schools? Could you not tell little children the way to be saved? Do you do what you can for the *world?* The field is the world.

4. *Feed Christ's poor.*—I am far from thinking that the wicked poor should be passed over, but Christ's poor are our brothers and sisters. Do you do what you can for them? In the great day, Christ will say to those on his right hand, "Come, ye blessed, for I was an hungered and ye gave me meat." They stand in the place of Christ. Christ does not any more stand in need of Mary's ointment, or Martha's hospitality, or the Samaritan's drink of water. He is beyond the reach of these things, and will never need them more; but he has left many of his brothers and sisters behind in this world, some diseased, some lame, some like Lazarus, all covered with sores; and he says, What ye do to them ye do to me. Do you live plainly, in order to have more to give away? Do you put away vain and gaudy clothes, that you may be able to clothe the naked? Are you thrifty in managing what you have, letting nothing be lost?

II. *Reasons why we should do what we can.*

1. *Christ has done what he could for us.*—Isaiah v., 4, "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?" He thought nothing too much to do and to suffer for us. While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Greater love than this hath no man. *All his life,* between the manger at Bethlehem and the cross of Calvary, was spent in labors and infinite sufferings for us. All that we needed to suffer, he suffered; all that we needed to obey, he obeyed. All his life in glory he spends for us. He ever liveth to make intercession for us. He is head over all things for us—makes everything in all worlds work together for our good. It is all but incredible that each person of the Godhead has made himself over to us to be ours. The Father says, "I am thy God;" the Son, "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee;" the Holy Ghost makes us a temple, "I will dwell in them and walk in them." Is it much that we should do all we can for him—that we should give ourselves up to him who gave himself for us?

2. *Satan does all he can.*—Sometimes he comes as a lion. Your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour; sometimes as a serpent, "as the serpent beguiled Eve;" sometimes as an angel of light. He does all he can to tempt and beguile the saints, leading them away by false teachers, injecting blasphemies and polluted thoughts into their minds, casting fiery darts at their souls, stirring up the world to hate and persecute them, stirring up father and mother against the children, and brother against brother. He does all he can to lead captive

wicked men, blinding their minds, not allowing them to listen to the gospel, steeping them in swinish lusts, leading them into despair. When he knows his time is short, he rages all the more. O should not we do all we can, if Satan does all he can?

3. *We have done all we could the other way.*—This was one of Paul's great motives for doing all he could—"I thank Christ Jesus our Lord for putting me into the ministry, for I was a blasphemer, and persecutor, and injurious." He never could forget how he had persecuted the Church of God, and wasted it; and this made him as diligent in building it up, and hailing men and women to Christ. He preached the faith which once he destroyed. So with Peter, "Let us live the rest of our time in the flesh, not to the lusts of men, but to the will of God; for the time past of our lives may suffice to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries." So with John Newton, "How can the old African blasphemer be silent!" So with many of you; you ran greedily after sin; you were at great pains and cost, and did not spare health, or money, or time, to obtain some sinful gratification. How can you now grudge anything for Christ? Only serve Christ as zealously as you once served the devil.

4. *Christ will own and reward what we do.*—The labor that Christ blesseth is believing labor. It is not words of human wisdom, but words of faith, that God makes arrows. The word of a little maid was blessed in the house of Naaman the Syrian. "Follow me," was made the arrow to pierce the heart of Matthew. It is all one to God to save, whether with many, or with them that have no might. If you would do all you can, the town would be filled with the fragrance. Christ will reward it. He defended Mary's work of love, and said it should be spoken of, over all the world, and it will yet be told in the judgment. A cup of cold water he will not pass over. "Well done, good and faithful servant."

5. *If you do not do all you can, how can you prove yourself a Christian?*—"Pure religion, and undefiled before God the Father, is this. To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." You are greatly mistaken if you think that to be a Christian is merely to have certain views, and convictions, and spiritual delights. This is all well; but if it leads not to a devoted life, I fear it is all a delusion. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.

III. *Let us answer objections.*

1. *The world will mock at us.*—*Ans.* This is true. They mocked at Mary, they called it waste and extravagance; and yet, Christ said it was well done. So if you do what you can the world will laugh at you, but you will have the smile of Christ. They mocked at Christ when he was full of zeal; they said he was mad, and

had a devil. They mocked at Paul, and said he was mad; and so with all Christ's living members. "Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of the sufferings of Christ." "If ye suffer with him ye shall also reign with him."

2. *What can I do, I am a woman.*—Mary was a woman, yet she did what she could. Mary Magdalene was a woman, and yet she was first at the sepulchre. Phebe was a woman, yet a succorer of many, and of Paul also. Dorcas was a woman, yet she made coats and garments for the poor at Joppa. *I am a child*—Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings God perfects praise. God has often used children in the conversion of their parents.

3. *I have too little grace to be good.*—"He that watereth others, shall be watered himself." "The liberal soul shall be made fat." "It pleased the Father that in Christ should all fulness dwell." There is a full supply of the Spirit to teach you to pray, a full supply of grace to slay your sins and quicken your graces. If you use opportunities of speaking to others, God will give you plenty. If you give much to God's poor, you shall never want a rich supply. "God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." "Bring all the tithes unto my storehouse, and prove me now herewith." "Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase; so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine."

April 26, 1842.

SERMON XX.

"It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth; I held him, and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me."—Song iii., 4.

HAVE you found him whom your soul loveth? Have you this day seen his beauty, heard his voice, believed the record concerning him, sat under his shadow, found fellowship with him? then *hold him*, and *do not let him go.*

I. *Motives.*

1. *Because peace is to be found in him.*—Justified by faith we have *peace with God, not* peace with ourselves, *not* peace with the world, with sin, with Satan, but peace with God. True Divine peace is to be found only in believing, only in keeping fast hold of Christ. If you let *him* go, you let go your righteousness; for this is his name. You are then without righteousness, without a cover-

ing from the wrath of God, without a way to the Father. The law will again condemn you; God's frown will again overshadow you; you will again have terrors of conscience. *Hold him then*, and do not let him go. Whatever you let go, *let not Christ go;* for he is our peace, not in knowledge, not in feeling, but *trust* in *Him* alone.

2. *Holiness flows from Him.*—No true holiness in this world, but it springs from him. A living Christ is the spring of holiness to all his members. As long as we hold him, and do not let him go, our holiness is secure. He is engaged to keep us from falling. He loves us too well to let us fall under the reigning power of sin. His word is engaged, "I will put my spirit within you." His honor would be tarnished if any that cleave to him were suffered to live in sin. If you let *him* go, you will fall into sin. You have no strength, no store of grace, no power to resist a thousand enemies—no promises. If Christ be for you, who can be against you; but if you let go his arms, where are you?

3. *Hope of glory is in Him.*—We rejoice in hope of the glory of God. If you have found Jesus this day, you have found a way into glory. A few steps more, you can say, and I shall be for ever with the Lord. I shall be free from pain and sorrow; free from sin and weakness; free from enemies. As long as you hold Christ, you can see your way to the judgment seat. "Thou wilt guide me with thy counsel, and receive me to thy glory." This gives such joy, such transporting desires after the heavenly world. But let Christ go, and this will be gone. Let Christ go, and how can you die? The grave is covered with clouds of threatening. Let Him go, and how can you go to the judgment —where can you appear?

II. *Means.*

1. *Christ promises to keep you holding Him.*—If you are really holding Christ this day, you are in a most blessed condition, for Christ engages to keep you cleaving to him. "My soul followeth hard after *thee*, and thy right hand upholdeth me." He that is the Creator of the world is the upholder of it, so he that new creates the soul keeps it in being. This is never to be forgotten. Not only does the Church lean on her beloved, but he puts his left hand under her head, and his right hand doth embrace her. "I taught Ephraim how to go, taking them by their arms." It is good for a child to hold fast by its mother's neck, but ah! that would be a feeble support, if the maternal arm did not enfold the child, and clasp it to her bosom. Faith is good, but ah! it is nothing without the grace that gave it. "I will put my fear in your heart."

2. *Faith in Christ.*—The only way to hold fast is to believe more and more. Get a larger acquaintance with Christ; with his person, work, and character. Every page of the Gospel unfolds

a new feature in his character; every line of the Epistles discloses new depths of his work. Get more faith, and you will get a firmer hold. A plant that has got a single root may be easily torn up by the hand, or crushed by the foot of the wild beast, or blown down by the wind; but a plant that has a thousand roots struck down into the ground can stand. Faith is like the root; many believe a little concerning Christ; one fact. Every new truth concerning Jesus is a new root struck downwards. Believe more intensely. A root may be in a right direction, but, not striking deep, it is easily torn up. Pray for deep-rooted faith. Pray to be stablished, strengthened, settled. Take a long intense look at Jesus; often, often. If you wanted to know a man again, and he was going away, you would take an intense look at his face. Look then at Jesus; deeply, intensely, till every feature is graven on your heart. Thomas Scott overcame the fear of death by looking intensely at his dead child, who had died in the Lord.

3. *Prayer.*—Jacob at Bethel. Isaiah xxvii., 5, "Take hold of my strength." You must begin to pray after another fashion than you have done. Let it be real intercourse with God, like Hezekiah, Jacob, Moses, &c.

4. *By not offending Him.*—1*st*, By sloth. When the soul turns sleepy or careless, Christ goes away. Nothing is more offensive to Christ than sloth. Love is an ever-active thing, and when it is in the heart it will keep us waking. Many a night his love to us kept him waking. Now, can you not watch with him one hour? Song v., 2. 2*d*, By idols. You cannot hold two objects. If you are holding Christ to-day, and lay hold of another object to-morrow, he cannot stay. He is a jealous God. You cannot keep worldly companions and Christ too. "A companion of fools shall be destroyed." When the ark came into the house of Dagon, it made the idol fall flat. 3*d*, By being unwilling to be sanctified. When Christ chooses us, and draws us to himself, it is that he may sanctify us. Christ is often grieved away, by our desiring to reserve *one* sin. 4*th*, By an unholy house. "I brought him into my mother's house." Remember to take Christ home with you, and let him rule in your house. If you walk with Christ abroad but never take him home, you will soon part company for ever.

SERMON XXI.

"To whom God would make known what *is* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you the hope of glory."—Colossians i., 27.

The gospel is here described as "Christ in you the hope of glory." There are two distinct senses in which these words may be taken,

and I cannot positively determine which is the true one. It is possible that both may be intended. I shall open up both.

I. *Christ in you*, means Christ embraced by faith as our righteousness and strength; and this is the sure ground upon which we hope for glory. In this sense it appears to be used, Ephes. iii., 17, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." When a sinner's heart is opened by the Holy Spirit, when the beauty and excellence of the Saviour is shown to him, the heart inwardly embraces and cleaves to Christ. Every new discovery of Christ to the soul renews this act of inward cleaving to the Lord Jesus. Every reproach, every temptation, every fall into sin, every bereavement, makes the soul more really, firmly, and fully embrace the Lord Jesus; and so, by continual faith, Christ may be said to dwell in the heart; as in Ephes. iii., 17, "That Christ may dwell in your heart by faith." Christ thus embraced is the hope of glory. It is this constant abiding faith; this close embracing of Christ as all our righteousness; it is this which gives a calm, sweet, full, peaceful hope of glory. The soul that can say, Christ is mine, can also say, Glory is mine; for we need nothing but Christ to shelter us in the judgment-day. Can you say that Christ is thus in you the hope of glory? If you have not got Christ, you have no good hope of glory.

II. *Christ formed in the soul by the Spirit.*—See Gal. iv., 19. Christ formed in the soul is also the hope of glory; and this I take to be the full meaning of this verse. So, John xv., 4, "Abide in me and I in you;" John xvii., 23, "I in them and thou in me;" v., 26, "And I in them."

1. *The mind of Christ* is formed in the soul; 1 Cor. ii., 16, "We have the mind of Christ." By the mind I understand the thinking powers of man. Now, every believer has the mind of Christ formed in him. He thinks as Christ does, "This is the spirit of a sound mind," 2 Tim. i., 7. This is being of the same mind in the Lord. I do not mean that a believer has the same all-seeing mind, the same infallible judgment concerning everything as Christ has; but up to his light he sees things as Christ does.

He sees *sin* as Christ does. Christ sees sin to be evil and bitter. He sees it to be filthy and abominable; its pleasures all a delusion. He sees it to be awfully dangerous. He sees the inseparable connexion between sin and suffering. So does a believer.

He sees the *Gospel* as Christ does. Christ sees amazing glory in the Gospel. The way of salvation which he himself has wrought out. It appears a most complete salvation to him, most free, most glorifying to God and happy for man. So does the believer.

He sees the *world* as Christ does. Christ knows what is in man. He looked on this world as vanity, compared with the

smile of his Father. Its riches, its honors, its pleasures, appeared not worth a sigh. He saw it passing away. So does the believer.

He sees *time* as Christ did. "I must work the work of him that sent me while it is day; the night cometh," "I come quickly." So does a believer look at time.

He sees *eternity* as Christ does. Christ looked at everything in the light of eternity. "In my Father's house are many mansions." Everything is valuable in Christ's eyes, only as it bears on eternity. So with believers.

2. *The heart of Christ.*—By the heart I mean the affections, that part of us that loves or hates, hopes and fears. We have Christ's heart formed in us, "I will put my spirit within you," "I in you," "My words abide in you."

1*st*, The same love to God.—What intense delight Jesus had in his father! "Righteous Father, the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee," "I am not alone, for the Father is with me," "I thank thee, O Father," "Abba Father," "Father, into thy hand I commend my spirit." So with every believer.

2*d*, The same aversion to God's frown.—Psalm xxii., 1, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" verse 15. "Thou hast brought me into the dust of death;" Psalm lxxxviii., 7, "Thy wrath lieth hard upon me;" Psalm cii., 10, "Thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down." So with the children of God. Psalm xlii. 9, "I will say unto God my rock, Why hast thou forgotten me?"

3*d*. The same love to saints.—Psalm xvi., 3, "To the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight;" John xiii., 1, "Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them to the end;" John xv., 13, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends;" John xiv., 3, "I will come again, and receive you to myself;" Acts ix., 4, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" So it is with all true believers. Every one that loveth is born of God.

4*th*, Compassion to sinners.—This was the main feature of Christ's character. This brought him from heaven to die. This made him weep over Jerusalem, long to gather her children. This makes him delay his coming, not willing that any should perish. 2 Peter iii., 9. All Christ's own are like him in this. The same heart throbs within them.

5*th*, Tenderness to the awakened.—"He will not break the bruised reed." O the tenderness of the lips that said, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden." Such are all Christians.

3. *The life of Christ.*—They live the same life in the main that Christ did in the world. Though they have many falls, wax cold, &c., still the main current of their life is Christ living in them. Gal. ii., 20, "Christ liveth in me;" 2 Cor. vi., 16, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them."

Bearing reproaches.—1 Peter ii., 23, "When he was reviled,

he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not." Christ felt reproach keenly, "Reproach hath broken mine heart." Still he reviled no man, but prayed for them. So believers.

In doing good.—"He went about doing good." He made this his meat and drink. So will all who have Christ formed in them. They do good, and to communicate forget not. They are the almoners of the world. "They parted to all men,' Acts ii., 45.

In being separate from sinners.—Christ walked through the midst of sinners undefiled. Like a beam of light piercing into a foul dungeon, or like a river purifying and fertilizing, itself untainted, so did Christ pass through this world; and so do all his own. Ps. ci., 4, "I will not know a wicked person."

But how is it that Christ formed in us is the hope of glory?—1*st*, Not legally. Christ in the soul is not our title to glory. We must have a complete righteousness to be our title; but Christ in the soul is not complete. Most are sadly deficient in many of the main features of Christ. It is Christ for us, laid hold on by faith, that is our title to glory. Christ our wedding garment—the Lord our righteousness; this, and this alone, can give us boldness in the day of judgment. 2*d*, Still really it is so. (1.) It is evidence that we have believed on Christ. A man may know that he has believed on Christ without any evidences. "He that believes has the witness in himself." But if a man has believed, the effects will soon be seen. Christ will be formed in him, and then he will have double evidence that Christ is his. "He that lacketh these things is blind," 2 Pet. i., 9. (2.) It is meetness for glory. A holy believer feels heaven begun. "The kingdom of God is within you." He can say, Now I know I shall soon be in heaven, for it is already begun in me. Christ lives in me. I shall soon be for ever with the Lord.

Improvement.—1. *Have you got the legal title to glory?*—Christ dwelling in you by faith. You have heard how those who are enlightened by God embrace Christ, and put him on abidingly for righteousness. Have you done so? Have you put on Christ? This is the only legal title to glory. If you have not this, your hope is a dream.

2. *Have you got the meetness for glory?*—Christ formed in you. Does Christ live in you, and walk in you? "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord."

Dundee, 1843.

He writes at the close of his notes after sermon—"Very sweet and solemn night."

SERMON XXII.

A CASTAWAY.

"I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."—1 Cor. ix., 26, 27.

OBSERVE, 1. *How earnestly Paul sought the kingdom of heaven.*—Verse 26, "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air." It was long after his conversion that Paul writes in this manner. He could say, "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." He felt it better to depart and be with Christ. He knew there was a crown laid up for him; and yet see how earnest he was to advance in the divine life. He was like one at the Grecian games running for a prize. This is the way all converted persons should seek salvation. "So run that ye may obtain." It is common for many to sit down after conversion, and say, I am safe, I do not need to strive any more. But Paul pressed toward the mark.

2. *One particular in which he was very earnest.*—"I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection." He had observed in the Grecian games, that those who were to run and fight, were very attentive to this, verse 25, "And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things." This was one thing that Paul strove for, to be temperate in all things, especially in eating and drinking, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection."

3. *His reason for all this earnestness.*—"Lest when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." Not that Paul had not an assurance of his salvation; but he felt deeply that his high office in the Church would not save him, although he was one of the Apostles—the Apostle of the Gentiles—one that had labored more than all the rest; though many had been converted under his ministry, he knew that still *that* would not keep him from being a castaway. Judas had preached to others and yet was cast away. Paul felt also that if he lived a wicked life he would surely be cast away. He knew there was an indissoluble connexion between living in sin and being cast away: and, therefore, it was a constant motive to him to holy diligence. What he feared was being "a castaway." The word is frequently translated "reprobate." It is taken from the trying of metals; the dross, or part that is thrown away, is said to be reprobate or cast away.

What is it to be cast away?

I. *Wicked men shall be cast away from God.*—Mat. xxv., 41, "Depart from me, ye cursed;" 2 Thess. i., 9, "Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

1. *Away from Christ.*—At present ungodly men are often near to Christ. Christ stands at their door and knocks. He stretches out his hands to them all the day long. He speaks to them in the Bible and the preached gospel. He says, Come unto me, and I will give you rest. Him that cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out. But when Christ pronounces that sentence, "Depart from me, ye cursed," there will not be one knock more, not one invitation more, not one sweet offer more. Christ is the only way to the Father; but it shall then be closed for ever. Christ is the only door; but it shall then be shut for ever more. It is the blessedness of the redeemed that they shall be with Christ. "To-day shalt thou be *with me*." Having a desire to be absent from the body and present *with the Lord*. So shall they be ever *with the Lord*. His servants shall serve him, and they shall see *his face*. It is this that maintains the eternal calm in the bosom of the redeemed. But the ungodly shall be cast away from all this. "Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into utter darkness."

2. *Away from God.*—True, the wicked can never be cast away from the presence of God. Ps. cxxxix., 8, "If I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there." Job says, "Hell is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering." (xxvi., 6.) His almighty power creates it; His breath kindles it. Isaiah xxx., 33, "The breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it." But they shall be banished.

1*st*, From the fruition of God.—God said to Abraham, "I am thy shield and thine exceeding great reward." God makes himself over to the believing soul, saying, I will be thy God. David says, God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. Who can tell the joy of those who enjoy God, who have God, the infinite God, as their portion? From this the Christless shall be cast away. You will have no portion in God. God will not be your God. His attributes will be all against you.

2*d*, From the favor of God.—"In thy favor is life." The favor of God is what believers feel on earth. A beam of God's countenance is enough to fill the heart of a believer to overflowing. It is enough to light up the pale cheek of a dying saint with seraphic brightness, and make the heart of the lone widow sing for joy. From all this the Christless shall be cast away for ever; and instead of it Jehovah's frown shall light on them for ever "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

3*d*, Cast away from the blessing of God.—God is the fountain of all blessing. No creature is good or pleasant any more than God makes it to be so. The sun warms us, our food nourishes us, our friends are pleasant to us; because God makes them so. All the joys in the world are but beams from that uncreated light; but separate a man from God, and all becomes dark. God is the fountain of all joy; separate a man from God finally, and no creature can give him joy. This is to be cast away, cut off, from

God for ever. Though there were no lake of fire, this of itself would be hell.

II. *Wicked men shall be cast away by the Holy Spirit.*—It is not often thought of, but it is true, that the Holy Spirit is now dealing and striving with natural men. All the decency and morality of unconverted men is to be attributed to the restraining grace of the Holy Spirit.

1. *The Holy Spirit works on natural men through the ordinances.*—The ordinance of family worship is often greatly blessed to restrain wicked children, so that they are kept from vicious courses and outbreaking sins. The ordinance of the read and preached Word is also greatly blessed in this way to restrain wicked men. The awful threatenings of the Word, the sweet invitations and promises of the gospel, have this effect on unconverted men, that they are greatly restrained from going to extreme lengths in wickedness.

2. *The Holy Spirit also works through providences in restraining wicked men.*—He places them in such circumstances that they cannot sin as they would otherwise do. He often reduces them to poverty, so that they cannot run into the vices they were inclined unto; or he lays sickness on their body, so that their keen relish for sin is greatly blunted; or he terrifies them by bereavements, so that they are kept in the bondage of fear, and dare not sin with so high a hand as they would otherwise do.

3. *The Holy Spirit also restrains through convictions of sin.*—Many men have deep wounds of conviction who are never saved. Many are piereed with arrows of the Word from time to time, and thus are driven away from their wicked companions and scared from open sin. Restraining grace is an amazing work of God. It is more wonderful than his setting a bound to the sea that it cannot pass over. Think what a hell every unconverted bosom would become, if the Spirit were to withdraw and give men over to their own hearts' lusts. Think what a hell an unconverted family would become, if the Spirit were to withdraw his bands. What hatreds, strifes, murders, parricides would take place! Think what a hell this town would become, if every Christless man were given over to the lusts of his own heart.

Now this is to be a castaway. Gen. vi., 3, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." The Holy Spirit, I believe, strives with all men; Acts vii., 51, "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost;" but he will not always strive. When the day of grace is done, when the sinner sinks into hell, the Spirit will strive no more.

1*st*, The Spirit will strive no more through ordinances. There will be no family worship in hell, no Bible read, no Psalms sung. There will be no Sabbath in hell, no preached gospel, no watchmen to warn you of your sin and danger. The voice of the

watchman will be silent, the danger has come, your doom will be past, and no room for repentance.

2*d*, The Spirit will no more strive through providences. There will be no more poverty or riches, no more sickness or bereavements, no kindly providences restraining the soul from sin, nothing but anguish and despair unutterable.

3*d*, There will be no more convictions by the Spirit. Conscience will condemn, but it will not restrain. Your hearts will then break out. All your hatred to God, the fountains of contempt and blasphemy in your heart will be all broken up. You will blaspheme the God of Heaven. All your lusts and impurities that have been pent up and restrained by restraining grace and the fear of man, will burst forth with amazing impetuosity. You will be as wicked and blasphemous as the devils around you.

O the misery of this! it is an evil thing and bitter. The way of transgressors is hard. Ah! sinners, you will yet find sin the hardest of all masters; you will yet find your grovelling lusts to be worse than the worm that never dies. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still;" Rev. xxii., 11.

III. *Wicked men shall be cast away by all the creatures.*—The state of unconverted men at present, although a very dreadful one, is yet not hopeless. The angels watch the unconverted, to see if there is any sign of repentance. It is believed that the holy angels are present in the assembly of God's worshippers. 1 Tim. v., 21. And if so, no doubt they watch your faces, to see if a tear starts into your eye, or a prayer trembles on your lip. There would be joy this day among the angels, if one sinner was to repent.

The redeemed on earth are peculiarly interested in unconverted souls. They pray for them night and day, many of them with tears; many a child of God wets his pillow with tears in behalf of perishing souls. Jeremiah wept in secret places for their pride. David says, Rivers of waters run down mine eyes. They seek your conversion more than any personal benefit. Ministers are set apart to seek after lost and perishing souls. "Go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." If ministers are like their Master, this will be their great errand, that by all means we may save some. But when the day of grace is past, all holy creatures will cast you away. Reprobate silver shall men call them, for the Lord hath rejected them.

The angels will no longer take any interest in you. They will know that it is not fit they should pity you any more. You will be tormented in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.

The redeemed will no longer pray for you, nor shed another tear for you. They will see you condemned in the judgment, and not put in one word for you. They will see you depart into

everlasting fire, and yet not pray for you. They will see the smoke of your torments going up for ever and ever, and yet cry, Alleluiah!

Ministers will no more desire your salvation. It will no more be their work. The number of the saved will be complete without you; the table will be full. Ministers will bear witness against you in that day.

Even devils will cast you off. As long as you remain on earth, the devil keeps you in his train; he flatters you, and gives you many tokens of his friendship and esteem; but soon he will cast you off. You will be no longer pleasant to him; you will be a part of his torment; and he will hate you and torment you, because you deceived him, and he deceived you.

IV. *Wicked men shall be cast away by themselves.*—It is said, they shall wish to die, and shall not be able. They shall seek death, and death shall flee from them. I believe that some suicides experience the beginnings of hell. I believe Judas did; he could not bear himself, and he tried to cast himself away. This will be the feeling of lost souls. They will not be able to bear the sight of themselves; they will be weary of being; they will wish they had never been. At present, unconverted men are often very self-complacent. They love to employ their faculties; the wheels of their life go smoothly; their affections are pleasant. Memory has many pleasant green spots to look back upon. How different when the day of grace is done! 1. *The understanding* will be clear and full to apprehend the real nature of your misery. Your mind will then see the holiness of God, his almightiness, his majesty. You will see your own condemned condition, and the depth of your hell. 2. *The will* in you will be all contrary to God's will, even though you see it add to your hell; yet you will hate all that God loves, and love all that God hates. 3. *Your conscience* is God's vicegerent in the soul. It will accuse you of all your sins. It will set them in order and condemn you. 4. *Your affections* will still love your kindred. "I have five brethren," you will say. Earthly fathers who are evil know how to give good gifts to their children. Even in hell you will love your own kindred; but ah! what misery it will cost you, when you hear them sentenced along with you. 5. *Your memory* will be very clear. You will remember all your misspent Sabbaths, your sermons heard, as if you did not hear; your place in the house of God, your minister's face and voice, the bell; through millions of ages after this, you will remember these, as if yesterday. 6. *Your anticipations.* Everlasting despair. O how you will wish you had never been! How you will wish to tear out your memory, these tender affections, this accusing conscience! You will seek death, and it will flee from you. This, this is to be lost! This is everlasting destruction! This is to be a castaway.

Lessons.—1. Let believers learn Paul's earnest diligence. A wicked life will end in being a castaway. These two are linked together, and no man can sunder them.

2. Hell will be intolerable. I have not spoken of the lake of fire, of the utter darkness, and the worm that never dies. I have spoken only of the mental facts of hell; and yet these by themselves are intolerable. O who can tell what it will be when both meet, and meet eternally? "Who knows the power of thine anger?" O do not keep away from Christ now. Now he says, Come; soon, soon he will say, Depart. O do not resist the Holy Spirit now. Now he strives, but he will not always strive with you. Soon, soon he will leave you. O do not despise the word of ministers and godly friends. Now they plead with you, weep for you, pray for you. Soon, soon they will be silent as the grave, or sing halleluiah to see you lost. O do not be proud and self-admiring. Soon you will loathe the very sight of yourself, and wish you had never been.

3. The amazing love of Christ in bearing all this for sinners. Christ is a wrath-bearing surety. All that is included in being a castaway he bore. Amen.

January, 1843.

SERMON XXIII.

A COMMUNION SABBATH IN ST. PETER'S.

I. SERMON.

"Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am: that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.—John xvii., 24.

I. *The manner of this prayer.*—"Father, I will." This is the most wonderful prayer that ever rose from this earth to the throne of God, and this petition is the most wonderful in the prayer. No human lips ever prayed thus before—"Father, I will." *Abraham* was the friend of God, and got very near to God in prayer, but he prayed as dust and ashes. "I have taken upon me to speak unto God that am but dust and ashes." *Jacob* had power with God, and prevailed, yet his boldest word was, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." *Daniel* was a man greatly beloved, and got immediate answers to prayer, and yet he cried to God as a sinner—"O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, hearken and do!" *Paul* was a man who got very near to God, and yet he says. "I bow my knees to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." But when Christ prayed, he cried, "Father, I will." Why did he

pray thus? *He was God's fellow.* "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man that is my fellow." He thought it no robbery to be equal with God." It was he that said, "Let there be light, and there was light." So now he says, "Father, I will."

He spoke as the Intercessor with the Father.—He felt as if his work were already done—"I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." He felt as if he had already suffered the cross, and now claims the crown. "Father, I will." This is the intercession now heard in heaven.

He had one will with the Father.—"I and my Father are one." One God—one in heart and will. True, he had a holy human soul, and, therefore, a human will; but his human will was one with his divine will. The human string in his heart was tuned to the same string with his divine will.

Learn how surely this prayer will be answered, dear children of God. It is impossible this prayer should be unanswered. It is the will of the Father and of the Son. If Christ wills it, and if the Father wills it, you may be sure nothing can hinder it. If the sheep be in Christ's hand, and in the Father's hand, they shall never perish.

II. *For whom he prays.*—"They also whom thou hast given me." Six times in this chapter does Christ call his people by this name—"They whom thou hast given me." It seems to have been a favorite word of Christ, especially when carrying them on his heart before the Father. The reason seems to be that he would remind the Father that they are as much the Father's as they are his own; that the Father has the same interest in them that he has; having given them to him before the world was. And so he repeats it in verse 10, "All mine are thine, and thine are mine." Before the world was, the Father chose a people out of this world; he gave them into the hand of Christ, charging him not to lose one, to bear their sins on his own body on the tree, to raise him up at the last day. And, accordingly, he says, "Of all whom thou hast given me have I lost none." Is there any mark on those who are given to Christ? They are no better than others. Sometimes he chooses the worst. *A.* Yes. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me." One of the sure marks of all that were given to Christ is that they come to Jesus—"They all come to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling." Are you come to Christ? Has your heart been opened to receive Christ? Has Christ been made precious to you?—then you may be quite sure you were given to Christ before the world was. Your name is in the Lamb's Book of Life, and your name is on the breastplate of Christ. It is for you he prays, "Father, I will that that soul be with me." Christ will never lose you. The Father which gave you to him is greater than all, and none is able to pluck you out of the Father's hand.

III. *The Argument*—"*For thou lovest me.*" He reminds the Father of his love to him before the world was. When there was no earth, no sun, no man, no angel—when he was by him—then thou lovest me. Who can understand this love, the love of the uncreated God to his uncreated Son? The love of Jonathan to David was very great, surpassing the love of women. The love of a believer to Christ is very great, for they see him to be altogether lovely. The love of a holy angel to God is very ardent, for they are like a flame of fire. But these are all creature loves; these are but streams; but the love of God to his Son is an ocean of love. There is everything in Christ to draw the love of his Father. Now discern his argument—If thou love me do this for my people.

Just as he said to Paul, "Why persecutest thou me?" he felt himself one with his afflicted members on earth, Just as he will say at the last day, "Inasmuch as ye did it to one of the least of these, my brethren, ye did it unto me." He reckons believers a part of himself—what is done to them is done to him. So here, when he carries them to his Father, this is all his argument,—"Thou lovedst me." If thou love me, love them, for they are part of me.

See how surely Christ's prayer will be answered for you, beloved. He does not plead that you are good and holy; he does not plead that you are worthy; he only pleads his own loveliness in the eyes of the Father. Look not on them, he says, but look on me. Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

Learn to use the same argument with God, dear believers. This is asking in Christ's name—for the Lord's sake—this is the prayer that is never refused. See that you do not come in your own name, else you will be cast out.

Come thus to his table. Say to the Father, accept me, for thou lovedst him from the foundation of the world.

IV. *The prayer itself.* Two parts.

1. "*That they may be with me.*" (1.) *What he does not mean.*—He does not mean that we should be presently taken out of this world. Some of you that have come to Christ may this day be favored with so much of his presence, and of the love of the Father—so much of the joy of heaven. and such a dread of going back to betray Christ in the world—that you may be wishing that this house were indeed the gate of heaven—you may desire that you might be translated from the table below at once to the table above. "I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ." Still Christ does not wish that. "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but thou shouldst keep them from the evil." "Whither I go thou canst not follow me now." (Like that woman in Brainerd's journal—"O blessed Lord, do come! O do take me away; do let me die and go to

Jesus Christ. I am afraid if I live I shall sin again.") 2. *What he does mean.*—He means that when our journey is done we should come to be with him. Every one that comes to Christ has a journey to perform in this world. Some have a long and some a short one. It is through a wilderness. Still Christ prays that at the end you may be with him. Every one that comes to Christ hath his twelve hours to fill up for Christ. I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day. But when that is done, Christ prays that you may be with him. He means that you shall come to *his Father's house* with him. "In my Father's house are many mansions." You shall dwell in the same house with Christ. You are never very intimate with a person till you see them in their own house—till you know them at home. This is what Christ wants with us—that we shall come to be with him at his own home. He wants us to come to the same Father's bosom with him. "I ascend to my Father and your Father." He wants us to be in the same smile with him, to sit on the same throne with him, to swim in the same ocean of love with him.

Learn how certain it is that you shall one day soon be with Christ. It is the will of the Father; it is the will of the Son. It is the prayer of Christ. If you have really been brought to Christ, you shall never perish. You may have *many enemies* opposing you in your way to glory. Satan desires to have you, that he may sift you like wheat. Your worldly friends will do all they can to hinder you. Still you shall be with Christ.. We shall see your face at the table of glory. *You have a hard heart*, an unbelieving heart, a heart deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. You often think your heart will lead you to betray Christ. Still you shall be with Christ. If you are in Christ to-day, you shall be ever with the Lord. You have *lived a wicked life.* You have dreadful sins to look back upon. Still if you are come to Jesus, this is his word to thee, "Thou shalt be with me in paradise." In truth, Christ cannot want you. You are his jewels, his crown. Heaven would be no heaven to him, if you were not there. This may give you courage in coming to the Lord's table. Some of you fear to come to this table, because, though you cleave to Christ to-day, you fear you may betray him to-morrow. But you need not fear. "He that hath begun a good work in you, will perform it till the day of Jesus Christ." You shall sit at the table above, where Christ himself shall be at the head. You need not fear to come to this table.

2. *To behold my glory which thou hast given me.*—There are three stages in the glory of Christ. It will be the employment of heaven to behold them all.

1*st, The original glory of Christ*—This is his underived, uncreated glory, as the equal of the Father. It is spoken of in Prov. viii., 30, "Then I was by him as one brought up with him; I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him." And, again, in

this prayer, verse 5, "The glory which I had with thee before the world was." Of this glory no man can speak—no angel—no archangel. One thing alone we know, that we are to honor the Son even as we honor the Father. He shared with the Father in being the all-perfect one, when there was none to admire, none to adore, no angels with golden harps, no seraphs to hymn his praise, no cherubim to cry, Holy, holy, holy. Before all creatures were, he was. One with the infinitely perfect, good and glorious God. He was then all that he afterwards showed himself to be. Creation and redemption did not change him. They only revealed what he was before. They only provided objects for those beams of glory to rest upon, that were shining as fully before, from all eternity. Eternity will be much taken up with praising God that ever he revealed himself at all; that ever he came out from the retirement of his lovely and blissful eternity.

2*d*, *When he became flesh.*—"The Word was made flesh." Christ did not get more glory by becoming man; but he manifested his glory in a new way. He did not gain one perfection more by becoming man; he had all the perfections of God before. But now these perfections were poured through a human heart. *The almightiness* of God now moved in a human arm. *The infinite love* of God now beat in a human heart. *The compassion* of God to sinners now glistened in a human eye. God was love before, but Christ was love covered over with flesh. Just as you have seen the sun shining through a colored window. It is the same sunlight still, and yet it shines with a mellowed lustre. So in Christ dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. The perfection of the Godhead shone through every pore, through every action, word and look—the same perfections; they were only shining with a mellowed brightness. The veil of the temple was a type of his flesh; because it covered the bright light of the holiest of all. But just as the bright light of the shechinah often shone through the veil, so did the Godhead of Christ force itself through the heart of the man Christ Jesus. There were many openings of the veil when the bright glory shone through.

(1.) *When he turned the water into wine.*—He manifested forth his glory, and his disciples believed on him. Almighty power spoke in a human voice and the love of God, too, shone in it; for he showed that he came to turn all our water into wine.

(2.) *When he wept over Jerusalem.*—That was a great outlet of his glory. There was much that was human in it. The feet were human that stood upon Mount Olivet. The eyes were human eyes that looked down upon the dazzling city. The tears were human tears that fell upon the ground. But oh, there was the tenderness of God beating beneath that mantle. Look and live, sinners. Look and live. Behold your God. He that hath seen a weeping Christ hath seen the Father. This is God

manifest in the flesh. Some of you fear that the Father does not wish you to come to Christ and be saved. But see here, God is manifest in the flesh. He that hath seen Christ hath seen the Father. See here the heart of the Father and the heart of the Son laid bare. O wherefore should you doubt. Every one of these tears trickles from the heart of God.

(3.) *On the cross.*—The wounds of Christ were the greatest outlets of his glory that ever were. The Divine glory shone more out of his wounds than out of all his life before. The veil was then rent in twain, and the full heart of God allowed to stream through. It was a human body that writhed, pale and racked, upon the accursed tree; they were human hands that were pierced so rudely by the nails; it was human flesh that bore that deadly gash upon the side; it was human blood that streamed from hands, and feet, and side; the eye that meekly turned to his Father was a human eye; the soul that yearned over his mother was a human soul. But O, there was Divine glory streaming through all; every wound was a mouth to speak of the grace and love of God. *Divine holiness* shone through. What infinite hatred of sin was there when he thus offered himself a sacrifice without spot unto God? *Divine wisdom* shone through! all created intelligences could not have devised a plan whereby God would have been just, and yet the justifier. *Divine love:* every drop of blood that fell came as a messenger of love from his heart to tell the love of the fountain. This was the love of God. He that hath seen a crucified Christ hath seen the Father. O, look on the broken bread, and you will see this glory still streaming through. Here is the heart of God laid bare, God is manifest in flesh. Some of you are poring over your own heart, examining your feelings, watching your disease. Avert the eye from all within. Behold me, behold me! Christ cries. Look to me, and be ye saved. Behold the glory of Christ. There is much difficulty about your own heart, but no darkness about the heart of Christ. Look in through his wounds; believe what you see in him.

3*d*, *Christ's glory above.*—I cannot speak of this. I trust I shall soon one day see it. He has not laid aside the glory which he had on earth. He is still the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. But he has got more glory now. His humanity is no more a veil to hide any of the beams of his Godhead. God shines all the more plainly through him. He has got many crowns now, the oil of gladness now, the sceptre of righteousness now.

Heaven will be spent in beholding his glory.—We shall see the Father eternally in him. We shall look in his face, and in his human eye shall read the tender love of God to us for ever. We shall hear from his holy human lips plainly of the Father. "In that day I shall no more speak to you in parables, but show you plainly of the Father." We shall look on his scars, healed,

yet plain and open on his hands, and feet, and side, and heaven-bright brow, and shall read eternally there the hatred of God against sin, and his love to us that made him die for us. And sometimes, perhaps, we may lean our head where John leaned his, upon his holy bosom. Oh! if heaven is to be spent thus, what will *you* do who have never seen his glory?

O beloved, if your eternity is to be spent thus, spend much of your time thus. If you are to be thus engaged at the table above, be thus engaged now at the table below.

Communion Sabbath, Jan. 19, 1840.

II. FENCING THE TABLES.

"But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, and kept back *part* of the price, his wife also being privy *to it*, and brought a certain part, and laid *it* at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. And Ananias, hearing these words, fell down, and gave up the ghost; and great fear came on all them that heard these things. And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried *him* out, and buried *him*. And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in. And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much. Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband *are* at the door, and shall carry thee out. Then fell she down straightway at his feet and yielded up the ghost; and the young men came in, and found her dead, and carrying *her* forth, buried *her* by her husband. And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things. And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. And of the rest durst no man join himself to them; but the people magnified them. And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women)."—Acts v., 1–14.

THERE have been hypocrites in the Church of Christ from the beginning. There was one, Judas, even among the twelve Apostles: and in the Apostolic Church there was an Ananias and a Sapphira. Attend, 1. *To their sin*—a lie. When so much of the spirit was given, all were of one heart and one soul. Those that had estates sold them, and brought the price and laid it at the Apostles' feet. It was a lovely sight to see. Among the rest came one Ananias; he was rich. From some worldly motive, he had joined himself to the Christians, husband and wife, both Christless, graceless souls. He sold his possessions to be like the rest, and brought a part and said it was his all! He pretended to be a Christian, he pretended that grace was in his heart. It was not a lie to man only, but to the Holy Ghost; for he was declaring that God had wrought a change upon his soul, when there was none, he was still old Ananias. 2. *Their punishment.*—They fell down and gave up the ghost. Oh! it is an awful thing when sinners die in the act of sin, with the lie in

their mouth, with the oath on their tongue. So it was with poor Ananias and his wife. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, they were in the place where all liars go. 3. *The effect*—great fear came upon them all. None dare to join themselves to the Apostles' company.

Dear friends, these things are written for our learning. Are there none come up here to-day with Ananias' lie in their heart?

The broken bread and poured out wine represent the broken body and shed blood of Christ. Oh! it is enough to melt the heart of the stoutest to look at them. To take that bread and that wine is declaring that you do close with Christ, that you take him to be your Saviour, that God has opened your heart to believe. In marriage, the acceptance of the right hand is a solemn declaration, by sign, that you accept the bride or bridegroom: and so in the Lord's supper. If it is not so with you, then it is *a lie;* and it is *a lie to the Holy Ghost.* Ananias came declaring that he had got the Spirit's work upon his heart. It was a time when much of God's spirit had been given, verses 31, 32. It is likely he and his wife had some convictions. But since it was false, since he was not really what he pretended to be, it was said, "*he lied to the Holy Ghost.*" So, dear friends, the Holy Ghost is peculiarly present in this ordinance. He glorifies Christ. He has converted many in this place. To sin to-day is to lie against the Holy Ghost. By coming to the table, you profess that you are under the Spirit's teaching. If you are not, you lie unto the Holy Ghost!

Now, do you know that you have not come to Christ? Do you know that you are unconverted? And will you sit down there and take the bread and wine? Take heed, Ananias! Thou art not lying to a man but unto God.

Perhaps there is one among you who is secretly addicted to drinking, to swearing, to uncleanness. Will you come and take the bread and wine? Take heed, Ananias!

Perhaps there are two of you, husband and wife, who know that neither of you were ever converted. You never pray together, and yet you agree together to come here. Take heed, Ananias and Sapphira!

Is there none of you a persecutor? Suppose a father, whose children have come to Christ, but in your heart you hate their change; you oppose it with bitter words; and yet, with a smooth countenance, you come to sit beside them at the same table! O, hypocrite, take heed lest you drop down dead! Draw back that hand lest it wither! If we should see the cup drop from your hand, and the eye glaze, and the feet become cold, Oh! where would your soul be?

Dear children of God, do not be discouraged from coming to this holy table. It is spread for sinners that have come to Jesus. "O, come and dine." Some of you say, "I do not

know the way to this table." Jesus says, "I am the way." Some of you say, "I am blind, I cannot see my sins, nor my Saviour." Go wash in the pool of Siloam. Some of you say, "I am naked." Jesus says, "I counsel thee to buy of me white raiment that thou mayest be clothed." You are polluted in your own blood; but has Jesus thrown his skirt over you? Then, do not fear; come with his robe on you. Come thus, and you come welcome.

3. TABLE SERVICE.

(The only specimen of his Table Services, found in his own handwriting, but without date.)

"*My beloved is mine, and I am his.*" 1. "*In the arms of my faith* he is mine." I was once of the world, cold and careless about my soul. God awakened me, and made me feel I was lost. I tried to make myself good, to mend my life; but I found it in vain. I sat down more lost than before. I was then told to believe on the Lord Jesus. So I tried to make myself believe. I read books on faith, and tried to bend my soul to believe, that so I might get to heaven; but still in vain. I found it written, "Faith is the gift of God." "No man can call Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." So I sat down more lost than ever. Whilst I was thus helpless, Jesus drew near, his garments dipped in blood. He had waited long at my door, though I knew it not. "His head was filled with dew, and his locks with the drops of the night." He had five deep wounds; and he said, "I died in the stead of sinners; and any *sinner* may have me for a Saviour. You are a helpless sinner, will you have me?" How can I resist him! he is all I need! "I held him, and would not let him go." "*My beloved is mine.*"

2. *In the arms of my love, he is mine.* Once I did not know what people meant by loving Jesus. I always wished to ask how they could love one whom they had never seen, but was answered, "whom not having seen, we love." But now that I have hidden in him, now that I am cleaving to him, now I feel that I cannot but love him; and I long to see him that I may love him more. Many a time I fall into sin, and that takes away my feeling of safety in Christ. Darkness comes, all is clouded, Christ is away. Still even then I am sick of love. Christ is not light and peace to me; but I follow hard after him amid the darkness, he is precious to me; and even though I be in darkness, he is my beloved still. "This is my beloved, and this is my friend."

3. *He is mine in the Sacrament.*—Many a time have I said to him in prayer, Thou art mine. Many a time when the doors were shut, and Jesus came in showing his wounds, saying, "Peace be unto you," my soul clave to him, and said, "My Lord and my God!" My beloved thou art mine! Many a time have I trysted with him in lonely places, where there was no eye of man. Many

a time have I called to the rocks and trees to witness that I took him to be my Saviour. He said to me, "I will betrothe thee unto me for ever;" and I said to him, "My beloved is mine." Many a time have I gone with some Christian friend, and we poured out our trembling hearts together, consulting one with another as to whether we had liberty to close with Christ or no, and both together we came to this conclusion, that if we were but helpless sinners we had a right to close with the Saviour of sinners. We clave to him, and called him ours. And now have we come to take him publicly, to call an ungodly world to witness, to call heaven and earth for a record to our soul, that we do close with Christ. See he giveth himself to us in the bread; lo! we accept of him in accepting this bread. Bear witness, men and angels, bear witness, all the universe—"My beloved is mine."

(The communicants then partook of the broken bread and the cup of blessing.)

(It was his custom, after they had communicated, to speak briefly on a few suitable texts, before dismissing them from the tables. On Sabbath, January 19, the texts were—"Love one another;" "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it;" "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but in me ye shall have peace.")

4. ADDRESS AT THE CLOSE OF THE DAY.

"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."—Jude 24.

There is no end to a pastor's anxieties. Our first care is to get you into Christ; and next, to keep you from falling. I have a good hope, dearly beloved, that a goodly number of you have this day joined yourselves to the Lord. But now a new anxiety begins, to get you to walk in Christ, to walk after the Spirit. Here we are to tell you of what God our Saviour is able to do for you: 1*st*, To keep you from falling all the way; 2*d*, To present you faultless at the end.

I. *To keep you from falling.*

1. *We are not able* to keep you from falling. Those that lean on ministers lean on a reed shaken with the wind. When a soul has received saving good through a minister, he often thinks that he will be kept from falling by the same means. He thinks, "O if I had this friend always beside me to warn me, to advise me." No; ministers are not always by, nor godly friends. Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever? We may soon be taken from you, and there may come a famine of the bread. And, besides, our words will not always tell. When temptation and passions are strong, *you* would not give heed to us.

2. *You are not able to keep yourselves* from falling. At present you know little of the weakness or wickedness of your own heart. There is nothing more deceitful than your estimate of your own strength. O if you saw your soul in all its infirmity; if you saw how every sin has its fountain in your heart; if you saw what a mere reed you are, you would cry, "Lord, hold up my goings." You may be at present strong, but stop till an inviting company occur; stop till a secret opportunity. O how many have fallen then! At present you feel strong, your feet like hind's feet. So did Peter at the Lord's table. But stop till this burst of feeling has passed away; stop till you are asked to join in some unholy game; stop till some secret opportunity of sinning all unseen, till some bitter provocation rouses your anger, and you will find that you are weak as water, and that there is no sin that you may not fall into.

3. *Our Saviour-God is able.*—Christ deals with us as you do with your children; they cannot go alone. You hold them, so does Christ by his Spirit. "I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms." Hosea xi., 3. Breathe this prayer—"Lord, take me by the arms." John Newton says, When a mother is teaching her child to walk on a soft carpet, she will sometimes let it go, and it will fall, to teach it its weakness; but not so on the brink of a precipice. So the Lord will sometimes let you fall, like Peter on the waters, though not to your injury. The shepherd layeth the sheep on his shoulder; it matters not how great the distance be, it matters not how high the mountains, how rough the path; our Saviour-God is an Almighty Shepherd. Some of you have mountains in your way to heaven, some of you have mountains of lusts in your hearts, and some of you have mountains of opposition; it matters not, only lie on the shoulder. He is able to keep you; even in the dark *valley* he will not stumble.

II. *To present you faultless.*

1. *Faultless in Righteousness.*—As long as you live in your mortal body, you will be faulty in yourself. It is a soul-ruining error to believe anything else. O if ye would be wise, be often looking beneath the robe of the Redeemer's righteousness to see your own deformity. It will make you keep faster hold of his robe, and keep you washing in the fountain. Now, when Christ brings you before the throne of God, he will clothe you with his own fine linen, and present you faultless. O it is sweet to me to think how soon you shall be the righteousness of God in him. What a glorious righteousness that can stand the light of God's face! Sometimes a garment appears white in dim light: when you bring it into the sunshine you see the spots. O prize, then, this Divine righteousness, which is your covering.

2. *Faultless in holiness.*—My heart sometimes sickens when I think upon the defects of believers; when I think of one Chris-

tian being fond of company, another vain, another given to evil speaking. O aim to be holy Christians, bright, shining Christians. The heaven is more adorned by the large bright constellations than by many insignificant stars; so God may be more glorified by one bright Christian than by many indifferent ones. Aim at being that one.

Soon we shall be faultless. He that begun will perform it. We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. When you lay down this body, you may say, Farewell lust for ever, farewell my hateful pride, farewell hateful selfishness, farewell strife and envying, farewell being ashamed of Christ. O this makes death sweet indeed. O long to depart and to be with Christ

III. *To him be glory.*

1. O if anything has been done for your soul, give him *the glory.* Give no praise to others; give all praise to him. 2. And give him *the dominion* too. Yield yourselves unto him, soul and body.

SERMON XXIV.

THE VOICE OF MY BELOVED.*

"The voice of my beloved! behold he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. My beloved is like a roe, or a young hart: behold he standeth behind our wall, he looketh forth at the windows, showing himself through the lattice. My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. 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. 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. Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines; for our vines *have* tender grapes. My beloved *is* mine, and I *am* his; he feedeth among the lilies. Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe, or a young hart, upon the mountains of Bether."—Song of Solomon ii., 8-17.

THERE is no book of the Bible which affords a better test of the depth of a man's Christianity than the Song of Solomon. (1.) If a man's religion be *all in his head*—a well set form of doctrines, built like mason work, stone above stone—but exercising no influence upon his heart, this book cannot but offend him; for there are no stiff statements of doctrine here upon which his heartless religion may be built. (2.) Or, if a man's religion be *all in his fancy*—if, like Pliable in the Pilgrim's Progress, he be taken with

* August 14, 1836, when he preached as candidate—the first day he preached in St. Peter's

the outward beauty of Christianity—if, like the seed sown upon the rocky ground, his religion is fixed only in the surface faculties of the mind, while the heart remains rocky and unmoved—though he will relish this book much more than the first man, still there is a mysterious breathing of intimate affection in it, which cannot but stumble and offend him. (3.) *But if a man's religion be heart religion*—if he hath not only doctrines in his head, but love to Jesus in his heart—if he hath not only heard and read of the Lord Jesus, but hath felt his need of him, and been brought to cleave unto him, as the chiefest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely, then this book will be inestimably precious to his soul; for it contains the tenderest breathings of the believer's heart toward the Saviour, and the tenderest breathings of the Saviour's heart again towards the believer.

It is agreed among the best interpreters of this book—(1.) That it consists not of one song, but of many songs; (2.) That these songs are in a dramatic form; and (3.) That, like the parables of Christ, they contain a spiritual meaning, under the dress and ornaments of some poetical incident.

The passage which I have read forms one of these dramatical songs, and the subject of it is, a sudden visit which an Eastern bride receives from her absent lord. The bride is represented to us as sitting lonely and desolate in a kiosk, or Eastern arbor, a place of safety and of retirement in the gardens of the East, described by modern travellers as "an arbor surrounded by a green wall, covered with vines and jessamines, with windows of lattice work."

The mountains of Bether (or, as it is on the margin, the mounts of division), the mountains that separate her from her beloved, appear almost impassable. They look so steep and craggy that she fears he will never be able to come over them to visit her any more. *Her garden* possesses no loveliness to entice her to walk forth. All nature seems to partake in her sadness; winter reigns without and within; no flowers appear on the earth; all the singing birds appear to be sad and silent upon the trees; and the turtle's voice of love is not heard in the land.

It is whilst she is sitting thus lonely and desolate that the voice of her beloved strikes upon her ear. Love is quick in hearing the voice that is loved; and, therefore, she hears sooner than all her maidens, and the song opens with her bursting exclamation, "The voice of my beloved!" When she sat in her solitude the mountains between her and her lord seemed nearly impassable, they were so lofty and so steep; but now she sees with what swiftness and ease he can come over these mountains, so that she can compare him to nothing else but the gazelle, or the young hart, the loveliest and swiftest creatures of the mountains. "My beloved is like a roe, or a young hart." Yea, while she is speaking, already he has arrived at the garden wall, and now, behold

"he looketh in at the window, showing himself through the lattice." The bride next relates to us the gentle invitation, which seems to have been the song of her beloved as he came so swiftly over the mountains. While she sat alone all nature seemed dead—winter reigned; but now he tells her that he has brought the spring-time along with him. "Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away. For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing 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." Moved by this pressing invitation, she comes forth from her place of retirement into the presence of her lord, and clings to him like the timorous dove to the clefts of the rock; and then he addresses her in these words of tenderest and most delicate affection, "O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the precipice, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely." Joyfully agreeing to go forth with her lord, she yet remembers that this is the season of greatest danger to her vines, from the foxes which gnaw the bark of the vines; and, therefore, she will not go forth without leaving this command of caution to her maidens, "Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes." She then renews the covenant of her espousals with her beloved, in these words of appropriating affection: "My beloved is mine, and I am his; let him feed among the lilies." And last of all, because she knows that this season of intimate communion will not last, since her beloved must hurry away again over the mountains, she will not suffer him to depart without beseeching him that he will often renew these visits of love, till that happy day dawn when they shall not need to be separated any more—"Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart, upon the mountains of Bether."

We might well challenge the whole world of genius to produce in any language a poem such as this, so short, so comprehensive, so delicately beautiful. But, what is far more to our present purpose, there is no part of the Bible which opens up more beautifully some of the innermost experience of the believer's heart.

Let us now, then, look at the parable as a description of one of those visits which the Saviour often pays to believing souls, when he manifests himself unto them in that other way than he doeth unto the world.

1. *When Christ is away from the soul of the believer, he sits alone.*—We saw in the parable, that, when her Lord was away, the bride sat lonely and desolate. She did not call for the young and the gay to cheer her solitary hours. She did not call for the harp of the minstrel to soothe her in her solitude. There was no

pipe, nor tabret, nor wine at her feasts. No, she sat alone. The mountains seemed all but impassable. All nature partook of her sadness. If she could not be glad in the light of the Lord's countenance, she was resolved to be glad in nothing else. She sat lonely and desolate. Just so it is with the true believer in Jesus. Whatever be the mountains of Bether that have come between his soul and Christ; whether he hath been seduced into his old sins, so that "his iniquities have separated again between him and his God, and his sins have hid his face from him, that he will not hear;" or whether the Saviour hath withdrawn for a season the comfortable light of his presence for the mere trial of his servant's faith, to see if, when he "walketh in darkness and hath no light, he will still trust in the name of the Lord, and stay himself upon his God;" whatever the mountains of separation be, it is the sure mark of the believer *that he sits desolate and alone.* He cannot laugh away his heavy care, as worldly men can do. He cannot drown it in the bowl of intemperance, as poor blinded men can do. Even the innocent intercourse of human friendship brings no balm to his wound, nay, even fellowship with the children of God is now distasteful to his soul. He cannot enjoy what he enjoyed before, when they that feared the Lord spake often one to another. The mountains between him and the Saviour seem so vast and impassable that he fears he will never visit him more. All nature partakes of his sadness—winter reigns without and within. He sits alone, and is desolate. Being afflicted, he prays; and the burden of his prayer is the same with that of an ancient believer—"Lord, if I may not be made glad with the light of thy countenance, grant that I may be made glad with nothing else; for joy without thee is death."

Ah! my friends, do you know anything of this sorrow? Do you know what it is thus to sit alone and be desolate, because Jesus is out of view? If you do, then rejoice, if it be possible, even in the midst of your sadness; for this very sadness is one of the marks that you are a believer; that you find all your peace and all your joy in union with the Saviour.

But ah! how contrary is the way with most of you? You know nothing of this sadness. Yes, perhaps you make a mock at it. You can be happy and contented with the world, though you have never got a sight of Jesus. You can be merry with your companions, though the blood of Jesus has never whispered peace to your soul. Ah! how plain that you are hastening on to the place where "there is no peace, saith my God to the wicked!"

II. *Christ's coming to the desolate believer is often sudden and wonderful.*—We saw in the parable, that it was when the bride was sitting lonely and desolate that she heard suddenly the voice of her lord. Love is quick in hearing; and she cries out, "the voice of my beloved!" Before, she thought the mountains all but

impassable; but now she can compare his swiftness to nothing but that of the gazelle or the young hart. Yea, whilst she speaks, he is at the wall, at the window, showing himself through the lattice. Just so is it oftentimes with the believer. Whilst he sits alone and desolate, the mountains of separation appear a vast and impassable barrier to the Saviour, and he fears he may never come again. The mountains of a believer's provocations are often very great. "That I should have sinned again, who have been washed in the blood of Jesus. It is little that other men should sin against him; they never knew him, never loved him as I have done. Surely I am the chief of sinners, and have sinned away my Saviour. The mountain of my provocations hath grown up to heaven, and he never can come over it any more." Thus it is that the believer writes bitter things against himself; and then it is that oftentimes he hears the voice of his beloved. Some text of the Word, or some word from a Christian friend, or some part of a sermon, again reveals Jesus in all his fulness, the Saviour of sinners, even the chief. Or it may be that he makes himself known to the disconsolate soul in the breaking of bread, and when he speaks the gentle words—"This is my body broken for you; this cup is the New Testament in my blood shed for the remission of the sins of many; drink ye all of it;" then he cannot but cry out, "The voice of my beloved; behold he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills."

Ah, my friends, do you know anything of this joyful surprise? If you do, why should you ever sit down despairingly, as if the Lord's hand were shortened at all that he cannot save, or as if his ear were grown heavy that he cannot hear? In the darkest hour say, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Still trust in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God." Come expectingly to the word. Do not come with that listless indifference as if nothing that a fellow-worm can say were worth your hearing. It is not the word of man, but the word of the living God. Come with large expectations, and then you will find the promise true, that he filleth the hungry with good things, though he sends the rich empty away.

III. *Christ's coming changes all things to the believer, and his love is more tender than ever.*—We saw in the parable that when the bride sat desolate and alone, all nature was steeped in sadness. Her garden possessed no charms to draw her forth, for winter reigned without and within. But when her Lord came so swiftly over the mountains, he brought the spring along with him. All nature is changed as he advances, and his invitation is, "For the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; arise, my love, my fair one, and come away." Just so it is with the believer when Christ is away; all is winter to the soul. But when he comes again over the mountains of provocation, he brings a gladsome

spring-time along with him. When that Sun of Righteousness arises afresh upon the soul, not only do his gladdening rays fall upon the believer's soul, but all nature rejoices in his joy. The mountains and hills burst forth before him into singing, and all the trees of the field clap their hands. It is like a change of season to the soul. It is like that sudden change from the pouring rains of a dreary winter to the full blushing spring, which is so peculiar to the climes of the Sun.

The world of nature is all changed. Instead of the thorn comes up the fir tree, and instead of the brier comes up the myrtle tree. Every tree and field possesses a new beauty to the happy soul. *The world of grace* is all changed. *The Bible* was all dry and meaningless before; now what a flood of light is poured over its pages! how full, how fresh, how rich in meaning, how its simplest phrases touch the heart! *The house of prayer* was all sad and dreary before, its services were dry and unsatisfactory; but now when the believer sees the Saviour, as he hath seen him heretofore within his holy place, his cry is—'How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts; a day in thy courts is better than a thousand." *The garden of the Lord* was all sad and cheerless before; now tenderness towards the unconverted springs up afresh, and love to the people of God burns in the bosom; then they that fear the Lord speak often one to another. The time of singing the praises of Jesus is come, and the turtle voice of love to Jesus is once more heard in the land; the lord's vine flourishes, and the pomegranate buds, and Christ's voice to the soul is, "Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away."

As the timorous dove pursued by the vulture, and well nigh made a prey, with fluttering anxious wing, hides itself deeper than ever in the clefts of the rock, and in the secret place of the precipice, so the backslidden believer whom Satan has desired to have that he might sift him as wheat, when he is restored once more to the all-gracious presence of his Lord, clings to him with fluttering, anxious faith, and hides himself deeper than ever in the wounds of his Saviour. Thus it was that the fallen Peter, when he had so grievously denied his Lord, yet when brought again within sight of the Saviour standing upon the shore, was the only one of the disciples who girt his fisher's coat unto him and cast himself into the sea to swim to Jesus; and just as that backslidden apostle, when again he had hidden himself in the clefts of the Rock of Ages, found that the love of Jesus was more tender towards him than ever, when he began that conversation which, more than all others in the Bible, combines the kindest of reproofs with the kindest of encouragements, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?" just so does every backslidden believer find, that when again he is hidden in the freshly opened wounds of his Lord, the fountain of his love begins to flow afresh, and the stream of kindness and affection is fuller and more overflowing than ever, for his word is, "Oh, my dove, that art in the

clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the precipice, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely."

Ah, my friends, do you know anything of this? Have you ever experienced such a coming of Jesus over the mountain of your provocations as made a change of season to your soul? and have you, backslidden believer, found, when you hid yourself again deeper than ever in the clefts of the rock, like Peter girding his fisher's coat unto him and casting himself into the sea, have you found his love tenderer than ever to your soul? Then should not this teach you quick repentance when you have fallen? Why keep one moment away from the Saviour? Are you waiting till you wipe away the stain from your garments? Alas! what will wipe it off, but the blood you are despising? Are you waiting till you make yourself worthier of the Saviour's favor? Alas! though you wait till all eternity, you can never make yourself worthier. Your sin and misery are your only plea. Come, and you will find with what tenderness he will heal your backslidings, and love you freely; and say, "Oh, my dove," &c.

IV. I observe the threefold disposition of fear, love, and hope, which this visit of the Saviour stirs up in the believer's bosom. These three form, as it were, a cord in the restored believer's bosom, and a threefold cord is not easily broken.

1. First of all, there is *fear*.—As the bride in the parable would not go forth to enjoy the society of her lord, without leaving the command behind to her maidens to take the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines, so does every believer know and feel that the time of closest communion is also the time of greatest danger. It was when the Saviour had been baptized, and the Holy Ghost, like a dove, had descended upon him, and a voice saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,"—it was then that he was driven into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil; and just so it is when the soul is receiving its highest privileges and comforts, that Satan and his ministers are nearest, the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines. 1. Spiritual pride is near. When the soul is hiding in the wounds of the Saviour, and receiving great tokens of his love, then the heart begins to say, Surely I am somebody, how far I am above the everyday run of believers. This is one of the little foxes that eats out the life of vital godliness. 2. There is making a Christ of your comforts, looking to them, and not to Christ, leaning upon them, and not upon your beloved. This is another of the little foxes. 3. There is the false notion that now you must surely be above sinning, and above the power of temptation, now you can resist all enemies. This is the pride that goes before a fall; another of the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines. Never forget, I beseech you, that fear is a sure mark of a believer Even when you feel that it is God that worketh in you,

still the word saith, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; even when your joy is overflowing, still remember it is written, "rejoice with *trembling*;" and again, "be not high-minded, but fear." Remember the caution of the bride, and say, "Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes."

2. But if cautious fear be a mark of a believer in such a season, still more is *appropriating love*. When Christ comes anew over mountains of provocation, and reveals himself to the soul free and full as ever, in another way than he doth unto the world, then the soul can say, "My beloved is mine, and I am his." I do not say that the believer can use these words at all seasons. In times of darkness and in times of sinfulness the reality of a believer's faith is to be measured rather by his sadness than by his confidence. But I do say, that, in seasons when Christ reveals himself afresh to the soul, shining out like the sun, from behind a cloud, with the beams of sovereign, unmerited love; then no other words will satisfy the true believer but these, "My beloved is mine, and I am his." The soul sees Jesus to be *so free a Saviour;* so anxious that all should come to him and have life; stretching out his hands all the day; having no pleasure in the death of the wicked; pleading with men, "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?" The soul sees Jesus to be *so fitting a Saviour;* the very covering which the soul requires. When first he hid himself in Jesus, he found him suitable to all his need; the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. But now he finds out a new fitness in the Saviour, as Peter did when he girt his fisher's coat unto him, and cast himself into the sea. He finds that he is a fitting Saviour for the backslidden believer; that his blood can blot out even the stains of him who, having eaten bread with him, has yet lifted up the heel against him. The soul sees Jesus to be *so full a Saviour;* giving to the sinner not only pardons, but overflowing, immeasurable pardons; giving not only righteousness, but a righteousness that is more than mortal, for it is all divine; giving not only the Spirit, but pouring water on him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. The soul sees all this in Jesus, and cannot but choose him and delight in him with a new and appropriating love, saying, "*My beloved is mine.*" And if any man ask, How darest thou, sinful worm, to call that divine Saviour thine? the answer is here, *For I am his:* He chose me from all eternity, else I never would have chosen him. He shed his blood for me, else I never would have shed a tear for him. He cried after me, else I never would have breathed after him. He sought after me, else I never would have sought after him. He hath loved me, therefore I love him. He hath chosen me, therefore I evermore choose him. "My beloved is mine, and I am his."

3. But, lastly, if love be a mark of the true believer at such a season, so also is *prayerful hope*. It was the saying of a true

believer in an hour of high and wonderful communion with Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here." My friend, you are no believer if Jesus hath never manifested himself to your soul in your secret devotions, in the house of prayer, or in the breaking of bread, in so sweet and overpowering a manner, that you have cried out, "Lord, it is good for me to be here." But though it be good and very pleasant, like sunlight to the eyes, yet the Lord sees that it is not wisest and best always to be there. Peter must come down again from the mount of glory, and fight the good fight of faith amid the shame and contumely of a cold and scornful world. And so must every child of God. We are not yet in heaven, the place of open vision and unbroken enjoyment. This is earth, the place of faith, and patience, and heavenward-pointing hope. One great reason why close and intimate enjoyment of the Saviour may not be constantly realized in the believer's breast is, to give room for hope, the third string that forms the threefold cord. Even the most enlightened believers are walking here in a darksome night, or twilight at most; and the visits of Jesus to the soul do but serve to make the surrounding darkness more visible. But the night is far spent, the day is at hand. The day of eternity is breaking in the east. The Sun of Righteousness is hasting to rise upon our world, and the shadows are preparing to flee away. Till then, the heart of every true believer, that knows the preciousness of close communion with the Saviour, breathes the earnest prayer, that Jesus would often come again, thus sweetly and suddenly, to lighten him in his darksome pilgrimage. Ah, yes, my friends, let every one, who loves the Lord Jesus in sincerity, join now in the blessed prayer of the bride—"Until the day break and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether."

SERMON XXV.

OUR DUTY TO ISRAEL.*

"To the Jew first."—Rom. i., 16

Most people are ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. *The wise* are ashamed of it, because it calls men to believe and not to argue; *the great* are ashamed of it, because it brings all into one body; *the rich* are ashamed of it, because it is to be had without money and without price; *the gay* are ashamed of it, because they fear

* Preached Nov. 17, 1839, after returning from the Mission to the Jews.

it will destroy all their mirth; and so the good news of the glorious Son of God having come into the world a surety for lost sinners, is despised, uncared for—men are ashamed of it. Who are not ashamed of it? A little company, those whose hearts the Spirit of God has touched. They were once like the world and of it, but He awakened them to see their sin and misery, and that Christ alone was a refuge, and now they cry, None but Christ, none but Christ! God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of Christ. He is precious to their heart; he lives there; he is often on their lips, he is praised in their family; they would fain proclaim him to all the world. They have felt in their own experience that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. Dear friends, is this your experience? Have you received the Gospel not in word only but in power? Has the power of God been put forth upon your soul along with the word? Then this word is yours; I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.

One peculiarity in this statement I wish you to notice.—He glories in the Gospel as the power of God unto salvation to the Jew first, from which I draw this Doctrine,—*That the Gospel should be preached first to the Jews.*

1. *Because judgment will begin with them.*—Rom. ii., 6–10. "Indignation and wrath, to the Jew first." It is an awful thought that the Jew will be the first to stand forward at the bar of God to be judged. When the great white throne is set, and He sits down upon it from whose face the heavens and earth flee away; when the dead, small and great, stand before God and the books are opened, and the dead are judged out of those things that are written in the books, is it not a striking thought that Israel, poor blinded Israel, will be the first to stand in judgment before God?

When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, when he shall 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; when the awful sentence comes forth from his holy lips, depart ye cursed; and when the guilty many shall move away from before him into everlasting punishment; is it not enough to make the most careless among you pause and consider, that the indignation and wrath shall first come upon the Jew; that their faces will gather a deeper paleness, their knees knock more against each other, and their hearts die within them more than others?

Why is this? Because they have had more light than any other people. God chose them out of the world to be his witnesses. Every prophet was sent first to them; every evangelist and apostle had a message for them. Messiah came to them. He said, "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." The word of God is still addressed to them. They still have it

pure and unadulterated in their hand; yet they have sinned against all this light, against all this love. "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!" Their cup of wrath is fuller than that of other men, their sea of wrath is deeper. On their very faces you may read in every clime that the curse of God is over them.

Is not this a reason, then, why the gospel should first be preached to the Jew? They are ready to perish, to perish more dreadfully than other men. The cloud of indignation and wrath that is even now gathering above the lost, will break first upon the head of the guilty, unhappy, unbelieving Israel. And have you none of the bowels of Christ in you, that you will not run first to them that are in so sad a case? In a hospital, the kind physician runs first to that bed where the sick man lies who is nearest to die. When a ship is sinking, and the gallant sailors have left the shore to save the sinking crew, do they not stretch out the arm of help first to those that are readiest to perish beneath the waves? And shall we not do the same for Israel? The billows of God's anger are ready to dash first over them; shall we not seek to bring them first to the rock that is higher than they? Their case is more desperate than that of other men; shall we not bring the good physician to them, who alone can bring health and cure? for the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

I cannot leave this head without speaking a word to those of you who are in a situation very similar to that of Israel; to you who have the word of God in your hands, and yet are unbelieving and unsaved. In many respects, Scotland may be called God's second Israel. No other land has its Sabbath as Scotland has; no other land has the Bible as Scotland has; no other land has the gospel preached free as the air we breathe, fresh as the stream from the everlasting hills. O then, think for a moment, you who sit under the shade of faithful ministers, and yet remain unconcerned and unconverted, and are not brought to sit under the shade of Christ, think how like your wrath will be to that of the unbelieving Jew. And think, again, of the marvellous grace of Christ, that the gospel is first to you. The more that your sins are like scarlet and like crimson, the more is the blood free to you that washes white as snow; for this is still his word to all his ministers, Begin at Jerusalem.

2. *It is like God to care first for the Jews.*—It is the chief glory and joy of a soul to be like God. You remember this was the glory of that condition in which Adam was created. "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." His understanding was without a cloud. He saw, in some measure, as God seeth. His will flowed in the same channel with God's will. His affec-

tions fastened on the same objects which God also loved. When man fell, we lost all this, and became children of the devil, and not children of God. But when a lost soul is brought to Christ, and receives the Holy Ghost, he puts off the old man, and puts on the new man, which *after God* is created in righteousness and true holiness. It is our true joy in this world to be like God. Too many rest in the joy of being forgiven, but our truest joy is to *be like him*. O rest not, beloved, till you are renewed after His image, till you partake of the Divine nature. Long for the day when Christ shall appear, and we shall be fully *like him*, for we shall see him as he is.

Now, what I wish to insist upon at present is, that we should be like God, even in those things which are peculiar. We should be like him in understanding, in will, in holiness, and also in his *peculiar affections*. "Love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love." But the whole Bible shows that God has a peculiar affection for Israel. You remember when the Jews were in Egypt, sorely oppressed by their taskmasters, God heard their cry, and appeared to Moses—"I have seen, I have seen, the affliction of my people, and I have heard their cry, for I know their sorrows."

And, again, when God brought them through the wilderness, Moses tells them why he did it; Deut. vii., 7. "The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you because ye were more in number than any people, for ye were the fewest of all people, but because the Lord loved you." Strange, sovereign, most peculiar love. He loved them because he loved them. Should we not be like God in this peculiar attachment?

But you say God has sent them into captivity. Now, it is true God hath scattered them into every land. "The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers!"—Lam. iv., 2. But what says God of this? "I have left mine house, I have forsaken mine heritage, I have given *the dearly beloved of my soul* into the hand of her enemies."—Jer. xii., 7. It is true that Israel is given, for a little moment, into the hand of her enemies, but it is as true that they are still the dearly beloved of his soul. Should we not give them the same place in our heart which God gives them in his heart? Shall we be ashamed to cherish the same affection which our heavenly Father cherishes? Shall we be ashamed to be unlike the world, and like God in this peculiar love for captive Israel?

But you say God has cast them off. Hath God cast away his people which he foreknew? God forbid! The whole Bible contradicts such an idea. Jer. xxxi., 20, "Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still. Therefore my bowels are troubled for him: I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord." "I will plant

them again in their own land assuredly, with my whole heart and with my whole soul." "Zion saith, the Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee."—Isaiah xlix., 14. "And so all Israel shall be saved, as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." Now the simple question for each of you is, and for our beloved Church, Should we not share with God in his peculiar affection for Israel? If we are filled with the Spirit of God, should we not love as he loves? Should we not grave Israel upon the palms of our hands, and resolve that through our mercy they also may obtain mercy.

3. *Because there is peculiar access to the Jews.*—In almost all the countries we have visited this fact is quite remarkable; indeed it seems in many places as if the only door left open to the Christian missionary is the door of preaching to the Jews.

We spent some time in Tuscany, the freest state in the whole of Italy. There you dare not preach the Gospel to the Roman Catholic population. The moment you give a tract or a Bible, it is carried to the priest, and by the priest to the Government, and immediate banishment is the certain result. But the door is open to the Jews. No man cares for their souls; and therefore you may carry the Gospel to them freely.

The same is the case in Egypt and Palestine.—You dare not preach the Gospel to the deluded followers of Mahomet; but you may stand in the open market place and preach the Gospel to the Jews, no man forbidding you. We visited every town in the Holy Land where Jews are found. In Jerusalem and in Hebron we spoke to them all the words of this life. In Sychar we reasoned with them in the synagogue, and in the open bazaar. In Chaifa, at the foot of Carmel, we met with them in the synagogue. In Sidon also we discoursed freely to them of Jesus. In Tyre we first visited them in the synagogue and at the house of the Rabbi, and then they returned our visit; for when we had lain down in the khan for the heat of mid-day, they came to us in crowds. The Hebrew Bible was produced, and passage after passage explained, none making us afraid. In Saphet, and Tiberias, and Acre, we had the like freedom. There is indeed perfect liberty in the Holy Land to carry the Gospel to the Jew.

In Constantinople, if you were to preach to the Turks, as some have tried, banishment is the consequence; but to the Jew you may carry the message. *In Wallachia and Moldavia* the smallest attempt to convert a Greek would draw down the instant vengeance of the holy Synod and of the Government. But in every town we went freely to the Jews—in Bucarest, in Foxany, in Jassy, and in many a remote Wallachian hamlet, we spoke without hindrance the message to Israel. The door is wide open.

In Austria, where no missionary of any kind is allowed, still we found the Jews willing to hear. In their synagogues we always found a sanctuary open to us, and often when they knew they could have exposed us, they concealed that we had been there.

In Prussian Poland, the door is wide open to nearly 100,000 Jews. You dare not preach to the poor Rationalist Protestants. Even in Protestant Prussia this would not be allowed; but you may preach the Gospel to the Jews. By the law of the land every church is open to an ordained minister; and one of the missionaries assured me that he often preached to 400 or 500 Jews and Jewesses at a time. Schools for Jewish children are also allowed. We visited three of them, and heard the children taught the way of salvation by a Redeemer. Twelve years ago the Jews would not have come near a church.

If these things be true, and I appeal to all of you who know these countries if it is not; if the door in one direction is shut, and the door to Israel is so widely open; O do you not think that God is saying by his Providence as well as by his Word, Go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel? Do you think that our Church, knowing these things, will be guiltless if we do not obey the call? for the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

4. *Because they will give life to the dead world.*—I have often thought that a reflective traveller, passing through the countries of this world, and observing the race of Israel in every land, might be led to guess, merely from the light of his natural reason, that that singular people are preserved for some great purpose in the world. There is a singular fitness in the Jew to be the missionary of the world. They have not that peculiar attachment to home and country which we have. They feel that they are outcasts in every land. They are also inured to every clime; they are to be found amid the snows of Russia and beneath the burning sun of Hindostan. They are also in some measure acquainted with all the languages of the world, and yet have one common language—the holy tongue—in which to communicate with one another. All these things must, I should think, suggest themselves to every intelligent traveller as he passes through other lands. *But what says the Word of God?*

Zechariah viii., 13.—"It shall come to pass, *that* as ye were a curse among the heathen, O house of Judah and house of Israel; so will I save you, and he shall be a blessing." To this day they are a curse among the nations, by their unbelief; by their covetousness; but the time is coming when they shall be as great a blessing as they have been a curse.

Micah v., 7.—"And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as a dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men."

Just as we have found, among the parched hills of Judah, that the evening dew, coming silently down, gave life to every plant, making the grass to spring, and the flowers to put forth their sweetest fragrance, so shall converted Israel be when they come as dew upon a dead dry world.

Zech. viii., 23.—"In those days *it shall come to pass*, that ten men shall take hold, out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you; for we have heard *that* God *is* with you." This never has been fulfilled; but as the Word of God is true, this is true. Perhaps some one may say. If the Jews are to be the great missionaries of the world, let us send missions to them only. We have got a new light—let us call back our missionaries from India. They are wasting their precious lives there in doing what the Jews are to accomplish. I grieve to think that any lover of Israel should so far pervert the truth, as to argue in this way. The Bible does not say that we are to preach *only* to the Jew, but to the Jew *first*. "Go and preach the gospel to *all* nations," said the Saviour. Let us obey his Word like little children. The Lord speed our beloved missionaries in that burning clime. The Lord give them good success, and never let one withering doubt cross their pure minds as to their glorious field of labor. All that we plead for is, that, in sending our missionaries to the heathen, we may not forget to begin at Jerusalem. If Paul be sent to the Gentiles, let Peter be sent to the twelve tribes that are scattered abroad; and let not a by-corner in your hearts be given to this cause—let it not be an appendix to the other doings of our Church, but rather let there be written on the very front of your hearts, and on the banner of our beloved Church, "To the Jew first," and "Beginning at Jerusalem."

Lastly, Because there is a great reward. Blessed is he that blesseth thee; cursed is he that curseth thee. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love her. We have felt this in our own souls. In going from country to country, we felt that there was one before us preparing our way. Though we have had perils in the waters and perils in the wilderness, perils from sickness, and perils from the heathen, still from all the Lord has delivered us; and if it shall please God to restore our revered companions in this mission, in peace and safety to their anxious families,* we shall then have good reason to say, that in keeping his commandment there is great reward.

But your souls shall be enriched also, and our Church, too, if this cause find its right place in your affections. It was well said by one who has a deep place in your affections, and who is now on his way to India, that our Church must not only be evangelical, but evangelistic also, if she would expect the blessing of God. She

* Drs. Black and Keith were at this time still detained by sickness abroad.

must not only have the light, but dispense it also, if she is to be continued as a steward of God. May I not take the liberty of adding to this striking declaration, that we must not only be evangelistic, but evangelistic *as God would have us to be*—not only dispense the light on every hand, but dispense it first to the Jew.

Then shall God revive his work in the midst of the years. Our whole land shall be refreshed as Kilsyth has been. The cobwebs of controversy shall be swept out of our sanctuaries, the jarrings and jealousies of our Church be turned into the harmony of praise, and our own souls become like a well-watered garden.

SERMON XXVI.

"BLESSED ARE THE DEAD."*

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth. Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors: and their works do follow them."—Rev. xiv, 13

THERE are two remarkable things in the manner in which these words are given to us.

I. *They are the words of the Father echoed back by the Spirit.*—"I heard a voice from heaven." "Yea, saith the Spirit." John's eye had been riveted upon the wondrous sight mentioned in verse 1. A Lamb stood on Mount Zion, and one hundred and forty-four thousand redeemed ones following him whithersoever he goeth, when suddenly a still small voice broke upon his ear, saying, "Write, blessed are the dead;" and then the Holy Spirit breathed Amen, "Yea, saith the Spirit."

It is written in the law that the testimony of two witnesses is true. Now here are two witnesses—the Father of all and the Holy Spirit the Comforter, both testifying, that it is a happy thing to die in the Lord. Is there any of you, God's children, who tremble at the thought of dying? Does death appear a monster with a dreadful dart, ready to destroy you? Here are two sweet and blessed witnesses who declare that death has lost its sting—that the grave has lost its victory. Listen, and the frown will disappear from the brow of death: the valley will be filled with light; the Father and the Holy Spirit both unite in saying, "Blessed are the dead."

II. "*Write.*"—Whatever is written down is more durable, and less liable to be corrupted, than that which is only spoken from

* Preached in the summer of 1840

mouth to mouth. For this reason God gave the Israelites the Ten Commandments, written with his own finger on two tables of stone. For the same reason he commanded them, on the day they passed over Jordan, to set up great stones, and plaster them with plaster, and *write* upon them all the words of that law. For the same reason, God commanded his servants, the prophets, to *write* their prophecies, and the apostles to *write* their gospels and epistles, so that we have a permanent Bible instead of floating tradition. For this reason, *did Job wish* his words to be written. "O that my words were written! O that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen, and with lead in the rock for ever! I know that my Redeemer liveth." Job. xix., 25. It was one of his precious, ever memorable sayings, a saying to comfort the heart of a drooping believer in the darkest hour—"*I know that my Redeemer liveth.*" For the same reason did the voice from heaven say, "*write*,"—do not hear it only but *write it*—print it in a book, grave it with an iron pen, with lead in the rock for ever.

"Blessed are the dead." Learn the value of this saying. It is a golden saying, there is gold in every syllable of it. It is sweeter than honey and the honeycomb; more precious than gold, yea, much fine gold. It is precious in the eyes of God. *Write it* deep in your hearts; it will solemnize your life, and will keep you from being led away by its vain show. It will make the syren songs of this world inconvenient, and out of tune; it will sweetly soothe you in the hour of adversity; it will rob death of its sting, and the grave of its victory. *Write, write* deep on your heart, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."

Now, consider the *words* themselves.

1. *Blessed are the dead.*"—*The world* say, "Blessed are the living;" but God says, "Blessed are the dead." The world judge of things by sense, as they outwardly appear to men; God judges of things by what they really are in themselves; he looks at things in their real color and magnitude. The world say, "Better is a living dog than a dead lion." The world look upon some of their families, coming out like a fresh blooming flower in the morning, their cheeks covered with the bloom of health, their step bounding with the elasticity of youth, riches and luxuries at their command, long, bright summer days before them. The world say, "There is a happy soul." God takes us into the darkened room where some child of God lately dwelt. He points to the pale face where death sits enthroned, the cheek wasted by long disease, the eye glazed in death, the stiff hands clasped over the bosom, the friends standing weeping around, and he whispers in our ears, "Blessed are the dead." Ah, dear friends, think a moment! whether does God or you know best? Who will be found to be in the right at last? Alas, what a vain show you are walking in! Disquieted in vain. "Man that is in honor and understandeth not, is like the

beasts that perish." Even God's children sometimes say, "Blessed are the living." It is a happy thing to live in the favor of God, to have peace with God, to frequent the throne of grace, to burn the perpetual incense of praise, to meditate on his word, to hear the preached gospel, to serve God; even to wrestle, and run, and fight in his service is sweet. Still God says, "*Blessed are the dead.*" If it be happy to have his smile *here*, how much happier to have it without a cloud *yonder!* If it be sweet to be the growing corn of the Lord *here*, how much better to be gathered into his barn! If it be sweet to have an anchor within the veil, how much better *ourselves* to be *there*, where no gloom can come! "In thy presence is *fulness* of joy; at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore." Even *Jesus* felt this—God attests it. "*Blessed are the dead.*"

1. *Not all the dead*, but those that "*die in the Lord.*" It is truly amazing the multitudes that die. "Thou carriest them away as with a flood." Seventy thousand die every day, about fifty every minute, nearly one every second, passing over the verge. Life is like a stream made up of human beings, pouring on, and rushing over the brink into eternity. Are all these blessed? Ah, no. "*Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.*" Of all that vast multitude continually pouring into the eternal world, a little company alone have savingly believed on Jesus. "Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and *few* there be that find it." It is not *all* the dead who are blessed. There is no blessing on the Christless dead; they rush into an *undone* eternity, unpardoned, unholy. You may put their body in a splendid coffin; you may print their name in silver on the lid; you may bring the well-attired company of mourners to the funeral in suits of solemn black; you may lay the coffin slowly in the grave; you may spread the greenest sod above it; you may train the sweetest flowers to grow over it; you may cut a white stone, and grave a gentle epitaph to their memory; still it is but the funeral of a damned soul. You cannot write *blessed* where God hath written "*cursed.*" "He that believeth shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned."

Consider what is implied in the words, "in the Lord."

1. *That they were joined to the Lord.*—Union to the Lord has a beginning. Every one that is blessed in dying has been converted. You may dislike the Word, but that is the truth. They were awakened; began to weep, pray, weep as they went to seek the Lord their God. They saw themselves lost, undone, helpless; that they could not be just with a holy God. They became babes. The Lord Jesus drew near, and revealed himself. "I am the bread of Life." "Him that cometh unto me I will in no-wise cast out." They believed and were happy; rejoiced in the Lord Jesus; counted everything but loss for Christ. They gave

themselves to the Lord. This was the beginning of their being in Christ.

Dear friends, have you had this beginning? Have you undergone conversion, the new birth, grafting into Christ? Call it by any name you will, have you the thing? Has this union to Christ taken place in your history? Some say, I do not know. If at any time of your life you had been saved from drowning, if you were actually drowned and brought to life again, you would remember it to your dying hour. Much more if you had been brought to Christ. If you had been born blind, and by some remarkable operation your eyes were opened when you were full grown, would you ever forget it? So if you have been truly brought into Christ, you may easily remember it. If not, you will die in your sins. Whither Christ has gone, thither you cannot come. "Except ye repent and be converted, ye shall all likewise perish."

2. *Perseverance is implied.—Not all* that seem to be branches are branches of the true vine. Many branches fall off the trees when the high winds begin to blow; all that are rotten branches. So in times of temptation, or trial, or persecution, many false professors drop away. Many that seemed to be believers went back, and walked no more with Jesus. They followed Jesus; they prayed with him; they praised him, but they went back, and walked no more with him. So is it still. Many among us doubtless seem to be converted, they begin well and promise fair, who will fall off when winter comes. Some have fallen off, I fear, already; some more may be expected to follow. These will not be blessed in dying. O of all death beds, may I be kept from beholding the death-bed of the false professor! I have seen it before now, and I trust I may never see it again. They are not blessed after death. The rotten branches will burn more fiercely in the flames. O think what torment it will be to think that you spent your life in pretending to be a Christian, and lost your opportunity of becoming one indeed! Your hell will be all the deeper, blacker, hotter, that you knew so much of Christ, and were so near him, and found him not. Happy are they who endure to the end, who are not moved away from their hope of the gospel, who, when others go away, say, Lord, to whom can we go? In prosperity, they follow the Lord fully; in adversity, they cleave to him closer still, as trees strike their roots deeper in storms. Is this your case? endure it to the end. Be not moved away from the hope of the gospel; Coloss. i., 23. We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end; Heb. iii., 15. Even in the dark valley you will cling to him still. Come to him as ye came at first, a guilty creature, clinging to the Lord our Righteousness. Thou wast made my sin. This is to die in the Lord, and this is to be blessed.

III. *Reasons why they are blessed.*

1. Because of the time, "From henceforth." The time of the persecutions of Popery was coming on. He was to wear out the saints of the Most High; he was to overcome and slay the followers of the Lamb. Happy are they that are taken from the evil to come. The righteous perish and no man layeth it to heart. Merciful men are taken away, none considering that he is taken away from the evil to come. This is one reason why it is better to be with Christ. Persecutions and troubles are not easy to flesh and blood. If in our day we be called to them, we must bear them boldly, knowing that a good reward is provided for those that overcome; see Rev. ii., 3. "And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast labored and hast not fainted." But if it be the will of God to call us away before the day of trial come, we must say, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth." There will be no persecutions there. All are friends to Jesus there, every one contending who shall cast their crowns lowest at his feet, who shall exalt him highest in their praise. No discord there. None to rebuke our song there.

2. *They rest from their labors.*—That which makes everything laborious here is sin; the opposition of Satan and the world, and the drag of our old nature. Some believers have a constant struggle with Satan. He is standing at their right hand to resist them; he is constantly distracting them in prayer, hurling fiery darts at their soul, tempting to the most horrid sin. Their whole life is labor. But when we die in the Lord, we shall rest from this labor. Satan's work will be clean done. The accuser of the brethren will no more annoy. No lion shall be there, neither shall any ravenous beast go up thereon, but the redeemed shall walk there. But above all, the wicked heart, the old man, the body of sin, makes this life a dreadful labor. When we wake in the morning, it lies like a weight upon us. When we would run in the way of God's commandments, it drags us back. When we would fly, it weighs us down. When we would pray, it fills our mouth with other things. "O wretched man that I am." But to depart and be with Christ, is to be free from this. We shall drop this body of sin altogether. No more any flesh, all spirit, all new man; no more any weight or drag; we shall rest from our labors. Oh, it is this makes death in the Lord blessed. We shall not rest from all work; we shall be as the angels of God; we shall serve him day and night in his temple. We shall not rest from our work, but from our labors. There will be no toil, no pain, in our work. We shall rest in our work. Oh, let this make you willing to depart, and make death look pleasant, and heaven a home. "We shall rest from our labors." It is the world of holy love, where we shall give free, full, unfettered, unwearied expression to our love for ever."

3. *Works follow.*—Our good works done in the name of Jesus

shall then be rewarded. 1*st*, Observe, they shall not go before the soul. It is not on account of them we shall be accepted. We must be accepted *first* altogether on account of *him* in whom we stand. 2*d*, Our evil works shall be forgotten, buried in the depths of the sea, forgotten, not more mentioned. 3*d*, All that we have done out of love to Jesus shall then be rewarded. We may forget them, and say to Jesus, "When saw we thee sick or in prison, and came unto thee?" But he will not forget them: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." A cup of cold water shall not go unrewarded.

Look to the recompense of reward, dear friends, and it will take the sting from death.

IV. *What followed.*—The Lord Jesus "put in his sickle and reaped." See verses 14, 15.

1. Learn that the Lord Jesus gathers his sheaves before a storm, just as farmers do; so when you see him gathering ripe saints, be sure that a storm is near.

2. Learn that Jesus gathers his saints in love. When Jesus gathers his own, he does it in love. Do not mourn for them as those who have no hope. Jesus has gathered them into his bosom. They shall shine as the sun.

ADDRESS

ON THE CLOSE OF A COMMUNION SABBATH.

"What have I to do any more with idols?"—Hosea xiv., 8.

EVERY one who has been truly united to Christ, and has this day confessed him before men, should now take up these words, and solemnly, in the presence of God, declare, "What have I to do any more with idols?" Two reasons are given.

I. Verse 4.—*God loves you freely.*—If you are this day come to Jesus, God loves you freely. If you believe on him that justifieth the ungodly, your faith is counted for righteousness. As long as you came to God in yourself, you were infinitely vile, loathsome, condemned; mountains of iniquity covered your soul; but blessed, blessed, blessed be the Holy Spirit who has led you to Jesus. You have come to God's righteous servant, who by his knowledge justifies many, because he bears their iniquities. Your sins are covered, God sees no iniquity in you; God loves you freely, his anger is turned away from you. What have you to do then any more with idols? Is not the love of God enough for

thee? The loving and much loved wife is satisfied with the love of her husband; his smile is her joy, she cares little for any other. So, if you have come to Christ, thy Maker is thine husband; his free love to you is all you need, and all you can care for; there is no cloud between you and God; there is no veil between you and the Father; you have access to him who is the fountain of happiness, of peace, of holiness; what have you to do any more with idols? Oh! if your heart swims in the rays of God's love, like a little mote swimming in the sunbeam, you will have no room in your heart for idols.

II. *The Spirit, like dew, descends on your souls.*—Verse 5, "I will be like the dew." If you are this day united to Jesus, the Spirit will come like dew upon your soul. The Spirit is given to them that obey Jesus, "I will pray the Father." When all nature is at rest, not a leaf moving, then at evening the dew comes down, no eye to see the pearly drops descending, no ear to hear them falling on the verdant grass, so does the Spirit come to you who believe. When the heart is at rest in Jesus, unseen, unheard by the world, the Spirit comes, and softly fills the believing soul, quickening all, renewing all within. "If I go away I will send him unto you." Dear little ones, whom God hath chosen out of this world, you are like Gideon's fleece, the Lord will fill you with dew when all around is dry. You are his vineyard of red wine; he says, I will water it every moment, silently, unfelt, unseen, but *surely*. But, ah! that Spirit is a holy Spirit. "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God." He cannot bear an idol in his temple. When the ark of God was carried into the temple of Dagon, the idol fell flat before it; much more when the Holy Spirit comes into the heart will he cast out the idols.

"When Christ came into the temple, he found those that sold oxen, and sheep, and doves, and the changers of money, sitting; and when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple." John ii., 15. So when the Holy Spirit comes into any heart, he drives out the buyers and sellers. If you have received the Spirit, you will be crying now in your heart, Lord, take these things hence; drive them out of my heart. What have I to do any more with idols? Some of the idols to be cast away are,

1. *Self-righteousness.*—This is the largest idol of the human heart, the idol which man loves most and God hates most. Dearly beloved, you will always be going back to this idol. You are always trying to be something in yourself, to gain God's favor by thinking little of your sin, or by looking to your repentance, tears, prayers; or by looking to your religious exercises, your frames, &c.; or by looking to your graces, the Spirit's work in your heart. Beware of false Christs. Study sanctification to the utmost, but make not a Christ of it. God hates this idol more than all others

because it comes in the place of Christ; it sits on Christ's throne. Just as the worship of the Virgin Mary is the worst of all kinds of idolatry, because it puts her in the place of Christ, so self-righteousness is the idol God hates most, for it sits on the throne of Christ. Dash it down, dear friends; let it never appear again. It is like Manasseh's carved image in the holiest of all. When Manasseh came home an altered man to Jerusalem, would not his first visit be to the holiest of all? With eager hand he would draw the veil aside; and when he found the carved image, he would dash it down from the throne of God. Go and do likewise. If you feel God's love freely by the righteousness without works, then why would you go back to this grim idol? What have I to do any more with idols?

2. *Darling Sins.*—Every man has his darling sins. Long they kept you from the Lord Jesus. You have this day declared that you were willing to leave them all for Christ. Go home, then, and perform your vows. After Hezekiah's passover, when they had enjoyed much of the love and spirit of God, "All Israel that were present went home, and broke the images in pieces, and cut down the groves, until they had utterly destroyed them all." You might have seen them entering the shady groves and dashing down the carved images. Go you and do likewise. Dash down family idols, unholy practices that have spread through your family. Dash down secret idols in your own heart. Leave not one. Remember, one Achan in the camp troubled Israel, and they were smitten before their enemies. So, one idol left in your heart may trouble you. Let Achan be slain if you would go on your way rejoicing. What have I to do any more with idols? "If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off."

3. *Unlawful attachments.*—There is not a more fruitful source of sin and misery than unlawful attachments. How much of the poetry and music of our country are given over to the worship of the idols of a foolish heart! How many are given over to worship a piece of clay that will soon be eaten of worms! O my friends, have you felt the love of God? Do you feel the sweet, full beams of his grace shining down upon your soul? Have you received the dew of his Spirit? How can you, then, any more love a creature that is void of the grace of God? What have you to do any more with idols? Dear young persons, abhor the idea of marriage with the unconverted. Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers. Marry only in the Lord. Remember, if it be otherwise, it is a forbidden marriage. There may be none on earth so kind or faithful as to forbid the banns. Earthly friends may be kind and smiling; the marriage circle may be gay and lovely: but God forbids the banns. But may there not be a lawful attachment? I believe there may; but take heed it be not an idol. I believe they are happiest who are living only for eternity, who have no object in this world to divert their hearts from Christ.

"The time is short; it remaineth that they who have wives be as though they had none." "What have I to do any more with idols?"

4. *Ministers.*—You have good reason to love ministers, and to esteem them highly for their works' sake. They love you; they watch for your souls as they that must give an account; they bear you on their hearts; they travail in birth till Christ be formed in you; they spend and are spent for you; they often endure amazing temptations, agonies, wrestlings, for your sake.

Some have been your spiritual fathers. This is a holy tie that will never be broken. You have good reason to love your spiritual father. You may have ten thousand instructors in Christ, &c.; but ah! make not an idol of them. The people that would have worshipped Paul, were the very people that stoned him, and left him for dead. O I wish that this day may bring you so near to Christ, and so much under the love of God and the dew of Israel, that you shall no more glory in man! What have I to do any more with idols?

5. *Earthly pleasures.*—This is a smiling, dazzling idol, that has ten thousand worshippers, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. What have you to do any more with this idol? Sometimes it is a gross idol. The theatre is one of its temples, there it sits enthroned. The tavern is another, where its reeling, staggering votaries sing its praise. What have you to do with these? Have you the love of God in your soul, the Spirit of God in you? How dare you cross the threshold of a theatre or a tavern any more? What! the Spirit of God amid the wanton songs of a theatre, or the boisterous merriment of a tavern! Shame on such practical blasphemy! No; leave them, dear friends, to be cages of devils and of every unclean and hateful bird. You must never cross their threshold any more. What shall I say of games, cards, dice, dancing? I will only say this, that if you love them you have never tasted the joys of the new creature. If you feel the love of God and the Spirit, you will not lightly sin these joys away amid the vain anxieties of cards, or the rattling of senseless dice. What shall I say of simpering tea-parties, the pleasures of religious gossipping, and useless calls, without meaning, sincerity, or end? I will only say, they are the happiest of God's children who have neither time nor heart for these things. I believe there cannot be much of the Spirit where there is much of these. What shall I say of dress? A young believer, full of faith and joy, was offered a present of flowers for her hair. She would not take them. She was pressed to accept them; still she refused. Why will you not? Ah, she said, how can I wear roses on my brow, when Christ wore thorns on his? The joy of being in Christ is so sweet, that it makes all other joys insipid, dull, lifeless. In his right hand are riches and honors; in his left are length of days.

His ways are ways of pleasantness. What, then, have I to do any more with idols?

6. *Money.*—Dear souls, if you have felt the love of God, the dew, you must dash down this idol. You must not love money. You must be more open-hearted, more open-handed. *To the poor* —"He that gives to the poor lends to the Lord." "Inasmuch as ye did it to the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me." You must build more churches. God be praised for what has been done; but you must do far more. I have as many in this parish who go nowhere as would fill another church. You must give more to missions, to send the knowledge of Jesus to the Jews, and to the Gentile world. O how can you grasp your money in hand so greedily, while there are hundreds of millions perishing? You that give tens must give your hundreds. You that are poor must do what you can. Remember Mary, and the widow's mite. Let us resolve to give the tenth of all we have to God. God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that ye always having all-sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work.

7. *Fear of man.*—Grim idol, bloody mouthed; many souls he has devoured and trampled down into hell! His eyes are full of hatred to Christ's disciples. Scoffs and jeers lurk in his eye. The laugh of the scorner growls in his throat. Cast down this idol. This keeps some of you from secret prayer, from worshipping God in your family, from going to lay your case before ministers, from openly confessing Christ. You that have felt God's love and Spirit, dash this idol to pieces. Who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die? Fear not, thou worm Jacob. What have I to do any more with idols?

Dearly-beloved and longed-for, my heart's desire for you is, to see you a holy people. How much longer my ministry may be continued among you God only knows; but if God give me health and grace among you, I here willingly devote my all to him. No moment, no pleasure, no ease, no wealth, do I wish for myself. I feel that he has bought me, and I am his property. O come, give yourselves to the Lord with me. Bind yourselves to the horns of God's altar. Time past is enough to have been the devil's, the world's, our own. Now, let us be Christ's alone. Are you willing? Lord, bear witness; seal it in heaven; write it in thy book. Bear witness, angels, devils, scowling world, bear witness, sun and moon, bear witness, stones and timber, bear witness, Jesus, Lamb of God! We are thine now, and thine for ever. What have we to do any more with idols?

25*th Oct.*, 1840.

ADDRESS.

AFTER THE COMMUNION.

"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."—Jude 20–21.

I. *Those that have been built on Christ have need to build themselves still more on Christ.*—If you come rightly to this table, you have been hewn out of the rock, and carried, and laid on the sure foundation. Others set at naught that stone, but to you it is the only name under heaven. You have been built on Christ alone for righteousness. Think not all is done, forget what is behind. You have begun salvation, work out your salvation.

1. Build yourselves more simply on Christ, on Christ alone, his blood and righteousness. Some are like a stone resting half on the foundation and half on the sand. Some take half their peace from Christ's finished work, and half from the Spirit's work within them. Now the whole of our justification must be from Christ alone. Other foundation can no man lay.

2. Build yourselves more surely on Christ. Some stones do not lie smoothly on the foundation, they are apt to totter. Seek, brethren, to get a sure founding on the Lord Jesus Christ. "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel." It is easy to sail with a gentle sea and the wind in the west, but the gale tries whether the ship be rightly balanced. It is easy to believe in a sunny day like this, when broken bread and poured out wine have been in your hands; but stop till you are in the wilderness, or afar at sea alone, stop till fresh guilt lies on the conscience, stop till a strong temptation blows; O then to rely on Christ alone for righteousness! Under a sight of sin, Satan grappling with the soul; O then to look up into the face of Christ and say, Thou art my robe, my righteousness, my shield, thy blood, thy obedience is enough for me! this is to believe.

II. *Pray in the Holy Ghost.*—When a believer prays he is not alone, there are three with him, the Father seeing in secret, his ear open; the Son blotting out sin, and offering up the prayer; the Holy Ghost quickening and giving desires. There can be no true prayer without these three. Some people pray like a parrot, repeating words when the heart is far from God. Some pray without the Father. They do not feel. They are speaking to the back of their chair, or to the world, or to the empty air. Some pray without the Son. They come in their own name; in their own righteousness. That is the sacrifice of fools. Some pray without the Holy Ghost. These are not filled with divine breathings. Dear friends, if you would live, you must pray; and if you

would pray with acceptance, you must pray to the Father in the name of Jesus, and by his Spirit quickening.

1. Get the Holy Ghost.—Many seem not to know if there be a Holy Spirit. Jesus being raised by the Father, has obtained the Spirit. Ask him.

2. Let him breathe within you. Do not vex him.

3. Pray without ceasing.—Whatever you need, ask him immediately. Have set times of approaching God solemnly. Let nothing interfere with these times. Take your best time.

III. *Keep yourselves in the love of God.*—It is when you are built on Christ, and praying in the Holy Ghost, that you keep yourselves in the love of God. There is one glorious Being whom God loves infinitely. "I am not alone, for the Father is with me." He loved him from eternity, for the pure, spotless image of himself. He loved him for laying down his life. He is well pleased for his righteousness' sake. The eye of the all-perfect One rests with perfect complacency on him. Have you this day come into Christ—this day come under his shield—are this day found in him? If you are in the love of God, keep yourselves there.

1. Care not for the love of the world.—If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Its best smiles are little worth. The world is a dying thing—a crucified man to them that are in Christ.

2. Prize the love of God.—Oh it is sweet to be in the garden of spices—to have God for your refuge—God rejoicing over you. 1*st*, This takes all the sting away from affliction. God is love to me. The hand that wounds is the gentlest and most loving. 2*d*, This takes their sting from the world's reproaches. 3*d*, This makes death sweet. It is a leap into the arms of infinite love, though to some a leap into a dark eternity. O keep yourselves in the love of God.

IV. *Looking for mercy.*—You will be incomplete Christians if you do not look for the coming again of the Lord Jesus. If the Table has been sweet to-day, what will it be when Jesus comes again to receive us to himself? If his love-letters and love-tokens, sent from a far country, be so sweet, what will the Bridegroom himself be when he comes and takes us by the hand to present us to himself, and acknowledge us before an assembled world?

1. You will get an open acquittal on that day.—Now he gives us sweet acquittal at the bar of conscience: he says, "Peace be unto you." But when it is open, we shall wear the blood-washed robe. It will need to be mercy even at that day.

2. Perfect deliverance from sin.—Now he gives us the victory by faith. He gives us to feel the thorn, and to look up for grace sufficient. Then he will take the thorn away. We shall be like Jesus in soul and body. O be casting sweet looks of love towards

that day. When a child is expecting an elder brother's return, when he is to bring some gift, how often he runs to the window and watches for his coming. Your elder brother is coming with a sweet gift. O cast your eye often towards the clouds, to see if they will break and let his beautiful feet through! Shorten the time by anticipation.

3. Jesus no more dishonored.—Honor to the Lamb is a sweet mercy to a believing soul. A high day like this, when Jesus gets many a crown cast at his feet, is sweet to a believing soul. How much more the day when we shall wear his full crown, and when the slain lamb shall be fully praised; and when he shall come to be glorified, who once came to be spit upon. That truly shall be mercy to our poor soul. Our cup shall run over.

3d January, 1841.

SERMON XXVII.

TURN YOU AT MY REPROOF.

"Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets: she crieth in the chief places of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words, saying, How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorners, delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you."—Prov. i., 20-23.

That none other than our Lord Jesus Christ is intended to be painted to us under the majestic figure of Wisdom in the Book of Proverbs, is evident from the passage before us. Of whom but the Saviour could it be said so truly that he stood with outstretched hands in the streets, in the markets, and in the openings of the gates, crying after the simple ones—the publicans and sinners; and the scorners—the Scribes and Pharisees; and those haters of knowledge—the Jewish priesthood? And again, of whom but the Saviour could it be said, with any truth at all, that he offered to "*pour out his Spirit upon the returning sinner, and to make known his words unto him?*" Christ alone "*hath ascended up on high*, leading captivity captive; and hath received gifts for men, yea, even for the rebellious, that the Lord God *might dwell among them.*"

Before pressing home upon you, brethren, this earnest and soul-piercing call of the Saviour, there are two explanations which I anxiously desire you to bear in mind—*First*, That the call of the Saviour, in the words before us, and the promise with which it is accompanied, are addressed *to sinners*, and not to saints. Nay more, they are not addressed to all sinners promiscuously; they

are not addressed to those who have been awakened to know their sin and danger, and are crying out, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" but they are addressed to the simple ones, who are loving their simplicity—to the scorners, who delight in their scorning—to the fools, that hate knowledge. The Bible is full of most precious promises to Christ's "hidden ones," his peculiar people, his body, his bride; and there are many pressing calls and most winning encouragements to those in whom God hath begun the good work by convincing them of sin. But the words before us belong to neither of these; they are addressed to those who are dead in trespasses and sins; to those who are so much lost that they do not know that they are lost; to those who are happy and comfortable in their sins; to those who have not a doubt as to the sufficiency of their worldly decency and respectability as a righteousness before God, and who do not so much as move the question whether they are saved or unsaved; *the simple ones loving their simplicity*, the scorners who delight in scorning, the fools who hate knowledge.

Is there none of you who has a secret suspicion that he may be just one of these characters which we have described? I would beseech that man to feel that HE, *then*, is this day addressed by the Saviour, not in the accents of wrath, but of tenderest kindness. It is to you that Jesus stretches out these beseeching hands. It is *to you* that Jesus speaks these gentle words. Oh! how blinded you are to the bowels and compassions of the Saviour. Oh! how you dishonor him every day by your hard and blasphemous thoughts of him. You think that because you delight in going away from him, therefore he hath nothing but messages of anger and of coming judgment for you. But, oh! how much wiser to gather his thoughts toward you from his own words: "*Turn you at my reproof.* Behold I will pour out, not judgment, but my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you."

My second explanation is, That the call of Christ is to an immediate conversion. He doth not say: WHY will ye love your simplicity? but, "*How long* will ye love your simplicity?" And again, he doth not say, Turn *at any time*, and I will pour out my Spirit unto you; but, "Turn *at my reproof*;" that is, Turn *this day while I am reproving you.* Immediate turning unto God—immediate application to the blood of Christ—immediate acceptance of the righteousness of God—a movement this day—conversion this day—this, and nothing but this, is the doctrine of the text. Let none of you say, I will take the gracious offer into consideration—I will take up the question *some day soon* with all due deliberation—I will set apart *some future day* for the very purpose of settling it. That man of you is as effectually casting a mockery on the words of the Saviour, as if he were to say, I will have neither part nor lot in this matter. It is not resolutions for the future that Christ asks of you, and to which he attaches the pro-

mise of the Spirit: it is a turning *this day*—conversion *this day*, whilst he is reproving you.

Having premised these things, it is now my desire to press home upon you the call of the Saviour by means of three arguments.

I. *The call of the Saviour ought to be obeyed by you, because of the rich promise with which it is seconded.*—"Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you."

Often in the Bible are sinners entreated to turn and believe on Jesus, for the sake of the peace and the pardon to be found in believing; but the argument here is a more rare, and perhaps a still more moving one. Here you are besought to turn and believe, that you may be made new creatures: "Turn you at my reproof: behold I will pour out my Spirit unto you."

1. Think how essential such a change is to your well-being: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." To dwell in the new heavens and the new earth, we must be made new creatures. There will be exquisite scenery in heaven, when the pearly gates of the New Jerusalem appear; but a blind man could not enjoy it. There will be exquisite melody in heaven, from the golden harps of angels and the redeemed; but a man without an ear for music could not enjoy it. And just so there will be spotless holiness in heaven—it will be the very atmosphere of heaven—how, then, could an unholy soul enjoy it? "Marvel not that I said unto you, Ye must be born again." But if this be an essential change—

2. Think how impossible it is with man. Search every sect and system of philosophy, search every plan of education, search from one end of the earth to the other, where will you find a power to make you holy?

> "The depth saith, It is not in me:
> And the sea saith, It is not with me.
> It cannot be gotten for gold,
> Neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof.
> No mention shall be made of coral, or of pears:
> For the price of Wisdom is above rubies."

A man may be able to change his sins, but, ah! what man can change his heart? The reason why this is utterly impossible with man, is, that he is not only fond of the objects of sin, but he is fond of his sinful heart; he is not only simple, but he loves his simplicity; not only scornful, but delights in scorning; not only a fool, but he hates the very knowledge that would make him wise unto salvation. Which of you, then, does not feel the power of the Saviour's tenderness in the offer which he makes this day to the most careless and unawakened of you all: "Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you." If you will

only turn and accept of Christ this day, he offers to give you that Spirit which alone can make you a new creature—which alone can give you a heart that will do for heaven.

You utterly mistake the matter, if you think that Christ here offers to put you under a system of strictness and restraint. You utterly mistake the matter, if you think the gift of the Spirit is to make you walk in ways of preciseness and of pain; for the whole Bible testifies, that the ways in which the Spirit leads us are ways of pleasantness and peace. Suppose a man happened to be so foolish and inconsiderate as to have an invincible relish for some poisonous drug, because of the sweetness and agreeableness of the taste; and had formed the habit of making such constant use of it that death would, through time, be the inevitable consequence. I can imagine two ways in which the friends of that inconsiderate man, anxious for his life, might cure him of his strange and most destructive appetite. 1*st*, They might forcibly restrain and keep him away from the use of the poison, forbidding it even to be brought within his sight. This would be the system of restriction; *the appetite would remain*, but it would be crossed and denied. Or, 2*dly*, Instead of forcibly taking away the poison, they might bring new and wholesome objects before him, the taste of which was far more agreeable and excellent; so that, when once he had tasted these, there would be no fear of his so much as desiring the poison any more. A new taste has been introduced, so that the drug which seemed sweet and agreeable before, seems now no longer palatable. Now, though this parable be a very imperfect one, yet it shows distinctly the one feature in sanctification which I wish to bring into view, namely, *its pleasantness*. The Spirit which Christ offers sanctifies us never in the first way, but always in the second way; not by restraining us, but by making us new. By nature we love sin, the world and the things of the world, though we know that the wages of sin is death. Now, to cure this I can imagine a man setting himself down deliberately to cross all his corrupted passions, to restrain all his appetites, to reject and trample on all the objects that the natural heart is set upon. This is the very system recommended by Satan, by anti-Christ, and the world. But there is a far more excellent way, which the Holy Ghost makes use of in sanctifying us; not the way of changing the objects, but the way of changing the affections; not by an *external* restraint, but by an *internal* renewing. As it is said in Ezekiel; "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 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." Ah! then, brethren, if there be one poor sinner here who has been deceived by the detestable heresy of the world—as if the keeping of the commandments by the saints were a grievous and unwilling

service—let that man. this day, open his eyes to the true nature of Gospel holiness—that God does not offer to work in you to *do*, without first working in you to *will*. He does not offer to pluck from you your favorite objects; but he offers to give you a new taste for higher objects; and just as the boy finds it no hardship to cast away the toys and trifles that were his bosom friends in childhood, so the saint feels no hardship in casting away the wretched playthings that so long amused and cheated the soul; for behold a new world hath been opened up by the Spirit of God, to the admiring, enamored gaze of the believer in Jesus.

Behold, then, ye simple ones, that are loving your simplicity, what an argument is here to move you to immediate conversion; to immediate acceptance of Jesus! If you will only put on Christ, behold he offers this day to begin the work of creating you anew; not of crossing and restraining you, and tying you down to services which you loathe, but of giving you a taste and a delight in objects which angels, which every holy and happy being delights in. "Turn you at my reproof."

II. *The call of the Saviour to* TURN NOW *ought to be obeyed by us, because conversion becomes every day harder.*—There is no law of our nature that works with a surer and more silent power than the law of habit. That which at first we find the utmost difficulty in accomplishing, becomes easier upon every trial, till habit becomes as it were, a second nature. Thus, in learning to read, how slow and how gradual is the progress made! until, trained by oft-repeated trial, the stammering tongue becomes the tongue of grace and fluency. Nay, so easy does the art become, that we at length forget to notice the very letters which compose the words we read. Just similar is the growth of habit in sinning. Depraved as is the natural heart, yet the ingenuous mind of youth finds something painful and revolting in acquiring the first oath which fashion or companionship obliges him to learn. The loose jest and the irreligious sneer, will generally summon up the blush of indignation in the cheek of the simple-hearted boy, newly ushered into the busy world. But who does not know the power of habit in rubbing off the fine varnish of the delicate mind? who has not within a few months, heard the oath drop as if with native vivacity from the tongue? who has not seen vice and profanity pass unreproved, even by the silent blush of shame? As it is with these sins, so it is with the greatest sin of which humanity is guilty; the sin of rejecting the Saviour. There is a time in youth when the mind seems peculiarly open to the reception of a Saviour. There is a time when the understanding and the affections suddenly burst forth into maturity, like the rose-bud bursting into the full-blown rose; a time when all the passions of our nature spurn control, and break forth with a reckless impetuosity; and all experience testifies that that is the time when conviction of sin may

most easily be wrought in the soul; the time when the work and sufferings of the Saviour may with greatest hope of success be presented to the mind. It is then that the whole scene of Gospel truth flashes upon the mind with a freshness and a power which, in all human probability, it never will do again. The tenderness of a Saviour's love, if resisted then, will every day lose more of its novelty and of its power to touch the heart; the habit of resistance to the word and testimony of a beseeching God will every day become more predominant; the stony heart will every day become more a heart of adamant; the triple brass of unbelief will every day become more impenetrable. Oh! my friends, it is fearful to think how many among us are every hour subjecting our hearts to this sure and silent process of hardening. Look back, brethren, as many of you may do, to the time when Christ and his sufferings had first an awakening interest to your soul. Look back to the first death in your family, or the first time you prepared to sit down at the holy sacrament. Were there not arousing, quickening feelings stirred in your breast, which now you have not? Had you not some struggle of conscience; something like a felt *kicking against the pricks*, in rejecting Christ, in putting away the tenderness of the tenderest of beings? But you were successful in the struggle, you smothered every disquieting whisper, you lulled every pang of uneasiness. The Spirit was striving with you; but you quenched his awakening influences. And now, do you not feel that these days of feeling are well-nigh past; that spirit-stirring seasons are becoming every year rarer and rarer to you? Deaths are more frequent around you; but they speak with less power to your conscience. Every sacrament seems to lose something of its affecting energy; every Sabbath becomes more dull and monotonous. It is true you may NOT feel all this. There is a state of the conscience in which it is said to be *past feeling*. But if there be any truth in the Bible, and any identity in human nature, this process of hardening is going on day after day in every unconverted mind. Oh! it is the saddest of all sights that a godly minister can behold, to see his flock, Sabbath after Sabbath, waiting most faithfully on the stirring ministrations of the Word, and yet going away unawakened and unimpressed; for well he knows that the heart that is not turned, is all the more hardened.

How simple and how mighty an argument is here to persuade you to turn to God *this day*. This day we hold out to you all the benefits to be found in Christ; *forgiveness* through his blood, *acceptance* through his righteousness, *sanctification* by his Spirit. Reject them, and you add not only another act of sin to the burden of your guilt, but you add another hardening crust to your impenetrable heart. *This day* refuse Christ, and, by all human calculation, you will more surely refuse him *the next day;* so that, without at all meaning to question the sovereignty of the Spirit of

God, who worketh whensoever and on whomsoever it pleaseth him, the only conclusion that any reasonable man has a right to come to, is, that this day, of all days between this and judgment, is the best and likeliest for your conversion; and your dying day—that sad season of tossings and heavings, before the spirit is torn from its earthly tenement—is, in all human calculation, the worst day of your life for turning unto God. When the minister of Christ pulls aside the curtains of your bed, to speak the word of Jesus Christ, the ear that for a whole lifetime has heard the glad message of salvation all unmoved, will, in that hour, hear as if it did not hear. The heart that has so long turned aside the edge of the Word of Life, will then be like the nether millstone. "*To-day*, then, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts."

III. *The call of the Saviour to turn now ought to be obeyed by us, because the Saviour will not always call.*—"My Spirit will not always strive with man," was the warning of God given to the antediluvian world. "*Now they are hid from thine eyes*," was a similar warning given by the Saviour to Jerusalem. And the passage immediately following the text, expresses the same sentiment in still more fearful language. And who does not see the solemnity and power which it gives to the call of the Saviour, that the time is at hand when he will *not* call any more?

Behold yon majestic figure bearing on his body the marks of the Man of Sorrows; but bearing in his eye and words the aspect of Him "who liveth, and was dead, and behold he is alive for evermore." Behold, how he stands in an attitude of unmingled tenderness to sinners, even the chief! Behold, how the beseeching hands are stretched out! Hearken to the soft accents of mercy, of invitation, of promise: "*I will pour out my spirit unto you.*" But remember that attitude of mercy is but *for a time:* these beseeching hands are stretched out only *for a time;* these accents of gentleness are but *for a time.* The day is at hand when he shall come "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." This is Christ's *attitude of judgment.* No more are the inviting hands stretched out beseechingly; for the rod of iron is in his right hand, and his enemies are before him as a potter's vessel. His right hand teacheth him terrible things; his arrows are sharp in the hearts of the King's enemies, whereby the people fall under him. And oh! how fearfully shall his accents of tenderness be changed!

> "I also will laugh at your calamity;
> I will mock when your fear cometh;
> When your fear cometh as desolation;
> And your destruction cometh as a whirlwind;
> When distress and anguish cometh upon you."

Oh! what a day will it be, when the tender-hearted Jesus,

that wept at the grave of Lazarus, shall laugh at your calamity, and mock at your terrors! The contrast between these two representations is so striking, that it cannot escape the notice of any one. But what I wish you to observe is, that it is not only a very striking change, but *a very sudden one.* The transition from kindness to indignation is here not gradual, like the change from day into night. There is no twilight, as it were; the transition *is sudden* as it is terrible. May not this be intended to teach us that God frequently ceases to strive with men, not gradually, but *suddenly?* not only that death is frequently sudden, and that the coming of the Son of Man shall surely be sudden, as a thief in the night, but that the withdrawing of the beseeching Saviour from living men who long resist his call, is often sudden and irremediable? Awake, then, brethren, those of you who think it is all one when you repent and embrace the Saviour, provided it be done before you die. Awake, those of you who say: "A little more sleep, and a little more slumber; a little more folding of the hands to sleep." The sun of grace may set not like the sun of nature; there may be no calm and tranquil twilight, when thou mightest bethink thee of the coming darkness, and flee to Him who is the *light of the world.* However this may be, there is enough surely in the fact, *that the Spirit withdraws from those who resist* him, whether suddenly or gradually, to move every one of you *this day* to immediate conversion. It must be *now*, or it may be *never.*

On a winter evening, when the frost is setting in with growing intensity, and when the sun is now far past the meridian, and gradually sinking in the western sky, there is a double reason why the ground grows every moment harder and more impenetrable to the plough. On the one hand, the frost of evening, with ever-increasing intensity, is indurating the stiffened clods. On the other hand, the genial rays, which alone can soften them, are every moment withdrawing and losing their enlivening power. Oh! brethren, take heed that it be not so with you. As long as you are unconverted, you are under a double process of hardening. The frosts of an eternal night are settling down upon your souls; and the Sun of Righteousness, with westering wheel, is hastening to set upon you for evermore. If, then, the plough of grace cannot force its way into your *ice-bound heart to-day*, what likelihood is there that it will enter in *to-morrow?*—Amen.

Larbert, Nov. 15, 1835.

SERMON XXVIII.

A SON HONORETH HIS FATHER.

"A son honoreth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honor? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of hosts unto you."—Mal. i., 6.

The first conviction that is essential to the conversion of the soul, is conviction of sin; not the general conviction that all men are sinful, but the personal conviction that I am an undone sinner; not the general conviction that other men must be forgiven or perish, but the personal conviction that I must be forgiven or perish. Now, there is no greater barrier in the way of this truth being impressed on the soul, than the felt consciousness of possessing *many virtues*. We cannot be persuaded that the image of God has so completely been effaced from our souls as the Bible tells us, when we feel within ourselves, and see exhibited in others, what may almost be termed godlike virtues. The heroes of whom we have read in history, with their love of country, and contempt of death, their constancy in friendship, and fidelity in affection, seem to rise up before us to plead the cause of injured humanity. And what is far more baffling, our every-day experience of the kindness of hospitality, the flowings of unbounded generosity, the compassion that weeps because another weeps; and all this among men that care not for Christ and his salvation, seems to raise a barrier impregnable against the truth, that man is conceived in sin and shapen in iniquity. When we enter one cottage door, and see a whole company of brothers and sisters melted into tears at the sight of a dying sister's agonies; or when we enter another door, and see the tenderness of a mother's affection toward the sick infant in her bosom; or when we see, in a third family, the cheerful obedience which the children pay to an aged father; or, in a fourth family, the scrupulous integrity with which the servant manages the affairs of an earthly master, we are ready to ask, Is this indeed a world of sin? is it possible that the wrath of God can be in store for such a world? It will be very generally granted, that there are some men so utterly worthless and incorrigible, so far gone in the ways of desperate wickedness, that nothing else is to be expected for them, but an eternity of hopeless misery. There is a crew of abandoned profligates, who scoff at the very name of God and religion. There are Atheists, who openly deny his very being; Infidels, who openly deny that Christ came in the flesh. There are cold-blooded murderers, and worse than murderers, who are confessed by all to be a disgrace to the name of man. For these, few would dare to plead exemption from the awful vengeance that

awaits the ungodly. So that there is a felt reasonableness in the dreadful words: "The abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolators, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." But that the obedient child, and the faithful servant, the tenderly affectionate mother, the hospitable and generous neighbor, the man of intelligence and good feeling, that all these should ever be bound up in the same bundle of destruction, and consigned to the same eternal flames, merely because they do not believe in Jesus: this is the rock of offence on which thousands stumble and fall, to their inevitable loss.

There is, perhaps, no way more commonly used by man, to repel all the personal convictions of sin which the Word of God would cast on us. For do I not feel within me all the tender affections of humanity, all the honesties and integrities of our nature? Do I not feel pleasure in being honest and fair dealing, in being compassionate, and generous, and hospitable? How plainly, then, may I say to my soul: "Soul, take thine ease?" These virtues of thine are a sure token that thou art born for a blessed eternity. Ah! my friends, is it not a most blessed thing that, in the passage now before us, God wrests from our hand the very weapon wherewith we would defend ourselves, and turns it with a shaft to pierce our worldly consciences? And, oh! if we had minds as intelligent as when Adam walked with God in Paradise, nothing more would be necessary to carry to our hearts the overwhelming conviction of sin than the repetition of the words: "A son honoreth his father, and a servant his master; if then I be a father, where is mine honor? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of hosts unto you." There is a power and a pathos in this argument, which might well break down the hardest and most unfeeling mind; it is as if God had said, as he elsewhere doth: "Come and let us reason together." You say that you have many excellent virtues, that you have tender and beautiful affections; you say that filial and parental love occupy a master-place in your bosom, that integrity and unsullied honesty beat high in your breast. And do I deny all this? Shall I detract from the glory of my own handiwork, so beautiful, even in ruins? No, it is all true; the son does honor his father, the servant is faithful to his master; all is beautiful, when I look only to the earthly relationships. But that is the very thing which shows the utter derangement of all the heavenly relationships; for, "if I then be a father, where is mine honor? if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of hosts unto you." I see that you honor your earthly fathers, and serve faithfully your earthly masters; but that is the very thing which shows me that I am the exception. I see that there is not a father in the whole universe that is deprived of the love of his children, but me —there is not a master under heaven that is robbed of the honor

and service of his domestics, as I am. If, brethren, you and I were sunk into actual brutality, if we had no love for parents, no honesty to masters, then God might have had cause to say of us, that nothing better could be expected from such wretches, than that we should forget our heavenly Father and Master. But, oh! when there are such tender and beautiful affections in our bosoms towards our earthly relations, is not our sin written as with an iron pen, and with lead in the rock for ever, that we make God the exception, that we are godless in the world?

I would now, with all affection and tenderness, beseech every one of you to search his own heart, and see if these things be not so; see if that which you generally take for the excuse of your sins, be not the very essence of your sin. What would you not do, what would you not suffer, for the sake of an earthly parent? and yet you will not expend so much as a thought, or the breathing of a desire, for your heavenly Parent. God is not in all your thoughts. You will toil night and day in behalf of an earthly master; yet you will not do a hand's turn for your heavenly Master. God is the only parent whom you dishonor; God is the only master whom you wrong. "If you were blind, you should have no sin; but now it is plain you see, therefore, your sin remaineth." If you were incapable of affection or fidelity, then you should have no sin; but now it is plain you are capable of both, therefore, your sin remaineth. Imagine a family of brothers and sisters all bound together by the ties of the closest amity and affection. Oh! it is a good and pleasant sight to see brethren dwell together in unity. "It is like precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments. It is as the dew of Hermon, that descended upon the mountains of Zion." What will they not do for each other? what will they not suffer for each other? But, imagine again that all this unity, which is so much like the temper of heaven, was maintained among them, whilst all the while they were united in despising the tender mother that bore them, in turning away from, and forsaking the grey-haired father that had brought up every one of them. Would not this one feature in the picture change all its beauty and all its interest? Would it not make their unity more like that of devils, than that of angels? Would you not say, that their affection for one another was the very thing which made their disaffection to their parents hateful and most unnatural? Oh! brethren, the picture is a picture of us: "A son honoreth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honor? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of hosts unto you."

Oh! it is a fearful thing, when our very virtues, to which we flee for refuge against the wrath of God, turn round most fiercely to condemn us. What avail your honesties, what avail your

filial attachments, what avail your domestic virtues, which the world so much admire, and praise you for, if, in the sight of God, these are all the while enhancing your ungodliness? Let no man misunderstand me, as if I had said that it was a bad thing to be honest, to be faithful, and just, and affectionate to parents. Every sensible man knows the value of these earthly virtues, and how much they are invigorated and enlarged, and begin a new life, as it were, when the worldly man becomes a believer. But this I do say, that if thou hast nothing more than these earthly virtues, they will every one of them rise in the judgment only to condemn thee. I say only what the mighty Luther hath said before me, that these virtues of thine, whereby thou thinkest to build thy Babel tower to heaven, are but the splendid sins of humanity; and that they will only serve to cast thee down into tenfold deeper condemnation. God doth not charge you, brethren, with dishonesty, with disobedience to parents. The only charge which he brings against you here is, the one long sin of the natural man's life, *ungodliness*. God is not in all your thoughts. He admits that you have earthly virtues; but these just make blacker and more indelible your sins against heaven.

I. I infer from this passage, that *our worldly virtues will not atone for sin, or make us acceptable in the sight of God.*— Humanity is a ruin; but it is beautiful even in ruins. And just as you may wander through some magnificent pile, over which the winter storms of whole centuries have passed, and stand with admiring gaze beside every fluted column, now broken and prostrate, and luxuriate with antiquarian fancy amid the half-defaced carving of Gothic ages, as you may do all this without so much as a thought of the loss of its chief architectural glory, the grand proportions of the whole towering majestically heavenward, with bastion and minaret, all now lying buried in their own rubbish, so may you look upon man; you may wander from one earthly affection and faculty to another, filled with admiration of the curious handiwork of Him who is indeed the most cunning of artists; you may luxuriate amidst the exquisite adaptations of man to man, so nice as to keep all the wheels of society running smoothly and easily forward; you may do all this, as thousands have done before you, without so much as a thought of the loss of man's chiefest glory, the relation of man to his God, that while many amid the rubbish of this world are honest, and fair-dealing, and affectionate to parents, *there is not one that seeketh after God.*

Let us imagine for an instant that these worldly virtues could take away sin; and just look to the consequences. Where would you find the man altogether destitute of them? where is salvation to stop? If honesty and generosity are to blot out one sin, why not all sin? In this way you can fix no limit between the saved

and the unsaved; and, therefore, all men may live as they please, for you never can prove that one man is beyond the pale of salvation. Again: if worldly virtues could blot out sin, Christ is dead in vain. He came to save his people from their sins. Angels ushered him into the world as the Saviour of sinners. John bade men behold in him the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world; and the whole Bible testifies, that "through this man is preached unto you the remission of sins." But if the every-day honesties, and kindnesses, and generosities of life, could avail to take away sin, what needed Christ to have suffered? If anything so cheap and common as earthly virtues are, could avail to the blotting out of sin, why needed so inestimably precious a provision to be made as the blood of the Son of God? If, with all our honesties, and all our decencies and respectabilities in the world, we do not stand in need of everything, why doth Christ counsel us to buy of him gold tried in the fire, that we may be rich? Nothing that is imperfect can make us perfect in the sight of God. Hence the admirable direction of an old divine; "Labor after sanctification to the utmost; but do not make a Christ of it; if so it must come down, one way or other. Christ's obedience and sufferings, not thy sanctification, must be thy justification." The matter seems a plain one. God is yet to judge the world in righteousness; that is, by the strictest rule of his holy law. If we are to be justified in his sight on that day, we must be perfect in his sight. But that we cannot be, by means of our own sanctification, which is imperfect. It must be through the imputing of a perfect righteousness, then, even the perfect obedience of Christ, that we are to be justified in that day. We are complete only in Christ; we are perfect only in Christ Jesus. But ah! brethren, if our sanctification will not do for a righteousness in that day, much less will our worldly virtues do. If your honesties and worldly decencies are to be enough to cover your nakedness, and make you comely in the sight of God, why needed Christ to have fulfilled all righteousness, as a surety in the stead of sinners? Why does he offer to make poor sinners the righteousness of God in him? Why does he say of his saved ones: "Thou wast perfect in beauty, through my comeliness which I put upon thee?"

II. I infer from this passage that *earthly virtues may accompany a man to hell.*—I desire to speak with all reverence, and with all tenderness upon so dreadful a subject. The man who speaks of hell should do it with tears in his eyes. But, oh! brethren, is it not plain, that if the love of earthly parents, and honesty to earthly masters, be consistent with utter ungodliness upon earth, they may also be consistent with the ungodliness of hell? Which of you does not remember the story of the rich man and Lazarus? When the rich man lifted up his eyes in hell, being in torments, and when he prayed Abraham to send Lazarus to dip his finger

in water, and cool his tongue, what was the one other desire which in that fearful hour racked the bosom and prompted the prayer of the wretched man? was it not love for his brethren? "I pray thee, therefore, father, that thou wouldst send him to my father's house; for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment."—Luke xvi., 27. Ah! my brethren, does not this one passage remove a dreadful curtain from the unseen world of woe? does it not reveal to you some eternal pains which you never dreamed of. There will be brotherly affection in hell. These parching flames cannot burn out that element of our being. But, oh! it will give no ease, but rather pain. The love of children will be there; but, oh! what agonies shall it not cause, when the tender mother meets the children on whose souls she had no pity, the children whom she never brought to the Saviour, the children unprayed for, untaught to pray for themselves! Who shall describe the meeting of the loving wife and the affectionate husband in an eternal hell? those that never prayed with one another, and for one another; those that mutually stifled each other's convictions; those that fostered and encouraged one another in their sins? Ah! my friends, if these, the tenderest and kindest affections of our nature, shall be such fierce instruments of torture, what shall our evil affections be?

I would now speak a word to those of you who are counting upon being saved, because you are honest and affectionate to parents. Oh! that you would be convinced this day by Scripture and common sense, that these, if you be out of Christ, and therefore not at peace with God, do but aggravate your ungodliness, and will add torment inexpressible to your hell. If, then, our very virtues condemn us, what shall our sins do? If the ungodly shall meet with so fearful a doom, where shall the open sinner appear? But there is a fountain opened up in Zion, to which both the ungodly and the sinner may go; and if only you will be persuaded to believe that you are neither more nor less than one of these lost and undone creatures, I know well how swiftly you will run to plunge yourself into these atoning waters. But if you will still keep harping upon the theme of your many excellent qualities, your honesty, your uprightness, your filial and parental affection, your exactness in equity, your kindness in charity, and will not be convinced by the very words of God, that though the son honor his father, and the servant his master, these do but add a deeper and more diabolical dye to your forgetfulness and contempt of God. If you still do this, then we can only turn away from you with sadness, and say: "The publicans and harlots enter into heaven before you."

Larbert, Nov. 22, 1835.

SERMON XXIX.

THE DIFFICULTY AND DESIRABLENESS OF CONVERSION.

"I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord."—Ps. xl., 1-3.

THERE can be little doubt that the true and primary application of this psalm is to our Lord Jesus Christ; for though the verses we have read might very well be applicable to David, or any other converted man, looking back on what God had done for his soul, yet the latter part of the psalm cannot, with propriety, be the language of any but the Saviour; and, accordingly, the 6th, 7th, and 8th verses are directly applied to Christ by the apostle in the 10th chapter of Hebrews: "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not; but a body hast thou prepared me: in burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God." The whole psalm, therefore, is to be regarded as a prayerful meditation of Messiah when under the hiding of his Father's countenance; for, how truly might he who knew no sin, but was made sin for us, he on whom it pleased the Father to lay the iniquities of us all, how truly might *he* say, in the language of verse 12, "Innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head; therefore my heart faileth me."

According to this view, verses 1-3 are to be regarded as a recalling a former deliverance from some similar visitation of darkness, in order to comfort himself under present discouragement. And who can doubt that he who was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, experienced many more seasons of darkness and of heaven-sent relief than that which is recorded in the garden of Gethsemane? His so frequently retiring to pray alone, seems to prove this. But as it is quite manifest that his description of his iniquities laying hold upon him, is expressed in words most suitable to any burdened but awakened sinner, so the verses of my text are every way suitable to any converted soul looking back on the deliverance which God hath wrought out for him. "Waiting, I waited for Jehovah" (as verse 1 may be most literally rendered), expresses all the intense anxiety of a mind aroused to know the danger he is in, and the quarter whence his aid must come. "And he inclined unto me," expresses the bodily motion of one who is desirous to hear, bending forward attentively. "And he heard my cry."

"He brought me up also out of an horrible pit,
Out of the miry clay,
And set my feet upon a rock;
He established my goings.
And he hath put a new song in my mouth,
Even praise unto our God:
Many shall see it, and fear,
And shall trust in the Lord."

He expresses the state of an unconverted man under the striking imagery of one who is in an horrible pit, and sinking in miry clay; while the change at conversion is compared to setting his feet upon a rock, and establishing his goings, and putting a new song in his mouth. Regarding, then, my text as a true and faithful picture of that most blessed change in state and character which, in Bible language, is called conversion, I proceed to draw from these words two simple but most important conclusions:—

I. *The difficulty of conversion.*—So difficult and superhuman is the work of turning a soul from sin and Satan unto God, that God only can do it; and, accordingly, in our text, every part of the process is attributed solely to him. "*He* brought me up out of an horrible pit, *he* took me from the miry clay, *he* set my feet upon a rock, *he* established my goings, and *he* put a new song in my mouth." God, and God alone, then, is the author of conversion. He who created man at first, alone can create him anew in Christ Jesus unto good works. And the reason of this we shall see clearly by going over the parts of the work here described. The first deliverance is imaged forth to us in the words: "*He brought me up out of an horrible pit;*" and the counterpart or corresponding blessing to that is, "*He set my feet upon a rock.*" There can hardly be imagined a more hopeless situation than that of being placed, like Joseph, in a pit, and especially an horrible pit, or a pit of destruction, as the Psalmist calls it. Hemmed in on every side by damp and gloomy walls, with scarce an outlet into the open air, in vain you struggle to clamber up to the light and fresh atmosphere of the open day; you are a prisoner in the bowels of the earth, the tenant of a pit of horrors. Such is your state, if you be unconverted; you are lying in a pit of destruction; you are dead while you live—buried alive, as it were; *dead* in trespasses and sins, while yet you *walk* in them. You cannot possibly ascend to the light of day, and the fresh atmosphere above you; for the pit in which you are, is indeed your prison-house; and except you be drawn up from it by the cords of grace, it will usher you into that yawning pit which the Bible says is bottomless. Such is your state, if you be unconverted. You are under the curse; for "cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them;" and you have never continued in *any* of these things, doing them from

the heart, as unto the Lord, which only can be called doing them. You have never savingly believed on the Son of God; and therefore you are "*condemned already*"—you have never been lifted out of the pit of condemnation. "*He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; but he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him;*" that is, it is never lifted off him. The pit of wrath and destruction, in which you are by nature, is never exchanged by you until you leave it for the pit of wrath eternal. Since this horrible pit, then, represents the state of wrath and condemnation in which we are by nature, how impossible is it that we can extricate ourselves from it! To escape from the prison-house of earthly kings is a hard and daring enterprise; but who shall break loose from the prison-house of the eternal God? Who shall clamber up from the pit of condemnation in which he confines the soul? or who can work out a pardon for past offences? Who can blot out the sin of his past life? Look back upon your lives, brethren, spent in forgetfulness of God, in desires and deeds contrary to God; and then remember he is infinitely just, he cannot lie, he cannot repent, and say if you think it an easy thing, or a possible thing, to save yourselves from the fearful pit in which you are now reserved for his wrath?

But if you cannot save yourself from the pit, and set your feet upon a rock, much less can you extricate yourself from the miry clay, and establish your own goings. The pit of destruction represents the wrath you are in by nature; the miry clay represents the corruption you are in by nature. To be standing in a dry pit, as Joseph was, is bad enough; but, ah! how hopeless and wretched, when you are standing in miry clay! To be under condemnation for past sins, one would think to be misery sufficient; but your case is far more desperate, for you are also sinking daily under the power of present corruptions. Every struggle which you make to get up from your wretched condition, only makes you sink deeper in the miry clay; and every hour you remain where you are, you are sinking the deeper; your ever getting out becomes more hopeless. How truly does the growth of sinful habits in you resemble the sinking of your feet in miry clay! Which of your habits does not grow inveterate by exercise? How does the habit of swearing grow upon a man until he is absolutely its slave? and so with those more refined sins whose seat is in the heart. Every day gives them new power over the soul—every new indulgence binds your feet more indissolubly than ever in the evil way; and though you may, nay, in the course of nature you must, change your lusts, your passions and desires, yet every change is but like extricating one foot from the miry clay, only to set it down again, in another spot to sink again. Ah! the undoneness of an unconverted heart; what imagination is bold enough to paint all its horrors? Look in upon your own hearts, ye who are unchanged in heart and life; and, oh! if the

Spirit of grace may but use the passage we are speaking of to convince you this day of your sin, you shall see how truly there is within you a dark chamber of imagery, a depth of spiritual wretchedness, and inability, either to forgive your own self, or to make your heart new—either to set your feet upon a rock, or to establish your goings; which can be described only by such ideas as those of an horrible pit, and sinking in miry clay.

A third step in conversion you cannot take for yourself; and that is, the putting *a new song* in your mouth. A song is the sign of gladness and light-heartedness, and hence James saith: "Is any merry? let him sing psalms." And the spoilers of Jerusalem, when they would put mockery on the sorrows of the exiled Israelites, required of them *mirth*, saying: "Sing us one of the Songs of Zion." But to sing a *new* song, even praise to our God, is a privilege of the believer alone. To be merry and glad in heart, whilst a holy God is before the thoughts, that is a privilege only of him whose feet are settled on the Rock, Christ. It is true the unconverted world have a mirth of their own; and they, too, can sing the song of gladness. But here lies the difference: They can be glad and merry only when God is not in all their thoughts, only when a veil of oblivion is cast over the realities of death and judgment. Keep away all serious thought of these things, and then they can revel, like Belshazzar and his thousand lords, when they drank wine, and praised the gods of gold and of silver. But unveil to their eyes the grand realities of a holy and omnipresent God, of death at the door, and after death the judgment, and then is their countenance changed (as was Belshazzar's at the appearance of the mysterious hand); their thoughts trouble them, so that the joints of their loins are loosed, and their knees smite one against another.

But to the believer a holy God is the very subject of his song, praise to our God; and the view of death and judgment do not break in upon this divine melody. On his dying bed he may begin the song which shall be finished only when he wakes up in glory. Now, what unconverted man has the power to put this supernatural song in his mouth, this strange joy in his heart? Gladness cannot be forced, and least of all this, the Christian's gladness. If thou be unforgiven, unjustified, still at enmity with God, how canst thou raise one note of praise to him? In the 14th chapter of Revelation, where the redeemed sing, as it were, a *new song* before the throne, and before the four beasts and the elders, it is added: "And no man could learn that song, but the hundred and forty and four thousand which were redeemed from the earth." None but *new* creatures can learn this new song. Angels cannot join in it; for it is the hymn of the *redeemed*, of those who were sinners, and have been made *new*. And, oh! if angels cannot, how much can *un*converted, *un*redeemed sinners join in that eternal harmony. In every way, then, how unspeak-

ably hard a work is conversion! How *impossible* with man But with God all things are *possible*. He hath provided the Rock, Christ; and his ear is not heavy that it should not hear, if we but cry; his arm is not shortened that it cannot save, if only we will inquire of him for this. But,

II. From this picture of a true conversion I deduce, not only the difficulty, but also the *desirableness of conversion.*

If you can imagine the delight of being lifted out of the horrible pit, where wrath only awaited us, and having our feet set upon the Rock, where our foundation is firm and solid as the everlasting hills, and we are raised high above the reach of enemies, for our defence is the munition of rocks, then, my friends, you have some notion of what it is to be taken out of wrath into peace, to be translated from being under the curse to the privilege of standing on the righteousness of Christ, standing on which you are justified, so that neither man, nor angel, nor devil, can bring accusation against you.

And, again, if you can imagine the delight of being carried out of the miry clay, where your feet were continually sinking deeper and deeper every hour, and of having your goings established, a straight path set before you, and solid ground beneath you, then you have some notion of what it is to be taken out of your worldly lusts, and desires, and cares, and thoughts, and anxieties, and habits of sin, in which every new day found you sinking deeper and deeper, and always with less hope of recovery; and to be enabled to love God and the things of God, "to set your affection on things above," "to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ."

And still further, if you can imagine the delight of exchanging the groan of the prisoner bound in affliction and iron, for the song of the captive who has been set free, the emancipated slave, then you have some notion of what it is to exchange the sullenness and cheerlessness of an unrenewed spirit for the joy and light-heartedness, and the new song of praise sung only by the redeemed.

But when you have imagined all these things, you will have a notion merely, and nothing more, of the desirableness of conversion. The riches of Christ are *unsearchable.* I might ransack all nature for images. I might bring all conditions of misery and sudden peace and happiness into contrast; yet would I fail to give you a just idea of the blessings received in conversion; for, indeed, "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart to conceive, the things which God hath prepared (in this world, aye, in the hour of believing) for all them that love him." But leaving images borrowed from nature, which may only confuse, let me simply lay before you *the realities* which these images signify. The first thing to be had in conversion is *peace with God: "Justified by faith we have peace with God."* This is the immediate effect of standing on the Rock, Christ. Sin-laden man

dost thou see no desirableness in peace with an offended, forgotten, despised God? Art thou so enamored of the horrible pit of enmity and condemnation, that thou hast no desire to be out of it? Then, indeed, it is in vain to tell you of a Saviour; you see no beauty in Christ. The second thing to be had in conversion is *a holy life:* "To as many as receive Christ, he giveth power to become sons of God." Depraved man, whose heart is wrinkled with habitual sins, dost thou see no desirableness in a holy life? I do not ask thee if it would be pleasant to thee this moment to restrain and cross all thine appetites, and desires, and indomitable lusts; I know it would appear to thee intolerable; but I do ask thee if thou seest no desirableness in having these very appetites and desires changed or taken away in their power, so that strictness and holiness of life would no longer appear irksome, but pleasantness and peace. Art thou so delighted, not with the objects which gratify thy passions, but with these very passions themselves, that thou hast no wish to be made new? Then, indeed, it is needless to tell thee of the Sanctifier.

The third good thing to be had in conversion is a *joyful and thankful heart:* "We joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." This is the song of the redeemed. The mirth of heaven is thankfulness and praise. The mirth of heaven upon earth—that is, of the converted mind—is the same, even praise to our God. If, then, cheerfulness and thankfulness of mind, which will endure even amid all the gloominess of the death-bed, and the dark valley, and the awful insignia of judgment; if these be desirable gifts of mind, these form parts of the desirableness of conversion.

But to many of you I know it is in vain that I talk of the desirableness of conversion; for you do not yet feel the misery of being *un*converted—the wretchedness of being a child of wrath, and a slave of corruptions. When we tell you that the unjustified are in an horrible pit, that the unsanctified are sinking in miry clay, you tell us that you never felt any horror about your situation. Nay, you have many pleasures, and you are comfortable and at ease. Ah! most wretched of all unconverted men, you are in the horrible pit; yet you are insensible to its horrors. You are in the miry clay, sinking every step you take; yet you feel no alarm. You know that you never savingly believed in Christ; yet you have no horror when the Bible tells you you are "*condemned already.*" You know that your heart has never been *made new—born again;* and yet you do not tremble when the Bible tells you that "*without holiness no man shall see the Lord.*" You remind me of nothing so much as of a man travelling in a snow storm, wandering far from home or shelter, and every step he takes his feet sink the deeper in the drifted snow; but a strange insensibility creeps over his mind. Death itself has lost its horrors. As his danger increases, his fears diminish. A deep slum-

ber is quickly descending on every faculty, till he sinks down quietly to sleep, but never to rise again.

In like manner, your insensibility, instead of being a sign that there is no danger, increases the danger and horror of your situation a thousand fold. As the Bible is true, the state of every unconverted man is so awful, that could you see it as God sees it, the words, "*an horrible pit and miry clay,*" would seem too feeble to express it. "*The sorrows of death and the pains of hell*" might, perhaps, come nearer your view of it. Ah! then, strive hard to know the misery of being unconverted. Be determined to know the worst of yourself; for thus only will you see the desirableness of conversion, the excellency of Christ.

And now, then, laying together the two conclusions which I have drawn from our text—the difficulty of conversion, so great that God himself must be the author; and the desirableness of conversion, so great that peace, and holiness, and joy, all depend upon it—suffer the word of exhortation, to seek it in the only way in which the Psalmist found it: "*Waiting, I waited for Jehovah,*" that is, *I waited anxiously,* "*and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry.*" He is more ready to hear, than thou to ask. The Rock is already laid. Christ hath died, and thou art this day besought to stand upon his righteousness; and being in Christ, you shall every day become more a new creature; and being a new creature, you shall sing a new song of praise to Him who hath loved us.

One word to those of you who can look back upon an experience like that described in my text; who can say that God hath brought you out of an horrible pit and the miry clay, and set your feet upon a rock, and established your goings, and put a new song in your mouth. Take you heed that the following words be also realized: "*Many shall see it and fear, and shall trust in the Lord.*" How many on every hand of you are yet unconverted, both in the pit and in the clay! Let them see, then, how great things God hath done for your soul, that they may fear lest they die unconverted; lest this glorious change never come to them; lest they die old creatures, tenants of the horrible pit, to remove only to the pit eternal; lest they be altogether swallowed up in the miry clay; and thus, moved by fear, they may be persuaded to trust in God, as you have done—to rest on the Rock, Christ, for righteousness.

"Let your light *so* shine before men, that they, seeing your good works, may glorify your father which is in heaven."—Amen.

Dunipace, Aug. 2, 1835.

SERMON XXX.

THE LOVE OF CHRIST.

"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead."—2 Cor. v., 14.

Of all the features of St. Paul's character, untiring activity was the most striking. From his early history, which tells us of his personal exertions in wasting the infant Church, when he was a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious, it is quite obvious that this was the prominent characteristic of his natural mind. But when it pleased the Lord Jesus Christ to show forth in him all long-suffering, and to make him a pattern to them which should afterwards believe on Him, it is beautiful and most instructive to see how the natural features of this daringly bad man became not only sanctified, but invigorated and enlarged; so true it is that they that are in Christ are a new creation: "Old things pass away, and all things become new." "*Troubled* on every side, yet not distressed; *perplexed*, but not in despair; *persecuted*, but not forsaken; *cast down*, but not destroyed;" this was a faithful picture of the life of the converted Paul. Knowing the terrors of the Lord, and the fearful situation of all who were yet in their sins, he made it the business of his life to persuade men; striving if, by any means, he might commend the truth to their consciences. "For (saith he) whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God; or whether we be sober, it is for your cause."—Verse 13. Whether the world think us wise or mad, the cause of God and of human souls is the cause in which we have embarked all the energies of our being. Who, then, is not ready to inquire into the secret spring of all these supernatural labors? Who would not desire to have heard from the lips of Paul the mighty principle that impelled him through so many toils and dangers? What magic spell has taken possession of this mighty mind, or what unseen planetary influence, with unceasing power, draws him on through all discouragements, indifferent alike to the world's dread laugh, and the fear of man, which bringeth a snare; careless alike of the sneer of the sceptical Athenian, of the frown of the luxurious Corinthian, and the rage of the narrow-minded Jew? What saith the apostle himself? for we have his own explanation of the mystery in the words before us: "*The love of Christ constraineth us.*"

That Christ's love to man is here intended, and not our love to the Saviour, is quite obvious, from the explanation which follows, where his dying for all is pointed to as the instance of his love. It was the view of that strange compassion of the Saviour, moving him to die for his enemies, to bear double for all our sins, to taste death for every man; it was this view which gave him the

impulse in every labor, which made all suffering light to him, and every commandment not grievous. He ran with patience the race that was set before him. Why? Because, looking unto Jesus, he lived a man crucified unto the world, and the world crucified unto him. By what means? By looking to the cross of Christ. As the natural sun in the heavens exercises a mighty and unceasing attractive energy on the planets which circle round him, so did the Sun of Righteousness, which had indeed arisen on Paul with a brightness above that of noon-day, exercise on his mind a continual and an almighty energy, *constraining* him to live henceforth no more unto himself, but to him that died for him and rose again. And observe, that it was no temporary, fitful energy, which it exerted over his heart and life, but an abiding and a continued attraction; for he doth not say that the love of Christ *did once* constrain him; or that it *shall yet* constrain him; or that in times of excitement, in seasons of prayer, or peculiar devotion, the love of Christ *was wont* to constrain him; but he said simply, that the *love of Christ constraineth him.* It is the ever-present, ever-abiding, ever-moving power, which forms the main-spring of all his working; so that take that away, and his energies are gone, and Paul is become weak as other men.

Is there no one before me whose heart is longing to possess just such a master-principle? Is there no one of you, brethren, who has arrived at that most interesting of all the stages of conversion in which you are panting after a power to make you new? You have entered in at the straight gate of believing. You have seen that there is no peace to the unjustified; and therefore you have put on Christ for your righteousness; and already do you feel something of the joy and peace of believing. You can look back on your past life, spent without God in the world, and without Christ in the world, and without the Spirit in the world; you can see yourself a condemned outcast, and you say: "Though I should wash my hands in snow water, yet mine own clothes would abhor me." You can do all this, with shame and self-reproach, it is true, but yet without dismay, and without despair; for your eye has been lifted believingly on him who was made sin for us, and you are persuaded that, as it pleased God to count all your iniquities to the Saviour, so he is willing, and hath always been willing, to count all the Saviour's righteousness to you. Without despair, did I say? nay, with joy and singing; for if, indeed, thou believest with all thine heart, then thou art come to the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works; which David describes, saying: "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not sin." This is the peace of the justified man. But is this peace a state of perfect blessedness? Is there nothing left to be desired? I appeal to those of you, who know what it is to be just by believing. What is it that still

clouds the brow, that represses the exulting of the spirit? Why might we not always join in the song of thanksgiving; "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities!" If we have received double for all our sins, why should it ever be needful for us to argue as doth the Psalmist: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul: and why art thou disquieted within me?" Ah! my friends there is not a man among you, who has really believed, who has not felt the disquieting thought of which I am now speaking. There may be some of you who have felt it so painfully, that it has obscured, as with a heavy cloud, the sweet light of the Gospel peace, shining in of the reconciled countenance upon the soul. The thought is this: "I am a justified man; but, alas! I am not a sanctified man. I can look at my past life without despair; but how can I look forward to what is to come?"

There is not a more picturesque moral landscape in the universe than such a soul presents. Forgiven all trespasses that are past, the eye looks inwards with a clearness and an impartiality unknown before, and there it gazes upon its long fostered affections for sin, which, like ancient rivers, have worn a deep channel into the heart, its periodic returns of passion, hitherto irresistible and overwhelming, like the tides of the ocean; its perversities of temper and of habit, crooked and unyielding, like the gnarled branches of a stunted oak. Ah! what a scene is here, what anticipations of the future! what forebodings of a vain struggle against the tyranny of lust! against the old trains of acting, and of speaking, and of thinking! Were it not that the hope of the glory of God is one of the chartered rights of the justified man, who would be surprised if this view of terror were to drive a man back, like the dog to his vomit, or the sow that was washed to wallow again in the mire? Now it is to the man precisely in this situation, crying out at morning and at evening, How shall I be made new? what good shall the forgiveness of my past sins do me, if I be not delivered from the love of sin? it is to that man that we would now, with all earnestness and affection, point out the example of Paul, and the secret power which wrought in him. "*The love of Christ*" (says Paul) "*constraineth us.*" We, too, are men of like passions with yourselves; that same sight which you view with dismay within you, was in like manner revealed to us in all its discouraging power. Nay, ever and anon the same hideous view of our own hearts is opened up to us. But we have an encouragement which never fails. The love of the bleeding Saviour constraineth us. The Spirit is given to them that believe; and that almighty agent hath one argument that moves us continually—THE LOVE OF CHRIST.

My present object, brethren, is to show *how* this argument, in the hand of the Spirit, does move the believer to live unto God; how so simple a truth as the love of Christ to man, continually

presented to the mind by the Holy Ghost, should enable any man to live a life of Gospel holiness; and if there be one man among you whose great inquiry is: How shall I be saved from sin, how shall I walk as a child of God? that is the man of all others, whose ear and heart I am anxious to engage.

1 *The love of Christ to man constraineth the believer to live a holy life, because that truth takes away all his dread and hatred of God.*—When Adam was unfallen, God was everything to his soul; and everything was good and desirable to him, only in so far as it had to do with God. Every vein of his body, so fearfully and wonderfully made, every leaf that rustled in the bowers of Paradise, every new sun that rose, rejoicing like a strong man to run his race, brought him in every day new subjects of godly thought and of admiring praise; and it was only for that reason that he could delight to look on them. The flowers that appeared on the earth, the singing of birds, and the voice of the turtle heard throughout the happy land, the fig tree putting forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grapes giving a good smell, all these combined to bring in to him at every pore a rich and varied tribute of pleasantness. And why? Just because they brought into the soul rich and varied communications of the manifold grace of Jehovah. For just as you may have seen a child on earth devoted to its earthly parent; pleased with everything when he is present, and valuing every gift just as it shows more of the tenderness of that parent's heart, so was it with the genuine child of God. In God he lived, and moved, and had his being; and not more surely would the blotting out the sun in the heavens have taken away that light which is so pleasant to the eyes, than would the hiding the face of God from him have taken away the light of his soul, and left nature a dark and desolate wilderness. But when Adam fell, the fine gold became dim, the system of his thoughts and likings was just reversed. Instead of enjoying God in everything, and everything in God, everything now seemed hateful and disagreeable to him, just in as far as it had to do with God.

When man sinned, then he feared, and hated Him whom he feared; and fled to all sin just to flee from Him whom he hated. So that, just as you may have seen a child who has grievously transgressed against a loving parent, doing all it can to hide that parent from its view; hurrying from his presence, and plunging into other thoughts and occupations, just to rid itself of the thought of his justly offended father—in the very same way when fallen Adam heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, that voice which, before he sinned, was heavenly music in his ears—*then did Adam and his wife hide themselves from the presence of the Lord, among the trees of the garden.* And in the same way does every natural man run from the voice and presence of the Lord, not to hide under the thick embowering leaves of Paradise, but to bury himself in cares, and business

and pleasures and revellings. Any retreat is agreeable, where God is not; any occupation is tolerable, if God be not in the thoughts. Now I am quite sure that many of you may hear this charge against the natural man with incredulous indifference, if not with indignation. You do not feel that you hate God, or dread his presence; and, therefore, you say it cannot be true. But, brethren, when God says of your heart, that it is "desperately wicked," yea, unsearchably wicked, who can know it? when God claims for himself the privilege of knowing and trying the heart; is it not presumptuous in such ignorant beings as we are, to say that that is not true, with respect to our hearts, which God affirms to be true, merely because we are not conscious of it? God saith that "*the carnal mind is enmity against God*," that the very grain and substance of an unconverted mind is hatred against God, absolute, implacable hatred against him in whom we live, and move, and have our being. It is quite true that we do not feel this hatred within us; but that is only an aggravation of our sin and of our danger. We have so choked up the avenues of self-examination, there are so many turnings and windings, before we can arrive at the true motives of our actions; that our dread and hatred of God, which first moved man to sin, and which are still the grand impelling forces whereby Satan goads on the children of disobedience; these are wholly concealed from our view, and you cannot persuade a natural man that they are really there. But the Bible testifies, that out of these two deadly roots—dread of God and hatred of God—grows up the thick forest of sins with which the earth is blackened and overspread. And if there be one among you, brethren, who has been awakened by God to know what is in his heart, I take that man this day to witness, that his bitter cry, in the view of all his sins, has ever been: "*Against thee, thee only* have I sinned."

If, then, dread of God, and hatred of God, be the cause of all our sins, how shall we be cured of the love of sin, but by taking away the cause? How do you most effectually kill the noxious weed? Is it not by striking at the root? In the love of Christ to man, then—in that strange, unspeakable gift of God, when he laid down his life for his enemies, when he died the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God; do not you see an object which, if really believed by the sinner, takes away all his dread and all his hatred of God? The root of sin is severed from the stock. In His bearing double for all our sins, we see the curse carried away, we see God reconciled. Why should we fear any more? Not fearing, why should we hate God any more? Not hating God, what desirableness can we see in sin any more? Putting on the righteousness of Christ, we are again placed as Adam was, *with God* as our friend. We have no object in sinning; and, therefore, we do not care to sin. In the sixth chapter of Romans, Paul seems to speak of the believer sinning, as if the very proposition

were absurd. "How shall we, that are dead to sin;" that is, who in Christ have already borne the penalty, "how shall we live any longer therein?" And again he saith very boldly: "Sin *shall not* have dominion over you"—it is impossible in the nature of things—"for ye are not under the law, but under grace;" ye are no longer under the curse of a broken law, dreading and hating God; ye are under grace; under a system of peace and friendship with God.

But is there any one ready to object to me, that if these things be so, if nothing more than that a man be brought into peace with God is needful to a holy life and conversation, how comes it that believers do still sin? I answer, it is indeed too true that believers do sin; but it is just as true that unbelief is the cause of their sinning. If, brethren, you and I were to live with our eye so closely on Christ bearing double for all our sins, freely offering to all a double righteousness for all our sins; and if this constant view of the love of Christ maintained within us, as assuredly it would, if we looked with a straightforward eye; the peace of God which passeth all understanding; the peace that rests on nothing in us, but upon the completeness that is in Christ, then, brethren, I do say, that, frail and helpless as we are, we should never sin; we should not have the slightest object in sinning. But, ah! my friends, this is not the way with us. How often in the day is the love of Christ quite out of view! How often is it obscured to us! sometimes hid from us by God himself, to teach us what we are. How often are we left without the realizing sense of the completeness of his offering, the perfectness of his righteousness, and without the will or the confidence to claim an interest in him! Who can wonder, then, that, where there is so much unbelief, dread and hatred of God should again and again creep in, and sin should often display its poisonous head? The matter is very plain, brethren, if only we had spiritual eyes to see it. If we live a life of faith on the Son of God, then we shall assuredly live a life of holiness. I do not say we ought to do so; but I say, we shall, as a matter of necessary consequence. But in as far as we do not live a life of faith, in so far we shall live a life of unholiness. It is through faith that God purifies the heart; and there is no other way.

Is there one of you, then, brethren, desirous of being made new, of being delivered from the slavery of sinful habits and affections? We can point you to no other remedy but the love of Christ. Behold how he loved you! See what he bore for you; put your finger, as it were, into the prints of the nails, and thrust your hand into his side; and be no more faithless, but believing. Under a sense of your sin, flee to the Saviour of sinners. As the timorous dove flies to hide itself in the crevices of the rock, so do you flee to hide yourself in the wounds of your Saviour; and when you have found him, like the shadow of a great rock in a

weary land; when you sit under his shadow, with great delight; you will find that he hath slain all the enmity; that he hath accomplished all your warfare. God is now for you. Planted together with Christ in the likeness of his death, you shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. Dead unto sin, you shall be alive unto God.

2. *The love of Christ to man constraineth the believer to live a holy life; because that truth not only takes away our fear and hatred, but stirs up our love.*—When we are brought to see the reconciled face of God in peace, that is a great privilege. But how can we look upon that face, reconciling and reconciled, and not love him who hath so loved us! Love begets love. We can hardly keep from esteeming those on earth who really love us, however worthless they may be. But, ah! my friends, when we are convinced that God loves us, and convinced in such a way as by the giving up of his Son for us all, how can we but love him, in whom are all excellences—everything to call forth love? I have already shown you that the Gospel is a restorative scheme; it brings us back to the same state of friendship with God which Adam enjoyed, and thus takes away the desire of sin. But now I wish to show you, that the Gospel does far more than restore us to the state from which we fell. If rightly and consistently embraced by us, it brings us into a state far better than Adam's. It constrains us by a far more powerful motive. Adam had not this strong love of God to man shed abroad in his heart; and, therefore, he had not this constraining power to make him live to God. But our eyes have seen this great sight. Before us Christ hath been evidently set forth crucified. If really we believe, his love hath brought us into peace, through pardon; and because we are pardoned and at peace with God, the Holy Ghost is given us. What to do? Why, just to shed abroad this truth over our hearts, to show us more and more of this love of God to us, that we may be drawn to love him who hath so loved us, to live to him who died for us and rose again.

It is truly admirable to see how the Bible way of making us holy is suited to our nature. Had God proposed to frighten us into a holy life, how vain would have been the attempt! Men have always an idea, that if one came from the dead to tell us of the reality of the doleful regions where dwell, in endless misery, the spirits of the damned, that that would constrain us to live a holy life; but, alas! brethren, what ignorance does this not show of our mysterious nature! Suppose that God should this hour unveil before our eyes the secrets of those dreadful abodes where hope never comes; nay, suppose, if it were possible, that you were actually made to feel for a season the real pains of the lake of living agony, and the worm that never dies; and then that you were brought back again to the earth, and placed in your old situation, among your old friends and companions; do you really

think that there would be any chance of your walking with God as a child? I doubt not you would be frightened out of your positive sins; the cup of godless pleasure would drop from your hand; you would shudder at an oath, you would tremble at a falsehood, because you had seen and felt something of the torment which awaits the drunkard, and the swearer, and the liar, in the world beyond the grave; but do you really think that you would live to God, any more than you did; that you would serve him better than before? It is quite true you might be driven to give larger charity; yea, all your goods to feed the poor, and your body to be burned; you might live strictly and soberly, most fearful of breaking one of the commandments, all the rest of your days: but this would not be living to God; you would not love him one whit more. Ah! brethren, you are sadly blinded to your curiously formed hearts, if you do not know that love cannot be forced; no man was ever frightened into love, and, therefore, no man was ever frightened into holiness.

But thrice blessed be God, he hath invented a way more powerful than hell and all its terrors; an argument mightier far than even a sight of those torments; he hath invented a way of *drawing us* to holiness. By showing us the love of his Son, he calleth forth our love. He knew our frame, he remembered that we were dust, he knew all the peculiarities of our treacherous hearts; and, therefore, he suited his way of sanctifying to the creature to be sanctified. And thus, the Spirit doth not make use of terror to sanctify us, but of love: "*The love of Christ constraineth us.*" *He draws us by "the cords of love, by the bands of a man.*" What parent does not know that the true way to gain the obedience of a child, is to gain the affections of the child? And think you, God, who gave us this wisdom, doth not himself know? Think you he would set about obtaining the obedience of his children, without first of all gaining their affections? To gain our affections, brethren, which by nature rove over the face of the world, God hath sent his son into the world to bear the curse of our sins. "Though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be made rich."

And oh! if there is but one of you who will consent this day, under a sense of undoneness, to flee for refuge to the Saviour, to find in him the forgiveness of all sins that are past, I know well, that from this day forth you will be like that poor woman which was a sinner, which stood at Christ's 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. Forgiven much, you will love much; loving much, you will live to the service of Him whom you love. This is the grand master-principle of which we spoke; this is the secret spring of all the holiness of the saints. The life of holiness is not what the world falsely

represents it, a life of preciseness and painfulness, in which a man crosses every affection of his nature. There is no such thing as self-denial in the Popish sense of that word in the religion of the Bible. The system of restrictions and self-crossings is the very system which Satan hath set up as a counterfeit of God's way of sanctifying. It is thus that Satan frightens away thousands from Gospel peace and Gospel holiness; as if to be a sanctified man were to be a man who crossed every desire of his being, who did everything that was disagreeable and uncomfortable to him. My friends, our text distinctly shows you that it is not so. We are constrained to holiness by the love of Christ; the love of him who loved us, is the only cord by which we are bound to the service of God. The scourge of our affections is the only scourge that drives us to duty. Sweet bands and gentle scourges! Who would not be under their power?

And, finally, brethren, if Christ's love to us be the object which the Holy Ghost makes use of, at the very first, to draw us to the service of Christ, it is by means of the same object that he draws us to persevere even unto the end. So that if you are visited with seasons of coldness and indifference, if you begin to be weary, or lag behind in the service of God, behold! here is the remedy: Look again to the bleeding Saviour. That Sun of Righteousness is the grand attractive centre, round which all his saints move swiftly, and in smooth harmonious concert, "*not without song*." As long as the believing eye is fixed upon his love, the path of the believer is easy and unimpeded; for that love always constraineth. But lift off the believing eye, and the path becomes impracticable, the life of holiness a weariness. Whosoever, then, would live a life of persevering holiness, let him keep his eye fixed on the Saviour. As long as Peter looked only to the Saviour, he walked upon the sea in safety, to go to Jesus; but when he looked around, and saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid, and beginning to sink, cried, "Lord, save me!" Just so will it be with you. As long as you look believingly to the Saviour, who loved you, and gave himself for you, so long you may tread the waters of life's troubled sea, and the soles of your feet shall not be wet; but venture to look around upon the winds and waves that threaten you on every hand, and, like Peter, you begin to sink, and cry, "Lord, save me!" How justly, then, may we address to you the Saviour's rebuke to Peter: "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" Look again to the love of the Saviour, and behold that love which constraineth thee to live no more to thyself, but to him that died for thee and rose again.

College Church, August 30, 1835

SERMON XXXI.

ARISE, SHINE.

"Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." —Isa. lx., 1-3

These words are yet to be fulfilled in Jerusalem. It has been long trodden down by the Gentiles, its walls are desolate, its temple burnt, and the Mosque of Omar raised over it in cruel mockery. The ways of Zion do mourn; because none come to the solemn feasts. No sunbeam pours upon the dark brow of Judah; no star of Bethlehem sparkles in their sky. But another day is at hand. The time is coming when a voice shall be heard saying to Jerusalem; "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."

Observe, 1. It shall be a time when the world is in darkness; "For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people." The whole Bible bears witness that the time when the Jew is to be enlightened is to be a time when the world is dark and unenlightened. Paul says plainly that the world will be dead, one great dead mass, when God gives life to the Jews: "If the casting away of them has been the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?"

2. In that time of darkness, the Lord Jesus shall reveal himself to the Jews, the veil shall be taken away, and that glorious Bridegroom shall come forth to them: "The Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee." Like the rising sun appearing above the hills, tinging all Mount Olivet with living gold, then pouring down upon the prostrate ruins of Jerusalem, till the holy hills smile again in his cheering ray; so shall it be with desolated Judah. Christ shall arise upon their souls, the day shall dawn, and the day-star arise on their hearts. Christ shall appear beautiful and glorious, and they shall submit with joy to put on his imputed righteousness. His glory, his beauty, his comeliness shall be seen upon them.

3. Observe the command of God to the enlightened Jews: "Arise, shine." Hitherto they have been sitting on the ground, desolate, in darkness; but when Christ is revealed to them, they shall give life to the dead world, they shall be the lights of a dark world. The word is, "Arise, shine." As Christ rises upon them, so they must rise on the dark world; as Christ shines upon them, so they must reflect his beauty and his brightness all around. Even as the moon, in itself dark and desolate, does not drink in

the rays of the sun, but arises and shines, reflecting his beams on the dark earth; so shall it be with the enlightened Jews.

4. The effect: "The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." When the songs of the ransomed Israelites are heard in their native mountains, their mouth filled with laughter and their tongue with singing, then shall the nations say: "The Lord hath done great things for them." Ten men out of all languages of the nations shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying: "We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you." When the psalms of Israel rise from under their vine and their fig-tree, even kings shall lay by their crowns, and come to learn of them the way to peace. Dear brethren, pray for the Jews, pray for the peace of Jerusalem. Oh! hasten the happy day. The Lord will hasten it in his time.

Doctrine.—Christ arises and shines upon souls, in order that they may arise and shine.

I. By nature men are in a state of darkness. Verse 2: "Darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the people." When Christ arises upon a soul, he finds it in utter darkness.

1. *He does not know himself.*—A man in the dark cannot see himself, he cannot see his own hand before him, he cannot tell whether his hands are filthy or clean; so is it with all of you who are in an unconverted state. You do not know yourselves. Your fingers are defiled, your garments are stained; but you know it not. Impure desires are written in your heart; but you cannot read what is there. You say: "Peace, peace, when there is no peace."

2. *A natural man shrinks from the light.*—A person who has been long in a dark dungeon, cannot bear the glaring light; it hurts the eyes; he starts back into his darkness; so is it with all unconverted souls. You love the darkness rather than the light; because your deeds are evil. When the light of God's holy law is brought upon you, you shrink back from it. When Jesus, who is the light of the world, is preached unto you, you shut your eyes closer than before. Is there none of you who has felt that when Christ is fully preached to you, when you have been compelled for a little to bear the light of his lovely countenance shining through the Word, when you have gone home, did you not creep back with delight to other thoughts of sin and worldliness? The more that sun shone, the more you have closed your eyes. Oh! how plainly you are in darkness, and a lover of it.

3. *A natural man gropes after salvation.*—A man in the dark gropes like the blind. If he wants to find the door, he is obliged to feel for it; he gropes about, not knowing where to place his hand; often he goes in the very opposite direction: so is it with natural men seeking salvation, they grope for it in the dark. "We

grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes: we stumble at noonday as in the night; we are in desolate places as dead men." Isa. lix., 10. Do you not remember a time when you were alarmed about your soul? a sudden threatening of death, or the near approach of a sacrament, awakened you to tremble for your soul. And where did you go for peace? You did not know where to go; you groped for it; you did not know where to turn yourself. You were directed to Jesus; but you could comprehend him: "The darkness comprehended it not." How plain that you are in gross darkness!

4. *They know not at what they shall stumble.*—A man in the dark does not know what he may come against. His next step may be over a precipice, or upon dark mountains; so is it with Christless souls: "The path of the wicked is as darkness; they know not at what they shall stumble." Oh! poor blinded souls, that walk so boldly in sin; ye know not what ye do. You that know you have never come to Christ, and yet walk with a light, confident step, as if you were to walk on a smooth carpet for ever, awake, dear souls. Do not rush on in the dark; for fear, and the pit, and the snare are in the way, and many bold sinners have gone down quick into hell. Give glory to the Lord before your feet stumble on the dark mountains, and while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness.

II. Learn how a soul is brought into light and peace; "The Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee."

1. *It is by Christ rising upon the soul.*—The image here is taken from the rising of the sun. When the sun rises, then all is light; so when Christ rises upon the soul, all is light. When God first awakens a soul, he finds himself sitting in gross darkness and the shadow of death; he fears he shall soon be cast into outer darkness. He says, I must make my way to light; so he struggles to justify himself, he tries to blot out his past sins by repentance, he tries to mend his life; but he is met by the word: "Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks, walk in the light of your fire and in the sparks that ye have kindled; this shall ye have of mine hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow." So he sits down in agony, in more midnight darkness than before; but man's extremity is God's opportunity. The soul is sitting, as it were, in a dungeon; he sees no way of peace. The Spirit opens the Word, and Christ shines through, Christ the Son of God, the Lord our Righteousness. The heart of Christ is revealed, his love to the lost, his undertaking for them, his suretyship obedience, his suretyship sufferings. Glorious Christ! precious Christ! He shines like a new sun, the soul gazes and says: "Truly light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun." Has Christ risen upon you? Has he been revealed to you, that better Sun? Oh! if not, you are of all men

most miserable; you are sitting in darkness and the shadow of death. Oh! what are all the sparks of worldly pleasure, what are all the fires and torches of the world's kindling? They are like the glowworm's deceitful blaze, they are leading you to ruin; they will soon go out, and leave you to the blackness of darkness for ever.

Anxious souls, learn to look out for peace.—Oh! how anxiously you search that bosom, to see if there is any change there which may give you peace. Now, change your plan. No more gaze into that foul dungeon; but look out upon the glorious Sun, look upon Christ: one look to him gives peace.

Learn to wait for light.—Be like those that wait for the morning. You can no more bring yourself into peace than you can change the course of the sun. Feel your vileness, feel your helplessness, and wait on his hand to take the veil away. "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."

2. *Christ's glory is put upon the soul:*—"His glory shall be seen upon thee." It has long been discovered that color is nothing in the object, but is all thrown upon it by the sun, and reflected back again. The beautiful colors with which this lovely world is adorned, all proceed from the sun. His glory is seen upon the earth. It is all the gift of the sun that the grass is of that refreshing green, and the rivers are lines of waving blue; it is all the gift of the sun that the flowers are tinged with their thousand glories; that the petal of the rose has its delicate blush, and the lily, that neither toils nor spins, a brightness that is greater than Solomon's. Now, my dear souls, this is the way in which you may be justified. You are dark, and vile, and worthless in yourselves; but Christ's glory shall be seen on you.

Observe it is His *glory.*—If you only consent to take Christ for your surety, his divine righteousness is all imputed to you; his sufferings, his obedience are both yours. Tell me, anxious soul, what are you seeking? "I am seeking to make myself appear better in the sight of God." Well, then, do you think you will ever make yourself appear as lovely and glorious as Jesus Christ in the eyes of God? "No, I have no hope of that." Ah! then, look here. Christ himself is offered you for a covering; put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. Oh! that God would open some heart to believe the word concerning Jesus. Oh! to see dust and ashes clothed in the brightness and beauty of Christ! Oh! to see a weary sinner perfect in beauty, through Christ's comeliness! This is the loveliest sight in all the world. "His glory shall be seen upon thee."

III. The command to all in Christ: "*Arise, shine.*" There never yet was a man saved for himself. God never yet made a Chris-

tian to be a selfish being. "Ye are the salt of the earth." But salt is not for itself, but to be used. A city set on a hill cannot be hid; so a Christian is set upon God's holy hill not to be hid. No man lighteth a candle and putteth it under a bushel or a bed, but on a candlestick, and then it gives light to all that are in the house. But here is a more wonderful comparison still: "Arise, shine." Christians are to become like Christ—little suns, to rise and shine upon the dark world. He rises and shines upon us, and then says to us, "Arise, shine." This is Christ's command to all on whom he has arisen: "Arise, shine." Dear Christians, ye are the lights of the world. Poor, and feeble, and dark, and sinful, though you be, Christ has risen upon you for this very end, that you might "Arise and shine."

1. *Be like the sun, which shineth every day, and in every place.*—Wherever he goes he carries light; so do you. Some shine like the sun in public before men, but are dark as night in their own family. Dear Christians, look more to Christ, and you will shine more constantly.

2. *Shine with Christ's light.*—The moon rises and shines, but not with her own light, she gathers all from the sun; so do you. Shine in such a way that Christ shall have all the glory. They shine brightest who feel most their own darkness, and are most clothed in Christ's brightness. Oh! wherever you go, make it manifest that your light and peace all come from him; that it is by looking unto Jesus that you shine; that your holiness all comes from union to him. "Let your light so shine before men."

3. *Make it the business of your life to shine.*—If the sun were to grow weary of running his daily journey, and were to give over shining, would you not say it should be taken down? for did not God hang it in the sky to give light upon the earth? Just so, dear Christians, if you grow weary in well-doing, in shining with Christ's beauty, in walking by Christ's Spirit, you, too, should be taken down and cast away; for did not Christ arise upon you for this very end, that you might be a light in the world? Ah! think of this, dark, useless Christians, who are putting your candle under a bushel. I tremble for some who will not lay themselves out for Christ. Ah! you are wronging yourselves and dishonoring Christ. Your truest happiness is in shining; the more you shine for Christ, the happier you will be. "To me to live is Christ; and to die, gain."

4. *Shine far and near.*—You are this day besought to help your brethren in the colonies; to send them the Gospel, that the Sun of Righteousness may rise upon them. *Obj.* Better help the heathen at home. *Ans.* It is quite right to help the heathen at home; but it is just as right to help the heathen abroad. Oh! that God would free you from a narrow mind, and give you his own divine Spirit. Learn a lesson from the sun. It shines both far and near; it does not pour its beams all into one sunny valley, or on one

bright land. No; it journeys on from shore to shore; pours its rich beams upon the wide ocean; on the torrid sands of Africa and the icy coasts of Greenland. Go you and do likewise. Shine as lights in the world.

Shine in your closet in secret prayer. Ah! let your face shine in secret communion with God. Shine in your family; that without the word you may gain their souls. Shine in your town; that, when you mingle with the crowd, it may be as if an angel shook his wings. Shine in the world; embrace every shore with the beams of living love. Oh! let your heart's desire and prayer be, that every soul may be saved. Be like Christ himself, who is not willing that any should perish. And whenever a soul sinks into the dark lake of eternal agony, may you be able to lift up your tearful eyes and say: Father, I have prayed to the last, and spoken to the last. "Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight."

SERMON XXXII.

MELTING THE BETRAYER.

"When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me."—John xiii., 21.

THERE are many excellent and most Christian men who think that the feast of the Lord's Supper should never be sullied or interrupted by allusions to those who may be eating and drinking unworthily. They think that when men have, by their own solemn act and deed, deliberately seated themselves at the table of the Lord, that table to which none but believers in Jesus are invited, they think that, for the time being, at least, it is the part of that charity which hopeth all things, to address them as if all were the genuine disciples of Jesus, and children of God. These good men know well that there are always many intruders into that holy ordinance; they know that many come from mere custom, and a sense of decency, and from a dislike to be marked out as openly irreligious and profane; and though they feel, in addressing the whole mass as Christians, many a rise of conscience within, many a sad foreboding that the true guests may be the little flock, while the intruders may be the vast majority; yet they do not feel themselves called upon to disturb the enjoyment of the believing flock, however few they may be, by insinuating any such dark suspicion as that there may be some there who have already sold their Lord for their sins; some who, though they may eat bread with him, yet lift up the heel against him.

Now, a most complete answer to the scruples of these good men is to be found in the example of our blessed Lord. In that night, so much to be remembered, in which he instituted the Lord's Supper, a night in which nothing but kindness and tenderness flowed from his blessed lips, we find that no fewer than five times over did he begin to speak about his betrayer. In many respects that was the most wonderful evening that ever was in the world, and that upper room in Jerusalem the most wonderful room that ever was in the world. Never did the shades of evening gather round a more wonderful company, never did the walls of an upper chamber look upon so wonderful a scene. Three strange events were crowded into that little space. 1*st*, There was the washing the disciples' feet; the Lord of glory stooping as a servant to wash the feet of poor worms! 2*d*, There was the last passover, eating of the lamb and the bitter herbs, which had been the memorial of the dying Saviour to all believing Jews, but which was now to come to an end. 3*d*, There was the first Lord's Supper, the breaking of bread and pouring out of wine, and the giving and receiving of it, which was to be the memorial of his dying love even to the end of the world. Oh! what an assemblage of love was here! what a meeting together of incidents, each one more than another picturing forth the inexpressible love of Jesus! Oh! what an awfully tender hour was this! Oh! what an awfully tender joy was now thrilling through the bosoms of his believing disciples! Oh! brethren, what an exulting gladness would now fill the bosom of the courageous Peter! what an adoring love the breast of the Israelite indeed, the simple-hearted Nathaniel! and what a breathing of unspeakable affection in the heart of the beloved John, as he leaned on the dear Saviour's bosom! Oh! who would break in on such an hour of holy joy with harsh and cruel words about the betrayer? who would dare to ruffle the calm tranquillity of such a moment by one word of dark suspicion? Hush! brethren, it is the Saviour that speaks: "*Verily, verily, I say unto you that one of you shall betray me.*"

I trust, then, my friends, you see plainly, from the example of our blessed Lord, that the awfully solemn warning of the text, instead of being a rash and unwarrantable intrusion upon the joyous feelings with which every true disciple should encompass the table of the Lord, is, of all other Scriptures, the most appropriate, and the most like what Jesus would have us to say upon this solemn occasion. It is not, then, with the harshness of unfeeling man, but it is with the tenderness of the compassionate Jesus, that we repeat these words in your hearing: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me."

There is a cruel kindness, almost too cruel, one would think, for this cruel world, which is sometimes practised by the friends of a dying man, when from day to day they mark the approaches of death upon his pallid cheek, and yet they will not breathe a

whisper of his danger to him. They flatter him with murderous lies, that he is getting better, and will yet see many days, when his days are numbered. But ten thousand times more cruel, more base and unfeeling, would that minister be, who, set over you by God to care for your never-dying souls, should yet look upon those of you who surround so willingly the table of the Lord, but whose whole life, and walk, and conversation, proclaim you to be the betrayers of that Lord, and not once lift up the warning cry: "Ye are not all clean. Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me."

Ques.—What could be Christ's reason for so often and so solemnly speaking of his betrayer?

Ans.—I can see no other reason for it but that he might make one last effort to melt the heart of his betrayer.

Doctrine.—Christ is earnestly seeking the salvation of those unconverted persons who sit down at his table.

There are two arguments running through the whole of this scene by means of which Jesus tried to melt the betrayer. 1*st*, *His perfect knowledge of him.* As if he had said: I know thee, Judas; I know thy whole life and history; I know that thou hast always been a thief and a traitor; I know that thou hast sold me for thirty pieces of silver; I know all thy plans and all thy crimes. In this way he tried to awaken the traitor, to make him feel himself a lost sinner. 2*d*, *His anxious love for him.* As if he had said, I love thee, Judas; I have left the bosom of the Father just for lost sinners like thee; I pitied thee before the world was; I am quite willing still to be a Saviour to thee. In this way he tried to win the traitor, to draw him to himself.

I. All the Saviour's dealings with Judas were intended to convince him that he knew his whole heart: "I know thee, Judas, and all thy crimes."

1. This was plainly his intention when washing the disciples' feet, and telling them, that if they be bathed in his blood, they need nothing more than to have their feet washed, their daily sins wiped off daily: "Ye are clean every whit." He then adds, but "*Ye are not all clean.*" This was evidently intended as a hint to Judas, to awaken his guilty conscience.

2. And then, when he had sat down again to partake of the passover with them, and had sent round the cup of the passover, saying, as we are told in Luke, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves," he would not let Judas slumber, as if he were unknown to him; but declares more plainly than before, "I know whom I have chosen; but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me." This was evidently intended as a plainer intimation to Judas, that, however concealed he might be to others, he was naked and laid open to the eyes of the Saviour, with whom he had to do.

3. And, *thirdly*, when he was about to put the bread and wine into their hands, to institute the holy ordinance of the supper, he would not do it without a still more convincing proof to the conscience of Judas that he knew him perfectly, "As they did eat, he said, Verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me: and they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I? And he answered, He it is that dippeth his hand with me in the dish; he it is that betrayeth me. And Judas answered and said, Lord, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said." Here we find the Saviour no longer deals in hints and intimations, but tells him plainly he is the man. Oh! my friends, if we did not know the deceitfulness of the natural heart, how it evades the most pointed declarations of the Word, we would be amazed that the heart of Judas was not overwhelmed with the conviction, "Thou, Lord, seest me." But no; the arrows of the Saviour, so faithfully directed, yet strike off from his heart as from a flinty rock, and Judas still sits at the table of the Lord, still secure, to receive with his bloody hands (those hands which had so lately received the thirty pieces of silver, the price of blood) the symbols of the Saviour's broken body, which he himself was to betray. Ah! my friends, are there no hearts here like Judas', from which the plainest arrows of conviction, having written on them, "Thou art the man," glance off, without even wounding? Are there none of you who sit, Judas-like, with unclean hands to receive the memorials of the Saviour whom you are betraying?

4. And, last of all, when the feast of love was over, when Judas, with unaffected conscience, had swallowed down the bread and wine, whose sacred meaning he did not, and could not, know; Jesus, deeply affected, "being troubled in spirit," made one last effort, more pointed than all that went before, to thrust the arrow of conviction into the heart of Judas. When the beloved John, lying on Jesus' breast, saith unto him: "Lord, who is it? Jesus answered, He it is to whom I shall give a sop when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it" (unseen, it would appear, by all the rest) "to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. And Jesus said unto him, That thou doest, do quickly." That this pointed word of the Lord was intended to awaken Judas, and for no other reason, is plain from the fact that "no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him. For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor." So secretly, but so powerfully, did the Saviour seek to awaken the slumbering conscience of the traitor. How was it possible he could miss the conviction that Christ knew all the thoughts and intents of his heart? how did he not fall down and confess that God was in him of a truth; or, like the Samaritan woman: "Come, see a man that told me

all things that ever I did. Is not this the Christ?" But Satan had his dark, mysterious hold upon him; and not more dark was the gloomy night which met his eyes as he issued forth upon his murderous errand, than was the dark night within his traitorous breast.

Now, brethren, the same Saviour is this day in the midst of us. He walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, his eyes are like a flame of fire, and he searcheth the reins and the hearts. *Think of this, you that are open sinners,* and yet dare to sit down at the table of Christ—swearers, drunkards, Sabbath-breakers, unclean. Ministers and elders may not know your sins: they are weak and short-sighted men. Your very neighbors may not know your sins; you may hide them from your own family. It is easy to deceive man; but to deceive Christ is impossible. He knows your whole history; he is present at every act of dishonesty, of filthiness, of folly. The darkness and the light are both alike to him. *Think of this, you that live in heart sins,* rolling sin beneath your tongue as a sweet morsel; you that put on the outward cloak of seriousness and sobriety, that you may jostle and sit down among the children of God; you that have the speech of Canaan in your lips, but hatred and malice, and the very breath of hell in your hearts; you that have the clothing of sheep, but inwardly are ravening wolves: you that are whited sepulchres, beautiful without, but within full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. Think of this, you that know yourselves unconverted, and yet have dared to sit down at the table of Christ. Christ knows you, Christ could point to you, Christ could name you, Christ could give the sop to you. You may be hidden to all the world, but you are naked and open to the eyes of him with whom you have to do. Oh! that you would fall down beneath his piercing glance, and say: "God be merciful to me, a sinner!" Oh! that every one of you would say: "Lord, is it I?"

II. The second argument which Christ made use of to melt and win the heart of Judas was his love: I have loved thee, Judas, and came to save thee.

1. This was plainly his intention when washing the disciples' feet. He did not shrink from the traitor's feet; yes, he not only stooped to wash the feet of those who were to forsake him and flee; he not only washed the feet of Peter, who was, before cock-crow, to deny him with oaths and curses; but he washed also the feet of Judas, the very feet which had gone, two days before, to the meeting of priests in Caiaphas' palace, where he sold the Saviour for thirty pieces of silver, the value of a slave; and it was in his hearing he spoke the gentle words: "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." If, then, the Saviour's washing the feet of the eleven was so blessed a proof of his tenderness to his own disciples, how much more is his washing the feet of him who (he knew) had betrayed him a proof of his love to sinners, even

the chief! He willed not the death of Judas, he wills not the death of any one of you. You think that, because you have betrayed the Saviour, and come to the feast without any warrant or title, an unbidden intruder, therefore Jesus cannot love you. Alas! this shows your own heart, but not Christ's heart. Behold Jesus washing the feet of Judas, and wiping them with the towel wherewith he was girded; behold his anxiety to awaken and to win the heart of the traitor Judas; and then think how, the more you are a traitor and a betrayer, the more doth Jesus pity you, and wait upon you, willing still to wash and to save you, saying: "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?"

2. The *second* instance of Jesus' love to the traitor is, when he had sat down again, and was eating the passover along with the twelve, he did not shrink from eating meat with the traitor. Yes; he not only sat down to eat with the eleven who were to forsake him and flee, he not only allowed John to recline on his bosom, and Peter to sit at the table, but he suffered Judas to dip his hand in the very same dish with him, even when he knew that he was fulfilling that prophecy which is written: "He that eateth bread with me, hath lifted up his heel against me." It was a blessed proof of the Saviour's love to his believing disciples, as is recorded by Luke, when he said: "With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer." One would have thought that to the eye of the Saviour this passover must have appeared covered with threatening clouds, involved in the deep gloom of the garden of Gethsemane, and the bloody cross from which the sun himself hid his beams. You always find, that when you are in immediate expectation of some calamity, it renders gloomy and uninviting every event that bespeaks its near approach. You would have thought, then, that the human soul of Jesus must have shrunk back from this passover with horror. But no; he felt the shrinking of humanity which more plainly showed itself in the garden, but his love for his own disciples was stronger than all beside, and made him look forward to this passover, when he was to picture out to them his dying love more clearly than ever, with intense desire: "With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer." But how much more wonderful is the proof of the Saviour's love to the unbelieving, to those who care not for him, but are his betrayers and murderers—when, with such divine complacency, he dips his hand in the same dish with Judas, and tells him, at the same time, that he does it not through ignorance, but that the prophecy might be fulfilled: "He that eateth bread with me, hath lifted up the heel against me."

Ah! my unbelieving friends, I know well the dark suspicions that lurk in your bosoms. Because you have done everything against Christ, you think that he cannot have any love for you; but behold, dark and proud sinners, how lovingly, how tenderly,

he tries, if it may be, to awaken and to win over the heart of Judas! and then think how anxious he is this day to win and awaken you, though you are of sinners the chief, to bow that brazen neck, to break that heart of adamant, to wring a tear from those eyes that never wept for sin.

3. The *third* instance of Jesus' love to the traitor is, his faithful declaration of his danger to him: "The Son of Man goeth, as it is written of him; but woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had never been born." In the two former instances Jesus had shown his love, by showing how willing he was to save him to the very uttermost, that he would bear all things to save him; but now he uses another way, he shows him the terror of the Lord, that if he will persist, "it had been good for him that he had not been born." As a mother, when she wishes her child to take some wholesome medicine, first wins upon its love, and then, if that will not do, tries to win upon its fears; with the same more than mother's tenderness did Jesus first try to win upon the affections, and now upon the fears of Judas. And he is the same Saviour this day in the upper chambers of the universe that he was that night in the upper chamber at Jerusalem; and he sends his messengers to you to carry the same messages of kindness and of love. It is only in love that he threatens you. And, oh! that in love we might speak the threatening to you, that if you have no part in Jesus, and yet, by sitting down at his table, are becoming guilty of the body and blood of our Lord, it were better for you that you had not been born. It is a happy thing to live; there is a blessedness which cannot be expressed in having life. The fly that lives but for a day, the veriest worm or insect that crawls upon the ground, has an amount of blessedness in the very fact that it lives, which it is far beyond the skill of man to calculate. To breathe, to move, to feel the morning sun and the evening breeze, to look out upon the green world and the blue sky; all this is happiness immense, immeasurable. It never can be said of a fly or worm, that it had better never been born; but, alas! it may be said of some of you: If you are living, but not living united to Christ, if you are sitting at the table of Christ and yet unconverted, it had been good for you that you had not been born. Ah! my friends, there was once a heathen man who always wept, and got the name of the Weeping Philosopher. One would almost think that he had known this truth which we preach unto you, that if that union which you make with the bread and wine at the holy table be not a picture and a seal of the union between your soul and the Saviour of sinners, you had far better never have been born. Better not to be, than to be only in hell. "They shall wish to die, and shall not be able; they shall seek to die, and death shall flee from them."

4. The *fourth* and last instance of Jesus' love to the traitor is the most touching of all. After the supper was over, *Jesus was troubled in spirit*, and testified and said: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me." It was but a few days before that he came riding down the declivity of Mount Olivet upon an ass's colt; and his disciples, behind and before, were all rejoicing and praising God, crying "Hosanna!" and Jesus —what was he doing? He was weeping: "When he came near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes." He wept over the very city which he doomed to destruction. And just so here; when his disciples on every hand were filled with a holy joy, and John most of all rejoicing, for he lay in the bosom of Immanuel, what was Christ doing—the author of all their joy? He was heavy and troubled in spirit. He was always the man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, but now a ruffle of deeper sorrow came over the placid calm of his holy features: he was troubled in spirit, and said: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, One of you shall betray me." He had tried all arguments to move his betrayer; he had unbosomed the tenderness of his love; he had shown the dreadfulness of his anger; but when he saw that all would not do to move his hard heart, when he saw the heartless unconcern with which Judas could swallow down the bread, and share in the blessed cup, the spirit of the Saviour sank within him; and the last effort of his love to awaken the impenitent murderer was, to unbosom the depth of his sorrows, and to breathe out, with many sighs, the words: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me."

My friends, there may be some within these walls with a heart as hard as that of Judas. Like Judas, you are about to partake of the most moving ordinance the world ever saw; like Judas, you may eat of the bread and drink of the wine; and like Judas, your heart may grow harder, and your life more sinful than ever. And you think, then, that Jesus is your enemy? But what does the Bible say? Look here; he is troubled in spirit; he weeps, as he did over Jerusalem. Yes; he that once shed his blood for you, now sheds his tears for you. Immanuel grieves that you will not be saved. He grieved over Judas, and he grieves over you. He wept over Jerusalem, and he weeps over you. He has no pleasure that you should perish; he had far rather that you would turn and have life. There is not within these walls one of you so hard, so cruel, so base, so unmoved, so far from grace and godliness, so Judas-like, that Jesus does not grieve over your hardness; that you will still resist all his love; that you will still love death, and wrong your own souls. Oh! that the tears which the Saviour shed over your lost and perishing souls might fall upon your hearts like drops of liquid fire; that you might no more

sit unmelted under that wondrous love which burns with so vehement a flame, which many waters cannot quench, which all your sins cannot smother, the love which passeth knowledge. Amen.

Larbert, Aug., 1836.

SERMON XXXIII.

I THE LORD HAVE CALLED THEE IN RIGHTEOUSNESS.

"Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house. I am the Lord; that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images."—Isa. xlii., 5-8.

In this passage we have some of the most wonderful words that ever were uttered in the world. It is not a man speaking to a man, it is not even God speaking to a man, it is God speaking to his own Son. Oh! who would not listen? It is as if we were secretly admitted into the counsel of God—as if we stood behind the curtains of his dwelling-place, or were hidden in the clefts of the rock, and overheard the words of the Eternal Father to the Eternal Son. Now, sometimes when you overhear a conversation on earth, between two poor, perishing worms, you think it is worth treasuring up—you remember what they said—you repeat it over and over again. Oh! then, when you overhear a conversation in heaven—when God the Father speaks, and God the Son stands to receive his words, will you not listen? will you not lay up these sayings in your heart?

God tells the Son: 1. That he had called him to his service—had passed over all his angels, and chosen him for this difficult work. 2. He tells him that he is not to shrink from the difficulties of it. There is an ocean of wrath to wade through, but fear not; I will hold thee by the hand—I will keep thee. 3. He tells him that he must be given as a covenant Saviour. However dear to his heart, still, says God, "I will give thee." 4. He encourages him by the great benefit to be gained—that he would be a light to whole nations of poor, blind, captive sinners. 5. That in all this he would have his glory: "My glory will I not give to another, nor my praise to graven images."

Doctrine.—God has provided the Saviour, and alone can reveal him; and he will keep this glory to himself.

I. *God provided the Saviour.*—He says here : " I have called thee in righteousnesss." The meaning is : I have called thee to do this work of righteousness—to work out this salvation, which shall show me to be a righteous God. God did, as it were, look round all the creatures, to see whom he would call to this great work, of being a Saviour of lost sinners. *He looked upon the earth*, through all its families ; but there was none that understood, there was none that did seek God. Every man had his own curse to bear ; no man could give a ransom for the soul of his brother, for the ransom of the soul was precious. *He looked round all the blooming angels*, as if to say, Who will go for me? Seraphim and Cherubim all stood, veiling their faces with their wings ; but he saw that none of them could bear infinite wrath. They are only creatures ; they would be crushed eternally under the weight of my wrath. These will not do. *He looked into his own bosom.* There was his eternal Son—his dear Son—his well-beloved Son. Oh ! this will do. I have found a ransom ; I have laid help on one who is mighty. My Son, I have called thee in righteousness.

Learn how complete a Saviour Christ is. God did not choose a man to this great work—he did not choose an angel ; he passed by them all, and chose his Son. Why ? Because he saw none other would be a sufficient Saviour. If Christ had not been enough, God never would have called him to it. God knew well the weight of his own wrath ; and, therefore, he provided an almighty back to bear it. Trembling sinner, do not doubt the completeness of Christ. God knew all your sins and your wrath when he chose Christ—that they were both infinite ; and therefore he chose an almighty, an infinite Saviour. Oh ! hide in him, and you are complete in him.

II. *God upheld the Saviour :* " I will hold thine hand, and will keep thee." The figure here seems taken from a father and his little child. When a little child has to go over some very rough road, or to travel in the darkness, or to wade through some deep waters, he says to his father : I fear I shall be lost ; I shall not be able to go through. Nay, do not fear, the father answers : " I will hold thine hand ; I will keep thee." Such are the words of the Father to his dear Son. I would not have dared to have imagined them, if I had not found them in the Bible. When God called his Son to the work, it could not but be a fearful work in his eyes. Christ knew well the infinite number of men's sins ; for he is the searcher of hearts and trier of reins. He knew also the infinite weight of God's anger against these sins ; he saw the dark clouds of infinite vengeance that were ready to burst over the head of sinners ; he saw the infinite deluge of eternal wrath that was to drown for ever the guilty world ; and, oh ! how dreadful his Father's anger was in his eyes ; for he had known nothing but his infinite love from all eternity. Oh ! how could he bear to lie

down under that wrath? How could he bear to exchange the smile of his Father's love for the dark power of his Father's anger? How could he bear, for the sake of vile sinners, to exchange the caresses of that God who is love, for the piercings and bruisings of his almighty hand? Surely the very thought would be agony. God here comforts his Son under the view: Yon sea of wrath is deep—its waves are dreadful; but "I will hold thine hand; I will keep thee."

1. Learn from this how dreadful the sufferings of Christ were. He needed God to hold his hand; he was God himself; thought it no robbery to be equal with God; he had the Spirit given to him without measure: "I have put my Spirit upon him;" but all that would not do: God the Father must hold his hand too. Oh! think what a weight must have been crushing and bruising the Lamb of God, when Father, Son, and Holy Ghost combined their force to hold him up. Oh! think what a depth of agony must have been upon him, when he cried: "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. Take away this cup from me"—and when the Father answered him: "I will hold thine hand—I will keep thee." Oh! my friends, this is a great deep. Cry, "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!"

2. Learn the greatness of your sins. Remember Christ had no sins of his own; no wrath was due to himself; all that wrath he bore was ours. *You that are believers*, you have but a small sense of the greatness of your sins. Oh! look here; see God holding the hand of his Son, while he wades through that sea of wrath! Oh! surely a look at a suffering Christ should keep you in the dust for ever. You must never open your mouth any more. And, oh! will you not love him who so loved you—who lay down under these surges and billows of God's wrath for you?

You that are unconverted. see here the dreadful wrath that is over your souls. You think your sins are very few, and God will not be very angry. This is natural; all natural men think this; and yet see here how dreadful the wrath is that is over you. Even Christ trembled and started back when he came to bear it; and how will you do? You are not the Son of God; you have no divinity within you, as Christ had; how will you be able to bear the bruisings and lashings of God's infinite anger? You have not the Spirit of God given to you, as Christ had, without measure; how will you be able to stand under the outpourings of his eternal indignation? You have not God to take you by the hand. God is not your God, not your friend; he has nowhere said that he will hold you by the hand; ah! how will you wade through an eternal and bottomless sea of wrath? How will you

contend and fight against the fiery billows, where there is no creature, in heaven or in earth, to hold you by the hand? Oh! my friends, it is because you are blind, that you have no fears. Christ saw all that is before you, and it made him tremble; you do not see it, and therefore you do not tremble. You can be happy, and smile, and sleep, and enjoy yourselves; but your day of trembling is at hand. Ah! woe is me! how will you stand upon the shore of that fiery sea? how you will hang back, and wish that you had some one to hold you by the hand; but it will be all in vain. Oh! that you were wise, that you would remember your latter end, that you would consider this.

3. Learn God's great hand in Christ's work. When a father guides his child through some dark part of the road, or through some rapid stream, holding him by the hand, this shows that the father is interested in the journey of the child; so, when God says, "I will hold thee by the hand," this shows that God has a great hand in Christ's work. In writing, if you hold the child's hand, and guide the pen, then you have a great hand in the writing. Just so did God hold the hand of the Saviour. The work is God's as much as Christ's. Oh! that we might give him all the glory! Remember, he will not give his glory to another.

III. *God gave Christ for a covenant:* "I will give thee for a covenant of the people." "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish." "Herein is love; not that we loved God." God not only provided the Saviour, and upheld him, but he gave him, gave him away, to be a covenant Saviour of the people, and a light to lighten the Gentiles. When Abraham bound his son Isaac upon the altar, and lifted up the knife to strike, this was giving away his son at the command of God. This is just what God did. He took his son out of his bosom, and gave him away to be bound, to be a covenant Saviour of the people. There are not more wonderful words in the whole Bible than these; "*I will give thee.*" "God spared not his own Son, but freely delivered him up to the death for us all." *The Son was infinitely dear* to the Father. God cannot but love that which is perfectly holy and beautiful. Now, such was Christ. From all eternity there had been the outgoings of love and infinite admiration from the bosom of the Father towards his well-beloved Son. Canst thou part with me? Canst thou give me up to the garden and the cross? "*I will give thee.*" Sinners were infinitely vile in the sight of the Father. God cannot but hate that which is enmity and rebellion to himself. "He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity." How loathsome and hateful this world must have been in his eyes, where every heart was enmity against him! Canst thou give me up for such sinners, for the sake of such vile worms! "Yes, *I will give thee.*"

1. Learn the intense love of God for sinners. He spared not

his own Son. Herein is love. He loved the happiness of his Son; but he loved the salvation of sinners more. He loved to have his Son in his bosom; but he loved more to have sinners brought into his bosom. He cast out his Son, in order to take us in. Oh! sinner, how will you escape, if you neglect so great a salvation?

2. Learn that God must have the glory of this. He will not give his glory to another. Some awakened persons look to God as an angry, inexorable judge; but to Christ as a smiling Saviour, that comes between us and an angry Father. Now, remember, you will never come to peace as long as you think this. This is robbing God of his glory. You must believe in Christ and believe in God. God wishes you to honor the Son even as you honor the Father; but not more than you honor the Father. You will never come to peace till you look to Christ as the gift of God, till you see that the heart of God and Christ are one in this matter, till God open a window in his breast, and show you the love which provided, upheld, and gave up the Son.

IV. *God gave Christ for a light:* "I will give thee for a light." It is God that causes the sun to rise every morning, so that the dark shades of evening are scattered before him; so it is God that makes Christ rise upon the soul of a sinner.

1. By nature, men have blind eyes. They do not know the beauty of Christ. They read of him in the Word, hear him preached; talked of; they see no form nor comeliness in him; no beauty that they should desire him. They have eyes, but they see not. 2. By nature, men are bound in prison. They serve divers lusts and pleasures; they are bound to selfishness and pride, and luxury, and lust; these things compass them about as with a chain. 3. By nature, men sit in a dark prison-house. They are bound, but do not see that they are bound; they do not see their misery; they sit—they do not strive to get free, but sit contented and happy in their darksome dungeon. Oh! unconverted souls, what a picture this is of your condition! Blind—in prison—contented in the dark dungeon. You will say, I feel it not; I am contented and happy. Ah! does not this just show that this word is true: You are blind, you do not see your misery? When a blind man is in darkness, he feels no pain from it. You are chained; you do not struggle; you sit still in the prison-house. I have often thought that your very ease and contentment might awaken you to think that all is not right.

Now, learn, how a change comes: "I will give thee for a light of the Gentiles." It is all the gift of God. Oh! I fear, we little understand this. There is much robbing God of his glory, even among Christians. When God causes the sun to rise, then nothing can make darkness. The mists and fogs cannot keep back the beams of the sun; so, when God causes Christ to rise on the soul

then there is light. Revealing Christ does the whole work for the soul. It awakens, it wins, it draws, it makes free, it makes holy.

Ques. Has Christ been made to rise upon your soul? If not, then you are still blind, still in chains, and in the dark dungeon; you have neither peace nor holiness. Oh! seek it from God; cry to him, that Christ may give you light.

But, if Christ has been made to rise on your soul, happy are you. You were sometime darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of the light. Now, see who did it, and give him the praise. It is the Lord. God gave Christ to be a light to thy soul. Give him, and him alone, the glory. "My glory I will not give to another." 1. Do not give the praise to yourself; do not say, My own wisdom or my own prayers have gotten me this. It was all undeserved mercy to the chief of sinners. "My glory I will not give to another. 2. Do not give the glory to ministers. They are often the instruments of bringing souls to Christ, but they cannot make Christ arise on the soul, any more than they can make the sun to rise on the earth. We can point to the sun, though we cannot make it rise; so, we can point you to Christ, but cannot make him rise on your soul. The work is God's, and he will have the glory. I believe the work is greatly hindered amongst us from the cause mentioned.

Last. Plead with God to fulfil his word, that Christ may be a light to the nations. It is as easy with God to make Christ rise on many souls as upon one. Show him that it is for his glory that a nation be born in a day. Give him no rest till he pour down the Spirit on all our families, till there be a great looking unto Jesus, and rejoicing in him. Take thine own glory, O Lord, give it to no other; neither thy praise to graven images.

St. Peter's, Jan. 7, 1838.

SERMON XXXIV.

RETURN UNTO ME.

"Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou art my servant: I have formed thee; thou art my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me. I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee."—Isa. xliv., 21, 22.

In these words God contrasts the happy condition of his chosen people with that of the poor blind idolators whom he had been describing in the verses before. Ah! my friends, to the eye of man, there may be little difference between the children of the wicked one and the children of God; but, to the eye of God, they are as different as the chaff from the wheat, as the lily from the

thorn. Of you that are Christless, God says, "He feedeth on ashes" (verse 20); but to you that are his children, "Remember these, O Jacob." May God open our eyes to see wonders out of this Scripture!

I. *All that have come to Christ are forgiven:* "I have blotted out."—Verse 22.

1. *Observe the completeness of their forgiveness:* "I have blotted out as a thick cloud." This complete forgiveness is many ways showed forth in the Bible. 1*st*, It is compared to the change produced on clothes by washing or dyeing them: "Though thy sins be as scarlet, yet shall they be white as snow" (Isa. i., 18); and again, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood." 2*d*, Again, to something covered over: "Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." And Jesus says, "Buy of me white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear." 3*d*, Again, it is compared to something lost. Hezekiah says, "Thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back;" Micah, "Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." But still they may be near at hand? No: "As far as east is distant from the west."—Ps. ciii., 12. But if God were to seek for them? "In those days, and in that time, shall the iniquity of Israel be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found."—Jer. l., 20. 4*th*, To something forgotten: "Thy sins and thine iniquities will I remember no more." "All his transgressions that he hath done, they shall not be mentioned unto him." 5*th*, To something blotted out. Although they be washed, covered, lost, forgotten, yet they will still remain in God's record, yes, they will; but how?—*Blotted out.*

Any of you that believe in Jesus, do you take the Son of God as your Surety? Take this word to yourself. See what the page will be like on which thy sins are written. It will be one great blot; one thick cloud. When you look on the clouds, can you read anything written there?—no more can God read any of thy sins, O believer in Jesus.

2. *Observe, it is present forgiveness.* It is not, I will blot out; but, "I have blotted out." Some say, I hope God will forgive me. Ah! my friends, you greatly mistake the Bible: a present forgiveness is offered to you. The moment a soul closes with Christ, that moment is this word true of him: "I have blotted out." "There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."

Ques. Has God blotted out your sins? 1*st*, Most say I don't know; I never inquired. Oh! sinner, if you never inquired, then I will answer for you; There is not one of them blotted out. Every evil thought, and word, and deed you have done, is written against you; you will meet them all another day. A deceived

heart hath turned thee aside, and thou dost not know that there is a lie in thy right hand. *2d*, Some say, It is impossible to tell; I never saw the book of God's remembrance; how can I tell? True, you never saw the book of God's remembrance, and yet there is another book, and if you would search it much, and believe the word concerning Jesus, you would come to know that you are forgiven. Oh, yes! it is quite possible. David tasted it, and thousands since David have blessed God for forgiving all their iniquities. The woman that touched the hem of Christ's garment felt in herself that she was made whole. She was no physician, and yet she knew that she was well. When a man has a burden on his back, if you lift it off, he knows it at once; so does the heavy laden soul that comes to Jesus, he finds rest.

3. *Observe who blots:* "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions."—Isa. xliii., 25. *1st, Some try to blot out their own sins;* I will be grieved, and sorry for my sins, says one. I will blot them out with tears. I will pray to God, and cover my past sins with my earnest prayers, says another. I will mend my life and cover my naked soul with good deeds, says another. But no; this is all vain; God alone can blot out. Either he will do it, or it will not be done: "I, even I, am he." *2d, Some hope that Christ will blot out their sins*, unknown to the Father. They think that Christ is very willing to be a Saviour, but not so the Father. But no; Christ and the Father are one. If you come to Christ, God himself will do it, and will tell you, "I have done it."

Speak to unforgiven souls: Unhappy man! You have many pleasures and many friends; but one thing you want—the forgiveness of sins. Do you think you would not be happier, lighter in heart, if you were forgiven? Oh! how miserable are all your daily employments and pleasures, when you know that hell is opening its mouth for you. God has never blotted out your sins; yet you might be forgiven: "Unto you, O men, I call; and my words are to the sons of men." Come to Christ, and God will abundantly pardon.

II. *All that have come to Christ are God's servants.* "Thou art my servant, thou art my servant." Two reasons are given: 1. "I have redeemed thee;" 2. "I have formed thee." *1st, Because redeemed.* When a man consents that Christ shall be his Surety, he feels that he is not his own, but bought with a price. So David felt: "Truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds." So Paul felt, when he lay gasping on the ground: "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Before conversion, the unconverted thinks that he is his own: May I not do what I will with mine own? He was the willing slave of the devil. But when he sees the price laid down for him, he feels that the Lord has redeemed him out of the house of bondage. Now he says, I am the Lord's. Now he is more

the servant of the Lord than ever he was of the devil. Oh! dear Christians, would that I could see more of this among you, a devoting of yourselves unto the Lord; "for thou art my servant; thou art my servant." 2*d, Because formed by God:* "I made thee, and formed thee from the womb."—Isa. xliv., 2. The whole work of grace is the Lord's doing, and wondrous in our eyes. Paul says: "It pleased the Lord, who separated me from my mother's womb, to reveal his Son in me;" and God to Jeremiah: "Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee; and before thou camest out of the womb, I sanctified thee." God marks his own from their mother's womb. When infants, God treasures up every prayer for them. Every mother's tears he puts into his bottle, her sighs into his book. In boyhood, he preserves their souls from death, gives them times of awakening, fixes words in their memory: "I girded thee, though thou hast not known me." When his time comes, he guides them to some fitting ministry; or, by some sore trial, awakens, leads to Christ, draws, wins, comforts, builds the soul. He is a faithful Creator. "Sing, O heavens! for the Lord hath done it." That soul becomes a servant indeed.

Some of you know that God has formed you. You can trace his hand, guiding you ever since you were born, girding you when you did not know him, in the mother that wrestled for you, in dear ones that prayed for you, now in their lonely grave, in the ministers that you have been brought to, in the texts they have been guided to. O be the Lord's servant! let him bore thine ear. Bear in your body the marks of the Lord Jesus.

III. *Souls in Christ shall not be forgotten of God:* "Thou shalt not be forgotten of me." The children of God often think their God has forgotten them. Often, when they fall into sin and darkness, they feel cut off from God, as if his mercies were clean gone for ever. But learn here that God never forgets the soul that is in Christ Jesus.

1. So it was with Moses in the land of Midian. For forty years he thought God had forgotten his people. He wandered about as a shepherd in the wilderness for forty years, sad and desolate. But had God really forgotten his people? No; he appeared in a flaming fire in a bush, and said: "I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them; for *I know their sorrows.*" God knows thy sorrows, O soul in Christ. 2. So it was with David, in Ps. lxxvii., xiii., and xxxi. 3. So it was with Hezekiah, when God told him he must die. Hezekiah wept sore: "Like a crane or a swallow so did I chatter; I did mourn as a dove: mine eyes fail with looking upward: O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me." Isa. xxxviii., 14. Did God forget him? No; God said this word to him: "I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy

tears; I will add unto thy days fifteen years." God never forgets the soul in Christ. 4. So shall it be with God's ancient people: "Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." Isa. xlix. 14, 15. 5. So it is in the words of the text: "Thou shalt not be forgotten of me." The world may forget thee, thy friends, thy father, thy mother, may forsake thee; yet "thou shalt not be forgotten of me."

A word to souls in Christ.—The Lord cannot forget you. If you stood before God in your own righteousness, then I see how you might be separated from his love and care; for your frames vary, your goodness is like the morning cloud and early dew. But you stand before him in Christ: and Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. You shall be held in everlasting remembrance. The world may forget you, your friends may forget you, for this is a forgetting world, you may not have a tombstone over your grave; but God will not forget you, Christ will put your name beside that of his faithful martyr, Antipas. In life, in death, in eternity, thou "shall not be forgotten of me."

IV. *A redeemed soul should return unto God:* "Return unto me." The sin and misery of every natural soul is in going away from God. Adam hid himself from the presence of God. So Isaiah complains; "They have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger: they are gone *away backward.*" And God says: "What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me?" "Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? yet my people have forgotten me days without number." But when a soul has come to Christ, there is no more reason why he should return unto God. "Return unto me, for I have redeemed thee." "Through Jesus, we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." "I am the way; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

Dear brethren in Christ, let me entreat you to return unto the Father.

1. *Come into the arms of his love.*—When God has redeemed a soul, he wants to have him in his arms, he wants to fall upon his neck and kiss him. See how he tries to win the soul! tells all that he has done for him, all that he will do; and adds: "Return unto me; for I have redeemed thee." Oh! why are ye fearful, ye of little faith? Why do you hang back, and will not venture near to God? Why do you not run to him? Some say: I am afraid of past sins. Oh! but hear his word: "I have blotted out. Return unto me, for I have redeemed thee." Some say: I am afraid he cannot wish such a sinful, weak thing as I beside him. Oh! foolish, and slow of heart to believe his own word. Does he

not speak plain enough and kind enough? "Return unto me, for I have redeemed thee."

2. Come into communion with him; daily walk with him. Enoch walked with God. Once Adam walked with God in paradise, as easily, Herbert says, "as you may walk from one room to another." He talked with him concerning his judgments. Oh! come unto thy God, redeemed, forgiven soul. Acquaint thyself with God, and be at peace. Come to him; do not rest short of him. You think it a great thing to know a lively Christian; oh! how infinitely better to know God. It is your infinite blessedness. You will get more knowledge in one hour with God, than in all your life spent with man. You will get more holiness from immediate conversing with God, than from all other means of grace put together. Indeed, the means are empty vanity, unless you come to God in them. "Return unto me; for I have redeemed thee."

3. *To the backslider.*—Guilty soul, you have been within the veil; you know the peace that Jesus gives; you know the joy of the smile of God. But you have left all this, and gone away backward. Guilty soul, you have done worse than the world. Worldly men never served Christ as you have done. They have spit on him, and buffeted him, and crucified him; but you have wounded him in the house of his friends: "It was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it; but thou, my friend and mine acquaintance." Guilty soul, what says God unto thee? "Depart thou cursed?" No: "Return unto me; for I have redeemed thee." "Return, O backsliding daughter; for I am married unto you." Return, sinner, thy God calleth thee; the God that chose thee, the Saviour that died for thee, the Comforter that renewed thee. "Return unto me; for I have redeemed thee."

St. Peter's, July 8, 1838.

SERMON XXXV.

I WILL POUR WATER.

"For 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."—Isa. xliv., 3, 4.

THESE words describe a time of refreshing. There are no words in the whole Bible that have been oftener in my heart, and oftener on my tongue than these, since I began my ministry among you. And yet, although God has never, from the very first day left us

without some tokens of his presence, yet he has never fulfilled this promise; and I have taken it up to-day, in order that we may consider it more fully, and plead it more anxiously with God. For, as Rutherford said, "My record is on high, that your heaven would be like two heavens to me; and the salvation of you all, like two salvations to me."

I. *Who is the author in a work of grace?* It is God: "*I will pour.*"

1. It is God who begins a work of anxiety in dead souls. So it is in Zech. xii.: "I will pour out the Spirit of grace and supplications, and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced and mourn." And so the promise is in John xvi.: "When he is come, he will convince the world of sin; because they believe not on me." And so is the passage of Ezek. xxxvii.: "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." If any of you have been awakened, and made to beat upon the breast, it is God, and God alone that hath done it. If ever we are to see a time of wide-spread concern among your families, children asking their parents, parents asking their children, people asking their ministers, "What must I do to be saved?" if ever we are to see such a time as Mr. Edwards speaks of, when there was scarcely a single person in the whole town left unconcerned about the great things of the eternal world, God must pour out the Spirit: "I will pour."

2. It is God who carries on the work, leading awakened persons to Christ. "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh," "and whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered." Joel ii., 28, 32. And again, in John: "He shall convince the world of righteousness." If ever we are to see souls flying like a cloud, and like doves, to Jesus Christ, if ever we are to see multitudes of you fleeing to that city of refuge, if ever we are to see parents rejoicing over their children as new-born, husbands rejoicing over their wives, and wives over their husbands, God must pour out the Spirit. He is the author and finisher of a work of grace: "I will pour."

3. It is God who enlarges his people. You remember, in Zech. iv., how the olive trees supplied the golden candlesticks with oil—they emptied the golden oil out of themselves. If there is little oil, the lamps burn dim; if much oil, the lamps begin to blaze. Ah! if ever we are to see you who are children of God greatly enlarged, your hearts filled with joy, your lips filled with praises; if ever we are to see you growing like willows beside the water-courses, filled with all the fullness of God—God must pour down his Spirit. He must fulfil his word; for he is the Alpha and Omega—the author and finisher of a work of grace: "I will pour."

First Lesson.—Learn to look beyond ministers for a work of

grace. God has given much honor to his ministers; but not the pouring out of the Spirit. He keeps that in his own hand: "I will pour." "It is not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." Alas! we would have little hope, if it depended upon ministers; for where are our men of might now? God is as able to do it for to-day as he was at the day of Pentecost; but men are taken up with ministers, and not with God. As long as you look to ministers, God cannot pour; for you would say it came from man. Ah! cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils. One would think we would be humbled in the dust by this time. In how many parishes of Scotland has God raised up faithful men, who cease not day and night to warn every one with tears! and yet still the heavens are like brass, and the earth like iron. Why? Just because your eye is on man, and not on God. Oh! look off man to him, and he will pour; and his shall be all the glory.

Second Lesson.—Learn good hope of revival in our day.

Third Lesson.—Learn that we should pray for it. We are often for preaching to awaken others; but we should be more upon praying for it. Prayer is more powerful than preaching. It is prayer that gives preaching all its power. I observe that some Christians are very ready to censure ministers, and to complain of their preaching—of their coldness—their unfaithfulness. God forbid that I should ever defend unfaithful preaching, or coldness, or deadness, in the ambassador of Christ! May my right hand sooner forget its cunning! But I do say, where lies the blame of unfaithfulness?—where, but in the want of faithful praying? Why, the very hands of Moses would have fallen down, had they not been held up by his faithful people. Come, then, ye wrestlers with God—ye that climb Jacob's ladder—ye that wrestle Jacob's wrestling—strive you with God, that he may fulfil his word: "I will pour."

II. *God begins with thirsty souls:* "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty."

1. *Awakened persons.*—There are often souls that have been a long time under the awakening hand of God. God has led them into trouble, but not into peace. He has taken them down into the wilderness, and there they wander about in search of refreshing waters; but they find none. They wander from mountain to hill seeking rest, and finding none; they go from well to well, seeking a drop of water to cool their tongue; they go from minister to minister, from sacrament to sacrament, opening their mouth, and panting earnestly; yet they find no peace. These are thirsty souls. Now, it is a sweet thought that God begins with such: "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty." The whole Bible shows that God has a peculiar tenderness for such as are thirsty. Christ, who is the express image of God, had a peculiar

tenderness for them: "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary." "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." Many of his cures were intended to win the hearts of these burdened souls. The woman that had spent all upon other physicians, and was nothing better, but rather worse, no sooner touched the hem of his garment, than she was made whole. Another cried after him, "Lord, help me," yet he answered not a word; but at last said: "O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Another was bowed down eighteen years; but Jesus laid his hands on her, and immediately she was made straight.

Weary sinner, (1.) This is Jesus; this is what he wants to do for you: "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty." Only believe that he is willing and able, and it shall be done. (2.) Learn that it must come from his hand. In vain you go to other physicians; you will be nothing better, but rather worse. Wait on him; kneel and worship him, saying: "Lord, help me." (3.) Oh! long for a time of refreshing, that weary souls may be brought into peace. If we go on in this every-day way, these burdened souls may perish—may sink uncomforted into the grave. Arise, and plead with God, that he may arise and fulfil his word: "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty."

2. *Thirsty believers.*—All believers should be thirsty; alas! few are. Signs: 1. *Much thirst after the Word.*—When two travellers are going through the wilderness, you may know which of them is thirsty, by his always looking out for wells. How gladly Israel came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and seventy palm trees! So it is with thirsty believers; they love the Word, read and preached, they thirst for it more and more. Is it so with you, dear believing brethren? In Scotland, long ago, it used to be so. Often, after the blessing was pronounced, the people would not go away till they heard more. Ah! children of God, it is a fearful sign to see little thirst in you. I do not wonder much when the world stay away from our meetings for the Word and prayer; but, ah! when you do, I am dumb, my soul will weep in secret places for your pride. I say, God grant that we may not have a famine of the Word ere long. (2.) *Much prayer.*—When a little child is thirsty for its mother's breast, it will not keep silence; no more will a child of God who is thirsty. Thirst will lead you to the secret well, where you may draw unseen the living water. It will lead you to united prayer. If the town were in want of water, and thirst staring every man in the face, would you not meet one with another, and consult, and help to dig new wells? Now, the town is in want of grace, souls are perishing for lack of it, and you yourselves are languishing. Oh! meet to pray. "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." (3.) *Desire to grow in grace.*—Some persons are contented when they come to Christ. They sink back, as it were, into an easy chair, they ask no more, they wish no more. This must not be. If you are thirsty believers, you will seek salvation as much after conversion as before it. "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

To thirsty souls.—Dear children, I look for the first drops of grace among you, in answer to your prayers, to fill your panting mouths. Oh, yes, he will pour. "A vineyard of red wine, I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day."—Isa. xxvii., 2, 3. "With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation."—Isa. xii., 3.

III. *God pours floods on the dry ground.*—The dry ground represents those who are dead in trespasses and sins. Just as you have seen the ground, in a dry summer, all parched and dry, cracking and open, yet it speaks not, it asks not the clouds to fall; so is it with most in our parishes. They are all dead and dry, parched and withered, without a prayer for grace, without even a desire for it. Yet what says God? "I will pour floods upon them." Marks:—

1. *They do not pray.*—I believe there are many in our parishes who do not make a habit of secret prayer, who, neither in their closet nor in the embowering shade, ever pour out their heart to God. I believe there are many who are dropping into hell who never so much as said: "God be merciful to me, a sinner." Ah! these are the dry ground. Oh! it is sad to think that the souls that are nearest to hell are the souls that pray least to be delivered from it.

2. *They do not wish a work of grace in their souls.*—I believe many of you came to the house of God to-day who would rather lose house, and home, and friends, than have a work of grace done in your heart. Nothing would terrify you so much as the idea that God might make you a praying Christian. Ah! you are the dry gtound; you love death.

3. *Those who do not attend to the preached Word.*—I have heard anxious persons declare that they never heard a sermon in all their life till they were awakened, that they regularly thought about something else all the time. I believe this is the way with many of you. You are the dry ground. What will God pour out on you? Floods, floods of wrath? No; floods of grace, floods of the Spirit, floods of blessing. Oh! the mercy of God, it passes all understanding. You deserve the flood that came on the world of the ungodly; but he offers

floods of blessing. You deserve the rain of Sodom; but, behold, he offers floods of his Spirit.

First Lesson.—Learn how much you are interested that there should be a work of grace in our day. You are the very persons who do not care about lively preaching; who ridicule prayer-meetings, and put a mock on secret prayer; and yet you are the very persons that are most concerned. Ah! poor dry ground souls, you should be the first to cry out for lively ministers; you should go round the Christians, and, on your bended knees, entreat them to come out to our prayer-meeting. You, more than all the rest, should wait for the fulfilment of this word; for if it come not, oh! what will come of you? Poor dead, dead souls, you cannot pray for yourselves! One by one, you will drop into a sad eternity.

Second Lesson.—Learn, Christians, to pray for floods. It is God's word, he puts it into your mouth. Oh! do not ask for drops, when God offers floods. "Open thy mouth and I will fill it."

IV. *Effects.*

1. Saved souls will be like grass. They shall spring up as grass. So, in Ps. lxxii.: "They of the city shall be like grass of the earth." Many will be awakened, many saved. At present, Christ's people are like a single lily amongst many thorns; but in a time of grace they shall be like grass. Count the blades of grass that spring in the clear shining after a rain; so many shall Christ's people be. Count the drops of dew that come from the womb of the morning, shining like diamonds in the morning sun; so shall Christ's people be in a day of his power. Count the stars that sparkle in night's black mantle; so shall Abraham's seed be. Count the dust of the earth; so shall Israel be in the day of an outpoured Spirit. Oh! pray for an outpoured Spirit, ye men of prayer, that there may be many raised up in our day to call him blessed.

2. Believers shall grow like willows. There is nothing more distressing in our day than the want of growth among the children of God. They do not seem to press forward, they do not seem to be running a race. When I compare this year with last year, alas! where is the difference? the same weaknesses, the same coldness; nay, I fear, greater languor in divine things. How different when the Spirit is poured out! They shall be like willows. You have seen the willow, how it grows, ceases not day or night, ever growing, ever shooting out new branches. Cut it down, it springs again. Ah! so would you be, dear Christians, if there were a flood-time of the Spirit, a day of Pentecost. (1.) Then there would be less care about your business and your workshop, more love of prayer and sweet praises. (2.) There would be more change in your heart, victory over the world, the devil, and the flesh. You would come out, and be separate. (3.)

In affliction, you would grow in sweet submission, humility, meekness. There was a time in Scotland when Sabbath-days were growing days. Hungry souls came to the Word, and went away filled with good things. They came like Martha, and went away like Mary. They came like Samson, when his locks were shorn, and went away like Samson when his locks were grown.

3. Self-dedication. "One shall say, I am the Lord's." Oh! there is no greater joy than for a believing soul to give himself all to God. This has always been the way in times of refreshing. It was so at Pentecost. First they gave their ownselves unto the Lord. It was so with Boston, and Doddridge, and Edwards, and all the holy men of old. "I have this day been before God," says Edwards, "and have given myself—all that I am and have—to God; so that I am in no respect my own. I can challenge no right in myself, in this understanding, this will, these affections. Neither have I right to this body, or any of its members; no right to this tongue, these hands, these feet, these eyes, these ears. I have given myself clean away." Oh! would that you knew the joy of giving yourself away. You cannot keep yourself. Oh! this day try and give all to Him. Lie in his hand. Little children, O that you would become like him who said: "I am God's boy altogether, mother!" Write on your hand; "I am the Lord's."

St. Peter's, July 1, 1838.

SERMON XXXVI.

GOD LET NONE OF HIS WORDS FALL TO THE GROUND.

"Samuel grew and the Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground."—1 Sam. iii., 19

It has long been a matter of sad and solemn inquiry to me, what is the cause of the little success that attends the preaching of the Gospel in our day, and, in particular, in my own parish. Many reasons have risen up before me.

1. *There are reasons in ministers.* (1.) The flocks are too large to be cared for by the shepherd. My own flock is just four times the size a flock used to be in the days of our fathers; so that I am called upon to do the work of four ministers, and am left, like Issachar, couching down between two burdens. (2.) Again, there is little union in prayer among the ministers. Heartburnings and jealousies, and cold suspicions, seem to put a sad bar in the way to this so necessary union. (3.) Again, comparing ministers now with ministers long ago, it is to be feared there is not that longing for the conversion of their people which there used to be; little

weeping between the porch and the altar; little wrestling with God in secret for a blessing on the Word; little travailing in birth till Christ be formed in their people the hope of glory. It is said of the excellent *Alleine*, that he was "infinitely, insatiably greedy of the conversion of souls." It is to be feared there is little of this greediness now. *Matthew Henry* used to say: "I would think it a greater happiness to gain one soul to Christ, than mountains of silver and gold to myself." We have few Matthew Henrys now. *Samuel Rutherford* used to say to his flock: "My witness is above, that your heaven would be two heavens to me; and the salvation of you all as two salvations to me."* Oh that God would give us something of this Spirit now!

2. *There are reasons in Christians.* (1.) There seems little appetite for the word among Christians. I do not mean that there is little hearing—oh, no—this is an age for hearing sermons; but there is little hearing the Word for all that. "One says: I am of Paul; and another, I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ." You come to hear the word of man, but not the word of God. You go away judging and criticising, instead of laying it to heart. Oh, for the time when Christians, like new born babes, would desire the sincere milk of the Word, that they might grow thereby! (2.) Little prayer. Two farmers possessed two fields that lay next to each other. The one had rich crops, the other very scanty ones. "How comes it," said the one to the other, "that your fields bear so well, and mine so poorly, when my land is as good as yours?" "Why, neighbor," said the other, "the reason is this, you only sow your field, but I both sow mine and harrow in the seed." Just so, my dear friends, there is little fruit among Christians, because there is little harrowing in by prayer. I think I could name many Christians among you who do not know one another and never pray with one another. What wonder that there is little fruit!

3. *Reasons in unconverted.* (1.) There is much keeping away from the house of God. I suppose there are at least a thousand persons in my parish who never enter the house of God. Ah! how shall we catch these souls, when they keep so far from the net? (2.) Again, many come only in the afternoons. The very souls that have the most need to hear are those which come but once. How do you expect a work of God, when you cast such open contempt upon his ordinance? (3.) Again, how many keep out of the way when we visit in your houses, lest some word should strike upon your conscience, and you should convert and be healed! How often, when I preach in your houses, do I find ten women for every man! Have the men no souls that they keep away from God's holy ordinance? (4.) Again, there is an awful profaning of the two sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper.

* Robert Bruce—John Welsh.—*Revivalist*, No. 74.

The whole Bible declares that they are intended only for those who have been born again; yet how many rush forward to them with mad and daring hand, drawing down the curse of a seared conscience and a stony heart!

These are painful truths—enough to break the heart of any Christian man that labors among you. Ah! where is the wonder that God should be a stranger in the land, and like a wayfaring man, that turns aside to tarry for a night? And yet this word comes like a beam of sunshine in a storm; God be praised for it! "Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground." Samuel was young in years, and it pleased God to cast him in days just as wicked as ours; and how did God encourage him? In two ways. 1*st*, God was with him.—God stood at his right hand, so that he could not be moved. 2*d*, God did let none of his words fall to the ground. May the Lord give us both these encouragements this day!

Doctrine.—God will not let one word of his ministers fall to the ground.

I. *The Word often works visibly.*

In most cases a work of grace is very visible. 1. When the Spirit awakens the soul to know its lost condition, there are very generally evident marks of awakening. The jailor trembled, and sprung in, and fell down, and said: "What must I do to be saved?" So it is commonly. This is not to be wondered at. If a man be in danger of losing all his money, or his wife, or child, he will often weep, and tremble, and wring the hands, and cry, Woe is me, I am undone. And is there less cause for weeping and trembling, if a man be in danger of losing his own soul? 2. When the soul is brought to peace, there is in general an evident change. "The woman stood behind Christ's feet weeping. She washed them with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head, and kissed them." So it is commonly. The bosom is brought to rest; the eyes are filled with tears of joy; there is a lively attendance on the Word of God; an exultation in singing his praises; the Sabbath is now plainly honored and kept holy; sinful companions are forsaken. Ah! my dear friends, it is my heart's desire and prayer, that these outward marks of a work of grace were more common in the midst of you. I fear there can be no extensive work of grace, where these are wanting.

II. *The Word may be working unseen.*

In some cases the work of grace is quite invisible. I believe that God, for wise reasons, sometimes carries on a work of grace in the heart, secretly and unknown to all the world but to himself. There are three things make me think so:—

1. Christ compared the kingdom of heaven in the heart to leaven and to seed: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which

a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." Now, you know that the process of leavening goes on a long time in the heart of the meal quite unseen; so may the work of grace. Again: "So is the kingdom of God as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how."—Mark iv., 6. Now you know the growing of the seed beneath the cloud is all unseen; so is it often with the work of grace.

2. Who is the workman in conversion? It is the Spirit of God. Now he works unseen, like the wind: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." He works like the dew: "I will be as the dew unto Israel." Now, no man ever yet heard the dew falling. He works like the well. "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up unto everlasting life." If the Spirit work so secretly, no wonder if his work is sometimes unseen.

3. So it has been in fact: Elijah cried, "I, even I, am left alone." How surprised was he to find seven thousand who had never bowed the knee to Baal! So shall it be in the latter day: "Then shalt thou say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro? and who hath brought up these? Behold I was left alone; these, where had they been?"—Isa. xlix., 21.

Encouragement to godly parents, and teachers, and ministers.—I know some of you have long been watching for a work of grace in your children's hearts. Learn this day that God will not let one word fall to the ground. His word shall not return to him void. But you say, Alas! I see no marks of grace. Go to the dough when the leaven has been thrust in, and it is covered up. Do you see any marks of leavening? No, not one. Still the work is going on beneath. So it may be in your child. Go to the field when the seed has been covered in. Do you see any marks of growing? No, not a green speck. Still the work is going on. Turn up the clod, and you will see the seed sprouting. Have patience; weary not in well-doing. Be instant in prayer. God will be faithful to his promise. He will not let one word fall to the ground.

III. *The Word may take effect another day.*

1. It is a curious fact in natural history, that seeds may be preserved for almost any length of time. Seeds that have been kept in a drawer for many years, yet, when sown in their proper season, have been known to spring up, as if they had been but a year old. So it may sometimes be with the seeds of grace. They may be kept long in the soul without in the least affecting

it, and yet may be watered by the Spirit, and grow up many days after.

2. *In general it is not so.*—It is the testimony of an old divine, who was indeed a master in Israel: "That the main benefit obtained by preaching is, by impression made upon the mind at the time, and not by remembering what was delivered."* And what says the Scripture: "Is not my Word like as a fire, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" Now you know that if the fire burns not when it is applied, it will not burn afterwards. If the rock does not break when the hammer strikes, it is not likely to break afterwards. Oh! my dear friends, to-day, while it is called to-day, harden not your hearts. If your hearts do not break under the hammer to-day, I fear they will never break. If they melt not now, under the fire of his love, I fear they will never melt.

3. In some cases, the Word takes effect another day. One faithful man of God labored in his parish for many a long year; and though greatly blessed elsewhere, yet died without, I believe, knowing one of his people brought to the knowledge of the Saviour. Another servant now stands in his room; and souls have been gathered in in crowds, every one declaring that it is the word of their departed minister that comes up into their heart, and makes them flee. Ah! God is a faithful God. He will not let any of his words fall to the ground.

The excellent John Flavel was minister of Dartmouth, in England. One day he preached from these words: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha." The discourse was unusually solemn, particularly the explanation of the curse. At the conclusion, when Mr. Flavel rose to pronounce the blessing, he paused, and said, "How shall I bless this whole assembly, when every person in it who loves not the Lord Jesus is anathema maranatha?" The solemnity of this address deeply affected the audience. In the congregation was a lad named Luke Short, about fifteen years old, a native of Dartmouth. Shortly after he went to sea, and sailed to America, where he passed the rest of his life. His life was lengthened far beyond the usual term. When a hundred years old, he was able to work on his farm, and his mind was not at all impaired. He had lived all this time in carelessness and sin; he was a sinner a hundred years old, and ready to die accursed. One day, as he sat in his field, he busied himself in reflecting on his past life. He thought of the days of his youth. His memory fixed on Mr. Flavel's sermon, a considerable part of which he remembered. The earnestness of the minister, the truths spoken, the effect on the people, all came fresh to his mind. He felt that he had not loved the Lord Jesus; he feared the dreadful anathema; he

* Edwards, 394.

was deeply convinced of sin, was brought to the blood of sprinkling. He lived to his one hundred and sixteenth year, giving every evidence of being born again. Ah! how faithful God is to his word. He did let none of his words fall to the ground.

Be of good cheer, Christian mothers, who weep over your unawakened children. They may be going far from you, perhaps across the seas, and you tremble for their souls. Remember God can reach them everywhere. A believing mother never prayed in vain. Be instant in prayer. God will not forget his word. He will let none of his words fall to the ground.

IV. *The Word may harden.* In some cases, I believe, the Word of God is sent to harden souls; and so it will not return void, but prosper in the thing whereto he sent it. That was an awful message God sent by his prophet: "Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not."—Isai. vi., 9. I fear there are many such messages in our day.

Ques. *Does God not wish men to be saved?* Ans. *O yes; God willeth all men to be saved.* I believe there is not one soul that the Saviour does not yearn over as he did over Jerusalem; and the Father says, "O that they had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways!" But still, when Jerusalem resisted the word of Christ, Christ said, "Now they are hid from thine eyes." And if you refuse the Word of Christ, and neglect this great salvation, I firmly believe that he shall soon come to you with Isaiah's dreadful message, "Hear ye indeed, but understand not."

Oh! how dreadful a thought it is, that though we be the savor of life unto life to some, we are the savor of death unto death to most. How dreadful, that the very words of love and mercy which we bring, should be making some souls only more fit for the burning! And yet it must be so. How often have I heard men of God complain that their greatest fruit was when they entered first upon their ministry! I do begin to fear that it is going to be so with us, that God hath chosen out his first-fruits, and the rest are to be hardened. Why was this? Because the people are hardened by the constant preaching of the truth.

My dear friends, remember this word: "God did let none of his words fall to the ground." I have gone among you for more than a year, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom. Remember, the word was not mine, but His that sent me. I would have been ashamed to stand up and speak my own words. If the hammer does not break, it makes the iron into steel. Every blow makes it harder. If the fire does not melt, it hardens the clay into brick, as hard as stone. If the medicine does not heal, it poisons. If the word concerning Christ does not break your heart, it will make it like the nether millstone.

V. *For a witness.*—That is an awful word in Matt. xxiv., 14:

"And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations." Ah! my dear friends, God's word cannot return unto him void. Every drop of rain has its errand from God. These driving showers of snow are all fulfilling his word. And do you really think that the word concerning his Son shall be spoken without any end? Ah, no! even though not one soul should be saved by it. It shall be for a witness. When Moses lifted up the brazen serpent in the wilderness, if the Israelites had been unwilling to look, I can easily imagine the haste with which he would go round the camp, crying to every dying man: Look here, look there. Two things would be in his mind; 1*st*, To get his people healed; 2*d*, To give glory to his God, by bearing witness to them of the love of God; as if he had said: Now, if you perish, it is your own blame; God is clear of your blood. So is it with the Christian minister. You remember Paul, how he was "instant, in season and out of season," "teaching publicly, and from house to house, warning every one day and night with tears;" "in labors more abundant; in stripes above measure; in prisons more frequent; in deaths oft." Why all this? *Ans.* For two reasons: 1*st*, He wanted souls to be saved. "He was infinitely and insatiably greedy of the conversion of souls." 2*d*, He sought the honor of God. He wanted to preach the Gospel for a witness; to leave every man without excuse for remaining in his sins; as if he had said: Now if you perish, it is your own blame; God is clear of your blood.

Ah! my dear friends, such is our ministry to many of you. It is for a witness. God, who knows my heart, knows that I seek your salvation night and day. "My record is above, that your heaven would be two heavens to me; and your salvation as two salvations to me." Yet if you will not learn, I will be a witness against you in that day. The words that we have spoken in weakness, and much trembling, will rise to condemn you in that day. How fain would I see you gathered with the ransomed flock, on the right hand of the throne! How fain, in that day, would I see you smiled on by the lovely Saviour, whose smile is more bright than the summer sun! But, if it may not be, I will say with the angels, "Hallelujah!"—"Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight."—Amen.

St. Peter's, Feb 25, 1838.

SERMON XXXVII.

THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT.

"And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."—Gen. i., 2.

THERE is, perhaps, no subject upon which there is greater ignorance than that of the Spirit of God. Most people, in our day, if they answered truly, would say as those twelve men of Ephesus: "We have not so much as heard if there be any Holy Ghost."—Acts xix. And yet, if ever you are to be saved, you must know him; for it is all his work to bring a poor sinner to Christ. A little boy, when dying, said: "Three persons in the Godhead. God the Father made and preserved me; God the Son came into the world and died for me; God the Holy Ghost came into my heart, and made me love God and hate sin." My dear friends, if you would die happy, you must be able to bear the same dying testimony. You know it is said in John, that "*God is love.*" This is true of God the Father in his giving up his Son for sinners; this is true of God the Son, in his becoming man and dying for sinners; this is true of God the Holy Ghost, in his whole work in the heart of sinners. At present I wish to show you the love of the Spirit, by observing all that he has ever done for men in the world. To-day I will show you his work at creation; at the flood; in the wilderness.

I. *At creation:* "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."—Gen. i., 2. The expression is taken from a dove brooding over its nest. "Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created; and thou renewest the face of the earth."—Ps. civ. Here the Spirit is said to have renewed the face of the earth. He made every blade of grass to spring, every flower to open, every tree to put forth blossoms. "By his Spirit he hath garnished the heavens."—Job. xxvi., 13. Here God does, as it were, lead us forth to look upon the midnight sky; and when we gaze upon its spangled maze, studded with brilliant stars, he tells us that it was the loving Spirit that gave them all their brightness and their beauty. Observe, then, that whatever beauty there is in the glassy sea, in the green earth, or in the spangled sky, it is all the work of the Holy Spirit. God the Father willed all, God the Son created all, God the Holy Ghost garnished, and gave life and loveliness to all. Oh! what a lovely world that unfallen world must have been, when God the Son walked with Adam in Paradise, when God the Holy Ghost watered and renewed the whole every moment, when God the Father looked down well pleased on all, and said that all was very good.

Learn, 1. *The love of the Spirit.*—He did not think it beneath

his care to beautify the dwelling-place of man. He wanted our joy to be full. He did not think it enough that we had a world to live in, but he made the waters full of life and beauty. He made every green thing to spring for man, and made a shining canopy above, all for the joy of man. Whatever beauty still remains on earth, or sea, or sky, it is the trace of his Almighty finger. You should never look on the beauties of the world without thinking of the Holy Spirit that moved upon the face of the waters, that renewed the face of the earth, that garnished the heavens with stars.

2. *The holiness of the Spirit.*—From the very beginning he was the *Holy* Spirit, of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. It was a sinless world. The sea had never been defiled by bearing wicked men upon its bosom. The green earth had never been trodden by the foot of a sinner. The spangled sky had never been looked upon by the eye of one whose eye is full of adultery, and cannot cease from sin. It was a holy, holy, holy world, a temple of the living God, the lofty mountains were the pillars of it; the glittering heavens its canopy. The far-resounding ocean sang his praise. The hills brake forth into singing, and all the trees of the field clapped their hands. As the cloud which so filled Solomon's temple that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud; so the Holy Spirit filled this world, a holy, sinless temple to the Father's praise. When man fell into sin, and the very ground was cursed for his sake, then the Holy Spirit in great measure left his temple; he could not dwell with sin. And never do you find him coming back, as before, till he lighted on the head of a sinless Saviour; for the Holy Ghost descended upon him like a dove, and abode upon him.

Just so is it with the soul.—As long as your soul is guilty, polluted, vile, in the sight of the Spirit, he cannot make his abode in your heart. He is a loving Spirit, full of a tender desire to make you holy. But as long as you are guilty in his sight, it is contrary to his nature that he should dwell in you. But come to the blood of Jesus, sinner; come to the blood that makes you white as snow, then will the Spirit see no iniquity in you, and he will come and dwell in your heart, as he dwelt at first in the sinless world. As he moved on the face of the waters, like a dove over its nest, so he will make his nest in your heart, and brood there. As he renewed the face of the ground, so will he renew your heart. As he garnished the heavens, so will he beautify your soul, till he make you shine as the stars for ever and ever.

II. *At the flood.*—"My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh (fading): yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years."—Gen. vi., 3. What a different scene we have here! Yet here also we shall learn that the Holy Spirit is a loving Spirit. At the creation we found him beautifying the world,

dwelling in it as in a temple; the earth, the sea, the sky, all proclaiming that it was a sinless world. But now fifteen hundred years had passed away, and the whole earth was covered with a race of godless men, giants in body and giants in wickedness.

"*God looked upon the earth, and it was corrupt.*"—It was all one putrid mass. "From the sole of the foot to the crown of the head there was no soundness in it;" for all flesh had corrupted his way. Just as a putrid body is loathsome in the sight of man, so the earth was loathsome in the sight of God. Nay, more; the earth was filled with violence. The few children of God that remained were hated and persecuted, hunted like the partridge on the mountains. It repented the Lord that he had made man, and it grieved him at his heart. How is the Holy Spirit engaged? *Ans.* 1. He does not dwell with sinful men. He cannot dwell with unpardoned sinners; for he is the Holy Spirit. 2. But still he strives with men, and strives to the very end. The men were giants in sin. Every imagination of their heart was only evil continually. But this is the very reason he strives. He sees the flood that is coming, he sees the hell that is beneath them; therefore does he strive. In the preaching of Noah he pleaded with them; he pricked their hearts, made them think of their danger, their sin, their misery. In the preparing the ark he pleaded with them, showed them the way of safety, and said: "Yet there is room." He made every stroke of the hammer go to their hearts. "The Spirit and the Bride said, Come."

Learn, 1. *That he is a striving Spirit.*—O! let those of you that are living in sin, learn what a loving Spirit is now striving with you. Some of you, who are living in sin, think that God is nothing but an angry God; therefore you do not turn to him. True, "he is angry with the wicked every day;" still he is striving with the wicked every day. He sends the Holy Spirit to strive with you. Oh! what a loving Spirit he is, that does not at once turn you into hell, but pleads and strives, saying: "Turn ye, turn ye; why will ye die?"

Some may say: I am a giant in wickedness, I am corrupt, I am violent against God's children. True; yet still see here how he strove with giants in wickedness. The whole earth was corrupt, and filled with violence; yet he strove. So he strives with you in whatever state you are. He is a loving Spirit. He strives by ministers, Bibles, providences. Sometimes, when you are all alone, that Spirit wrestles with you, brings your sin to remembrance, and makes you tremble; or, like the angels at Sodom, strives to make you flee from destruction. Oh! what love is here, to strive with hell-deserving worms. "Oh! ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye."

2. *A long-suffering Spirit.*—One hundred and twenty years he strove with the men before the flood. He never ceased till the

flood came. Some of you remember a time when God's Spirit was striving with you at the Sabbath school, or your first sacrament. You wept for your soul, and prayed; but the world has come on you since then, and now you fear he strives no more. Learn, he is a long-suffering Spirit, he strives with you yet. "He that hath ears, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches."

3. *He will not always strive.*—Observe, the Spirit strove till the flood came, but no longer; for the flood came, and carried them all away. So it is with you, my dear friends. As long as our ministry lasts, he strives with you; but when death comes, or when the Saviour comes, he will strive no more. Ah! you will have no awakening, inviting, striving sermons in hell, not one invitation more. Oh! how sad it is to think that so many, who have the Spirit of God striving with them, should perish after all.

III. *In the wilderness.*—Nearly one thousand years after the flood, we find God choosing a peculiar people to himself, and keeping them separate from all people, in the wilderness. Here the Spirit shows himself still more as the loving Spirit.

1. *The glorifier of Christ.*—Bezaleel and Aholiab, by his guidance, make the tabernacle, the mercy seat, the altar, the high priest's garments.—Exod. xxxi., 1–11. All these typify Christ. The Spirit here enables these men to show forth the Saviour to the many thousands of Israel. Although they often vexed the Holy Spirit, and grieved him in the desert, yet, see here how lovingly he sets forth Christ in the midst of them, that he may lead them to peace and holiness! This is exactly what Christ said of him afterwards: "He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you."

Dear friends, has the Spirit glorified Christ to you? He is still the great revealer of Christ. He shines into our heart, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Christ. Has he led you to the altar, to the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world? Has he clothed you in the high priest's garments? Has he brought you within the veil, to the mercy seat? This is his delightful work. Oh! it is a sweet work to be the minister on earth that leads souls to Christ, that points, like John, and says: "Behold the Lamb of God." But O how infinitely more loving in that Holy Spirit of God to lead trembling souls to Jesus! Oh! praise him that has done this for you. Oh! love the Spirit of God. "Thy Spirit is good: lead me to the land of uprightness."

2. *He purifies all that believe:* "Thou shalt set the laver between the tent of the congregation and the altar." Exod. xl., 6, 7. This brazen laver, containing water, was set up in the wilderness to typify the Holy Spirit; and observe the place where it was put, between the altar and the tabernacle of God. The first thing that the sinner came up to was the altar with the

bleeding lamb. He laid his hands upon the head of the lamb, and confessed his sins; so that they were carried all away in the blood of the lamb. Forgiven and justified, he advanced a few paces further to the brazen laver; there he washed his feet and hands. This represented the Holy Spirit washing and renewing his heart, and then he entered into the holy place of God.

"Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scripture, might have hope." Dear friends, has the Holy Spirit purified you? If you have laid your sins upon the Lamb of God, have you come to this laver of living water? are you really washing there, and preparing to enter into the holy place, made without hands, eternal in the heavens? "Without holiness no man can see the Lord;" and without the Spirit you will have no holiness. Oh! is he not a loving spirit who thus delights to prepare the believer for glory, who comes into our vile heart, and "creates a clean heart, and renews a right spirit within us?" Oh! love him who thus loves you; and ask for him, you that are his children. The Father delights to give him. "If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

3. *He upholds the life of believers:* "They all drank of that Rock which followed them; and that Rock was Christ." 1 Cor. x.. 4. This was a third way in which the Spirit showed himself in the wilderness. (1.) *A river.* This was to show Israel how refreshing and supporting he is to the weary soul, and that there is abundance in him. Drink, and drink again; you will not drink a river dry; so there is infinite fulness of the Spirit. (2.) *Flowing from a smitten rock.* This shows that he is given by a wounded Saviour; that it is only when we hide in that Rock that we can receive the Holy Ghost. "I will send him unto you." (3.) *It followed them.* This was to show that, wherever a believer goes, the Holy Spirit goes with him. "I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;" a well within, springing up into everlasting life.

My dear friends, have you received the Holy Ghost, since you believed? It appears to me that few Christians realize this river flowing after them. Oh! what inexpressible love and grace there is in this work of the Spirit. Is there any of you weak and faint, and ready to perish under a wicked heart, and raging lusts? or, have you got a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to buffet you? and are you driven to pray that it may be taken from you? See here the answer to your prayer. A river of living water flows from Christ. There is enough here for all your wants. "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness." Some of you are afraid of the future; you fear some approaching temptation; you fear some coming contest. See here the river flows after you; the Spirit will abide with you

for ever. Oh! what love is here! Notwithstanding all your sinfulness, and weakness, and unbelief, still he abides with you, and will for ever. He is "a well of water springing up into everlasting life." John iv., 14.

Oh! love the Spirit, then, who so loves you. Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption.

St. Peter's, Dec. 16, 1838.

SERMON XXXVIII.

MOSES AND HOBAB.

"And Moses said unto Hobab the Son of Raguel, the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel."—Numb. x., 29.

The children of Israel had been nearly a year encamped in the wilderness that surrounds the rocky peaks of Mount Sinai. But now the cloud rose from off the tabernacle—the signal that God wished them to depart—and so Israel prepared for the march in regular order. Upon a rocky eminence, that overlooked the marshalled thousands of Israel, stood Moses and his brother-in-law, Hobab. The heart of Moses grew full at the sight, when he looked upon their banners floating in the wind, when he looked at the pillar-cloud towering over them like some tall angel beckoning them away, when he thought of God's good words concerning Israel, and the good land to which they were hastening. He felt that his loins were girt with truth, and on his head the helmet of salvation, and in his hand the sword of the Spirit. He could not bear that any he loved should leave them now; and, therefore, while Hobab stood lingering, uncertain which way to go, Moses spake thus: "We are journeying toward the place of which the Lord hath said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good."

Such are the feelings of God. Whenever a soul is brought to Jesus Christ, to wash in his blood and to stand in his righteousness, he is brought to feel two things: *first*, That now he is journeying to a good land, his sins are blotted out, the Spirit is within him, God is his guide, heaven is before him; *second*, He wishes all he loves to come along with him.

Doctrine.—The children of God are on a journey, and wish all they love to come along with them.

I. *This world is not the home of a Christian.*

When Israel was travelling through the wilderness, they did not count it their home. Sometimes they came to bitter places, like Marah, where the waters were bitter; they would not rest there. Sometimes they came to sweet, refreshing places, like Elim, with its seventy palm trees and twelve wells of water; and yet they would not sit down and say: "This is my rest." It was sweet when the manna fell round the camp every morning, and when the water followed them; yet it was a wilderness, and a land of drought, and the shadow of death. "We are journeying," said Moses. So is this world to a true Christian, it is not a home. Sometimes he meets with bitter things—disappointments, losses, bereavements—and he calls the waters Marah; for they are bitter. Sometimes, too, he comes to refreshing spots, like Elim; yet he does not rest in them.

1. *There are the sweet joys of home and of kindred,* when the family ring is still unbroken, when not a chair is empty by the hearth, when not a link is wanting in the chain, when not even a lamb is carried off from the flock. These are very pleasant and lovely to the child of God; yet he does not, he cannot, rest in them. He hears a voice saying: "Arise, depart, this is thy rest; for it is polluted."

2. *Christian friends are sweet to the Christian.*—Those that are sharers of our spiritual secrets, those who mingle prayer with us before the throne, those who never forget us when within the veil—oh, there is something cheering in the very light of their kindly eye! It is an intercourse of which the world knows nothing. We have them in our heart, inasmuch as they are partakers of one grace, washed in one fountain, filled with the same Spirit, having one heart, members one of another; yet our rest is not among these. This is a taste of heaven, but not heaven. They often disappoint us, go back and become colder, or they are taken from us before, and leave us to journey on alone. "We are journeying."

3. *Ordinances are sweet to the Christian.*—They are the manna and the waters in the wilderness, the rain that fills the pools in the Valley of Baca. How sweet is the Sabbath morning! The sun shines more brightly than on any other day. How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord! the singing of psalms, how pleasant! the prayers, how solemn, when we stand within the veil! the doctrine, how it distils like the dew! the blessing, how full of peace! the sacraments especially, how sweet to the Christian—wells of salvation, Bethels, trysting-places with Christ! what sweet days of pleasure, love, and covenanting with Jesus. Still not our home, not our rest. (1.) They are defective; always something human about them to mar the sweetest ordinances. There is a bunch of grapes, but oh! it is not enough to satisfy. (2.) They are polluted; always some fly to spoil the fragrant

ointment; always so much sin in the minister and in the hearer. "We are journeying unto the place."

Learn, 1. *To look with a traveller's eye upon the world.*—When a traveller is journeying, he sees many fine estates, and beautiful houses, and lawns and gardens; but he does not set his heart on them. He admires, and passes on. So must you do, dear Christians. Ye are a little flock, travelling through the wilderness. Twine not your affections round any one thing here. Do not set your affections on home, or on kindred, or houses, or lands. Be like Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, who lived in tents, declaring plainly that they sought a better country. "If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth." "Set your affections on things above, not on the things of the earth."

Learn, 2. *Not to mourn over the loss of Christian friends,* as those who have no hope. Some of you have lost little children, who died in the Lord. Some of you have lost near friends, who fell asleep in Jesus. Some of you have lost aged parents, who have committed their spirit into the hand of Jesus. Now, you cannot but weep; and yet, if they were in Christ, you need not. They have got to their journey's end, and we are on the way. A voice seems to rise from their grave, saying: "Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and your children." They are at rest, and "we are journeying."

II. *The Christian's home is nearer every step.*—When Israel was travelling the wilderness, they came nearer to the good land every step they took. They had a long wilderness to pass through, still every day's journey brought them nearer to the end. So it is with all that are in Christ Jesus. Every step is bringing them nearer to heaven. Every day they are coming nearer and nearer to glory. "Now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." "The night is far spent, the day is at hand." Every sheep that is really found, and on the shoulder of the shepherd, is coming nearer to the heavenly fold every day. Every soul that is carried on the wings of the eagle is flying towards the rest that remaineth. The hours fly fast; but as fast flies that divine eagle. In running a race, every step brings you nearer to the end of it, nearer to the prize and the crown.

Question.—Are you fitter for heaven every day? Ah! my dear Christians, I tremble for some of you who are on your way to glory, and yet are not turning fitter for glory. Oh! that you would forget the things that are behind, and reaching forth to those that are before, press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Some of you are just beginning the journey to heaven. Dear little children, wax stronger and stronger; pray more, read more, hear more, love more, do more

every day. Let your sense of sin grow, like the roots of trees, downwards, deeper and deeper. Let your faith grow, like the branch of the vine, stronger and stronger every year. Let your peace grow, like a river, broader and broader. "We are journeying."

1. *Some are wellnigh through the wilderness.*—Some of you are on the top of Pisgah. The time draws nigh when you must die. Dear aged Christians, how soon your eyes will see Him whom, having not seen, you love! How soon your heart will love Him as you wish to do! How soon you will grieve him no more for ever! Do not be afraid, but meekly rejoice. Live more above the world; care less for its pleasures. Speak plainer to your friends, saying, "Come ye with us." Be oftener within the veil. Soon you shall be a pillar, and go no more out.

2. *Unconverted.*—You are nearer hell every day. You, too, are journeying to the place of which God hath said: "I will give it you." "For the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

Oh! stop, poor sinner, stop and think. Wherever you are, and whatever you are engaged in, you are travelling thither. The most go in at the wide gate. When you are sleeping, you are posting thither. When you take a journey of pleasure, you are still advancing on that other journey. When you are laughing and talking, or in the full enjoyment of your sin, you are still hurrying on. You have never stopped since you began to live. You never stand a moment to take breath. You are nearer hell this afternoon than in the forenoon. O stop and think! "Come thou with us, and we will do thee good."

III. *This journey is the great concern of a Christian.*—Their journey was the great concern of Israel. They did not care much for doing anything else. They did not take to another occupation. When they came to a green spot, they did not take to the plough, to try and cultivate it. Their journey was their great concern. So it should be with those of you who are children of God. Your journey to heaven should be your great concern. Dear friends, judge of everything in this way, whether it will help you on your journey or no. In choosing a profession, or trade, choose it with regard to this. Will it advance or hinder your heavenward journey? Will it lead you into sore temptations, or into wicked company? Oh! take heed. What is the use of living, but only to get on in our journey to heaven? Choose your abode with regard to this. Christian servants, choose your place with regard to this. Remember Lot. He chose the plain of Jordan, because it was well watered; but his soul was all but withered there. In choosing connexions or

friends, O choose with regard to this—will they help or hinder your prayers? will they go with you, and help you on your journey? or will they be a drag upon your wheels? In going into companies, in reading books, choose with regard to this—Will they fill your sails for heaven? If not, go not near them. In yielding to your affections, especially if you find them hindering your journey, drop them instantly. Never mind the consequences. "If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee. It is better to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to be cast into hell fire." "Wherefore, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus."

IV. *All true Christians wish others to journey along with them:* "Come thou with us, and we will do thee good." So it was with Moses. Hobab had been his friend for forty years, in the land of Midian, where Moses married his sister, and lived in his father Raguel's house. In that time, I doubt not, Moses had told him much of Israel's God and Israel's coming glory. Many a time, while they fed their flocks in this very wilderness, Moses had reasoned with him of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, till Hobab trembled. Still it would seem Hobab was not quite convinced. He doubted—he lingered, He had been awed by the terrors of Sinai, but not won by the love of Calvary. He did not know whether to go or stay. But the hour of decision came. He must decide now. Now was the heart of Moses stirred in him: "Come thou with us, and we will do thee good; for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel." So it was with Paul, when he himself had tasted the joy and peace of believing; then says he: "My heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved." So it was with Andrew: "Andrew first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Christ." So it was with the poor maniac whom Jesus healed: "Go home, tell thy friends how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and how he hath had compassion on thee." So it was with the poor slave in Antigua, who used to pray that there might be a full heaven and an empty hell.

Question.—Is it so with you? Have you asked your friends to come with you? Have you a father whom you love—a mother that carried you at her breast? Have you a brother or a sister? Are they lingering like Hobab? Oh! will you not put in a word for Christ, and say: "Come thou with us, and we will do thee good." Have you a friend whom you love much—who knows nothing of Christ and of God—who is willing to die in the wilderness? Oh! will you not win him to go with you to Israel's God and Israel's glory?

Word to lingering souls.—Some of you, like Hobab, are half

persuaded to go with Israel. "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Some of you see your children converted, and you not; and yet you are not determined to go with them. Oh! why halt ye between two opinions? Go with them now.

Observe, 1. *This may be the deciding day.*—It was so with Hobab. God is pleading hard with you to-day. He has spoken to you by most solemn providences—by the Bible, by his ministers, and by the tender persuading voice of those you love. "Come thou with us." "Choose you this day, then, whom you will serve." Remember this may be the deciding day: to-morrow it may be too late.

2. *You will share in their joys:*—"We will do thee good." What makes them so anxious for you to go with them, if it be not for your good? You know they love you tenderly; they would not have a hair of your head hurt. You will taste their forgiveness—their peace with God—their joy in the Word and prayer; you will know their God; you will know their heaven. Oh! that God would put it into your heart to cleave to them like Ruth to Naomi, saying: "Whither thou goest I will go; and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."

St. Peter's, July 22, 1838.

SERMON XXXIX.

COMFORT YE.

"Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins."—Isa. xl., 1, 2.

These words are a blast of the silver trumpet of the Gospel. Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound. They are like the words of the angel at Bethlehem; "I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." This is the voice of the shepherd, which all his flock know and love.

I. *Believers have received double punishment for all their sins:* "She hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins."—Verse 2. There are two ways in which sinners may bear the punishment of their sins.

1. *In themselves*—On their own body and soul for ever. This is the way in which all unconverted men, who finally perish, will bear their sins. "These shall go away into everlasting punishment." "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." Not

that they will be able to bear their punishment: "My punishment is greater than I can bear." "The great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?" They shall say to one another, "Who among us can dwell with the devouring flame? Who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings?" And God will say: "Can thine heart endure, or thine hands be strong, in the day that I shall deal with thee?" This is not the way spoken of in the text; for, (1.) It would be a message of woe, and not of comfort—Woe, woe, woe, and not Comfort ye, comfort ye. When God really takes in hand to punish sinners, there will be no comfort in that day. The heart of sinners will sink under insupportable gloom. (2.) Sinners never can bear double in themselves. When a poor sinner dies Christless and goes to bear the punishment of his sins, he never can bear enough. He has sinned against an infinite God; and his punishment, if it be just, must be infinite—his stripes must be eternal—the gnawing worm must never die—the burning flame must never be quenched. In this way, poor Christless souls can never satisfy the justice of God. God will never say it is enough. He will never pour water on the flames of hell, nor send a drop to the parched tongues that are tormented there. Instead of suffering double, they will never receive enough at the Lord's hand for all their sins. Oh! dear friends, it is easy talking of this now; but many of you will probably feel it soon.

2. *In Christ the surety.*—It is according to justice, that sinners may bear their sins in Christ the Surety. (1.) This was the very errand that Christ came upon. He thought upon this from all eternity. For this end he came into the world—for this end he became man. "He himself bare our sins in his own body on the tree." If it were not a just and righteous thing, that sinners should bear their sins in another, and not in themselves, Christ never would have undertaken it. This is the very way here spoken of. (2.) All the sufferings of Christ were at the hand of his Father: "It pleased the Lord to bruise him: he hath put him to grief. The Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all." We generally look at the wicked hands that crucified and slew Christ; but we must not forget that it was by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, and that they would have had no power at all against him, except it had been given them from above. Through all the crowd of scoffing priests and bloody soldiers, you must see the Lord's hand making his soul an offering for sin. This shows that Christ is a Saviour appointed of the Father. Awakened souls are afraid of the avenging hand of God; but in Christ there is a refuge. And you need not fear but Christ will shelter you; for there was an agreement between them, that Christ should suffer these things for sinners, and enter into his glory. Christ finished the work which the Father gave him to do. (3.) When sinners take refuge in Christ, the law takes its course

against their sins—not upon their soul, but upon Christ. All their sins, whether they be many or few, are reckoned his, and he is made answerable; and he has already borne double for them all. How was it just that Christ should bear double? *Ans.* He could not suffer at all, without bearing double for all our sins, by reason of his excellency and glory. The sufferings of Christ for a time, were, in God's eye, double the eternal sufferings of sinners, by reason of the infinite dignity of his person. God is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; for he magnified the law, and made it honorable. In the death of Christ, the angels saw God to be holy, infinitely better than if all mankind had perished for ever.

Come freely, then, to Jesus Christ, O awakened sinner. There you will find a shelter from the wrath due to your sins. Your sins are, indeed, infinite, and the wrath of God intolerable; but in Jesus you may find safety. He came upon this very errand. You need not fear but he will receive you; his heart and his arms are open for you. His Father is willing you should come. Be your sins many or few, it is all one; in Christ you will find that they are all borne, suffered for, in a way glorifying to God and safe to you.

II. *All believers are therefore in a truly blessed condition.*

1. *Their iniquity is pardoned.*—A soul in Christ is a pardoned soul. It matters not how many his sins have been. The iniquity of Jerusalem was very great. The people of Jerusalem had sinned against light and against love. All the prophets had been sent them; yet they were stoned or killed. The Son of God came there; they cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. Their sins had grown up to heaven; yet, no sooner do they betake themselves to Christ than God says: "Her iniquity is pardoned." And, observe, 1*st*, It is *a present pardon.* He does not say, Her iniquity shall be pardoned, but, "Her iniquity is pardoned." No sooner does a guilty, heavy laden soul betake himself to Christ, than this sweet word is heard in heaven: "His iniquity is pardoned." "There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." Oh! it is no future or uncertain pardon that is offered in the gospel; but a sure and present pardon; pardon now, this instant, to all who believe in Jesus. You are as completely pardoned in the moment of believing as ever you will be. Oh! haste ye, and receive pardon from Christ. Oh! that ye knew the day of your visitation. Observe, 2*d*, It is *a holy pardon.* Your iniquity is pardoned; for another has died for your sins. Oh! it is an awful way of pardon. "There is forgiveness with God, that he may be feared." It is a pardon to make you tremble, and hate sin with a perfect hatred. Oh! can you ever love that which nailed him to the tree, which bowed down his blessed head? Will you take up sin again, and thus put the spear afresh into the side of Jesus? Some say: I am too vile. Ah! are you viler than

Jerusalem? When you take a pebble, and cast it into the deep sea, it sinks, and is entirely covered; so are the sins of those who take refuge in Christ: "Thou wilt cast all our sins into the depths of the sea."

2. *Their warfare is accomplished.*—(1.) *With the law.* An awakened soul has a dreadful warfare with the law of God. The law of God is revealed to his conscience, armed with a flaming, glittering sword. It demands the obedience of his heart and life. The sinner tries to obey it, he tries to bring his life up to its requirements; but in vain. The law lifts up its sword to slay him; it hurls its curses at him. This is a dreadful warfare in every awakened conscience; but when the sinner runs into Jesus Christ, his warfare is accomplished. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." In Christ Jesus, the demands of the law are satisfied; for he was made under the law. Its curses are borne; for he was made a curse for us. The glittering sword pierced the side of Jesus. Oh! do you know what it is to have this warfare accomplished? (2.) *With the devil.* We wrestle not with flesh and blood. An awakened soul has often an awful warfare with Satan. Satan fights against him in two ways: 1*st*, By stirring up his corruptions, and making his lusts to flame and burn within him in a fearful manner. 2*d*, By accusing him. Satan is the accuser of the brethren. He accuses him in his conscience, in order to drive him away from Christ, to drive him to despair, and to give up all hope of salvation. He says to him: "Thou art a vile wretch, not fit for a holy Saviour; see what raging lusts are in thy heart, thou wilt never be saved." Ah! when the poor sinner runs into Christ, he finds rest there; his warfare is then accomplished. He sees all the accusations of Satan answered in the blood of the Lamb. (3.) *With sin.* The awakened soul has a dreadful warfare with his corruptions. His heart appears just full of raging lusts, all tearing him to pieces. He is driven hither and thither; but when he comes to Christ this warfare is accomplished. Indeed, in one sense the battle is not over, but just begun; but now victory is sure. God is now for him. Greater is He that is for him than all that can be against him. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" *The Spirit of God* is now within him; he will abide with him for ever. The Spirit now reigns in him. *Christ* now fights for him, covers his head in the day of battle, carries him on his shoulder. He is as sure to overcome as if he were already in glory. He says to him: "Fear not, thou worm Jacob: fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." That word, *never leave thee*, reaches through the darkest hours of temptation, the deepest waters of affliction, the hottest fires of persecution; it reaches unto death, through death and the grave, into eternity.

III. *Believers should take the comfort of their condition.*

1. *God commands it.*—Some say, It is a dangerous thing to be happy. They are afraid of too much joy. They say, It is better to be in deep exercises, better to have deep wadings; it is not good to be of too joyful a spirit. What says the Word of God? "Comfort ye, comfort ye." If your joy flow from the cross of Christ, you cannot have too much joy. "Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say, Rejoice." When Christ truly rises on the soul, he should be like a morning without clouds. If it be true that Christ came into the world to seek and save that which was lost; if you see his freeness and preciousness, I ask, how *can* you do otherwise than rejoice and be comforted? "Whom, having not seen, we love; in whom, though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." May the God of Hope fill you brimfull with joy and peace in believing!

2. *Examine from whence your comfort flows.*—All true Gospel comfort flows from the cross of Christ, from the Man of Sorrows. The comfort of hypocrites flows from themselves. They look to themselves for comfort; they look to the change on their life, they see some improvements there, and take rest from that; or, they look deeper to their concern, their mourning over sin, their convictions, their endeavors after Christ; or, they look to their devotions, their delight in prayer, their flowing of affection and words; or to texts of the Bible coming into their minds; or, they look to what their friends or ministers think of them, and they take comfort from these. All these are refuges of lies, false Christs, that must be cast away, or they will ruin your soul. Christ's blood and righteousness, and not any work in your own heart, must be your justification before a holy God. True Gospel comfort comes from a sight of Christ's bearing double for all our sins. "Behold the Lamb of God!" Gospel comfort is a stream that flows direct from Calvary.

3. *See how false the comfort of Christ-neglecting souls.*—This sweet word of comfort is only to those who are under the wings of Christ. That little flock alone have got rest for their souls. But most neglect this great salvation. You do not feel your need of an atoning Saviour, you think you can justify yourself before God; you do not feel your need of an almighty Sanctifier. Christ is a tender plant in your eyes, you have not betaken yourself to Christ. Ah! my friend, woe to you. Your warfare is not accomplished. The law, with its curses and its flaming sword, stands in your way. Satan also accuses you, and you have nothing to answer him. Sin rages in you, and you have no power against it. Your iniquity is not pardoned, not one sin is blotted out. All is naked and laid open to the eyes of Him with whom you have to do. Your comfort is all a lie, your peace is Satan's peace, it is the slumber that ends in perdition. You will yet bear your own sins. When the great day of his wrath is come, you

will not be able to stand. "Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong, in the day that I shall deal with thee?" Oh! sirs, you think it a small thing to be Christless this day; you can talk lightly of it, and jeer and jest about it; you can sleep soundly withal; but there is a day coming, when your bitter cry will be heard throughout all the caverns of hell: Woe is me! I am Christless, I am Christless! Amen.

SERMON XL.

CAN A WOMAN FORGET?

"But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget; yet will I not forget thee."—Isaiah xlix., 14, 15.

These words apply, first of all, to God's ancient people, the Jews. Before their final conversion, I believe their eyes will be opened to see their sin and misery. They will look upon him whom they have pierced, and mourn. When they hear the glorious offers of mercy, they will not be able to believe them: "Zion will say, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my God hath forgotten me." But God will answer them, that notwithstanding all their past sins and afflictions, still he will love them, and be their God: "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget; yet will I not forget thee." These words are equally true of all believers.

I. *Inquire into those times when believers think themselves forsaken.*

1. *In times of sore affliction.*—So it was with Naomi. She had lost her beloved husband and her two sons in the land of Moab. And now, when she returned, leaning on her daughter-in-law, up the hill of Bethlehem, the whole town was moved, and they said: "Is this Naomi? But she said unto them, Call me not Naomi; call me Mara; for the Lord hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty. Why, then, call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?" So with Hezekiah. When the Lord said to him: "Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live, Hezekiah turned his face to the wall, and prayed to the Lord; and Hezekiah wept sore. Like a crane or a swallow so did I chatter; I did mourn as a dove; mine eyes fail with looking upward. O Lord, I am oppressed;

undertake for me." So with Job. When Job lost his flocks and herds, and his ten children in one day; when his bodily health was destroyed, and he sat down among the ashes; then Job opened his mouth, and cursed his day: "Let the day perish wherein I was born. Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life to the bitter in soul? O that I might have my request, and that God would grant me the thing that I long for: even that it would please God to destroy me, that he would let loose his hand, and cut me off."

Ah! it is a sad thing when the soul *faints* under the rebukes of God. They were intended to lead you deeper into Christ; into a fuller enjoyment of God. Do not faint when thou art rebuked of him. When a soul comes to Christ, he expects to be led to heaven in a green, soft pathway, without a thorn. On the contrary, he is led into darkness; poverty stares him in the face, or bereavement writes him childless, or persecutions embitter his life; and now his soul remembers the wormwood and the gall. He forgets the love and wisdom that are dealing with him; he says, "I am the man that hath seen affliction. The Lord hath forsaken me, and my God hath forgotten me."

2. *When they have fallen into sin.* As long as a believer walks humbly with his God, his soul is at peace. The candle of the Lord shines on his head. He walks in the light as God is in the light, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth him from all sin. But the moment that unbelief creeps in, he is led away into sin; like David he falls very low. A believer generally falls lower than the world; and now he falls into darkness.

When *Adam* fell, he was afraid: and he hid himself from God among the trees of the garden, and he made a covering of leaves. Alas! when a believer falls, he also is afraid; he hides from God. Now, he has lost a good conscience; he fears to meet with God; he does not love the house of prayer; his heart is now filled with suspicions. If I had been a child of God, would God have given me up to my own heart's lusts? He refuses to return. "There is no hope; no; for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go." Though God has never been a wilderness nor a land of darkness to the soul, yet he says: "We are lords; we will come no more unto thee." "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my God hath forgotten me." Ah! this is the bitterest of all kinds of desertion. If you put away faith and a good conscience, you will make shipwreck.

3. *In time of desertion.*—Desertion is God withdrawing from the soul of the believer, so that his absence is felt. The world knows nothing of this, and yet it is true. God has ways of revealing himself to his own in another way than he doth to the world: "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant. *Jesus* is often with his own. They feel his presence, their hearts burn within them. They

sometimes feel that he fulfils that word; "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you." *The Father* is the refuge of his own. They feel his everlasting arms underneath them, they feel his eye watching over them, they feel his love pouring down upon them like a stream of light from heaven. *The Holy Spirit* is within them. They sometimes feel his breathing, they sometimes feel that they have the Spirit within them, crying, "Abba, Father." Oh! this heaven upon earth, full, satisfying joy. Sometimes it pleases God to withdraw from the soul, chiefly, I believe, 1*st*, To humble us in the dust; 2*d*, To discover some corruption unmortified; 3*d*, To lead us to hunger more after him. Such was the state of *David* when he wrote the 42d psalm: "I will say unto God, my Rock, Why hast thou forgotten me? As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me, while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God?" "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God." Ah! far more than the natural thirst of the wounded deer for the clear-flowing brook, is the spiritual thirst of the deserted soul after God. Such was the feeling of Job when he cried; "The arrows of the Almighty are within me;" and again: "O that I knew where I might find him; O that it were with me as in months past!" He has a bitter remembrance of his past enjoyment, a bitter sense that means cannot bring his soul back again to rest. Such was the feeling of the bride: "By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not."—Song iii., 1. Ah! brethren, if ever you have known anything of this you will know the wretched feeling of distance from God, of having mountains between the soul and him, implied in these words: "The Lord hath forsaken me, and my God hath forgotten me."

II. *God cannot forget a soul in Christ:* "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget; yet will I not forget thee."

1. *It is like a mother's love.*—There is no love in this world like a mother's love. It is a free, unbought, unselfish love. However much pain she has suffered on her child's account, however many troubles she has to bear for it, by night and by day, while it hangs upon her breast, still it is more precious than gold. There is a something in her heart that clings to her weak, sickly, nay, even to her idiot boy. God's love to a soul in Christ is stronger than this love. The Psalmist compares it to a father's: "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." And Mal. iii., 17: "I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." Again, Isa. lxvi., 13: "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you."

This love of a mother to her child is natural to her. She can-

not account for it. You cannot change it. You must break to pieces the mother's heart before you can change her love to her child. And yet there are some poor souls so disfigured by Satan, their hearts so brutalized, that they can forget their children. The Indian mother can dance over her infant's grave, and the murderess can lift her hand against the life of her little one: "They may forget; yet will I not forget thee."

The love of God to a soul in Christ is a natural love. It is a love engrained in his nature. The Father loveth the Son; and it is the same love with which he loves the soul that is in Christ. He cannot forget him. He loves him because he is altogether lovely, he loves him because he is worthy to be loved, he loves him because he laid down his life for the sheep. All that is in God binds him to love his Son, his holiness, his justice, his truth; and so all that is in God binds him to love the soul that is in Christ.

Be not cast down, brethren, in affliction. Deserted souls, God's love cannot change unless his nature change. Not till God cease to be holy, just and true, will he cease to love the soul that hides under the wings of Jesus.

2. *The Father's love is full love.*—A mother's love is the fullest love which we have on earth. She loves with all her heart. But there is no love full but that of God toward his Son; God loves Jesus fully; the whole heart of the Father is, as it were, continually poured down in love upon the Lord Jesus. There is nothing in Christ except what draws the infinite love of God. In him God sees his own image perfect, his own law acted out, his own will done. The Father loves the Son fully; but when a soul comes into Christ, the same love rests on that soul: "That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them." John xvii., 26. True, a creature cannot receive the love of God as Jesus can; but it is the same love that shines on us and him; full, satisfying, unbounded love. When the sun pours down its beams on the wide ocean and on a little flower at the same time, it is the same sunshine that is poured into both, though the ocean has vastly larger capacity to receive its glorious beams; so, when the Son of God receives the love of his Father, and a poor guilty worm hides in him, it is the same love that comes both on the Saviour and the sinner, though Jesus is able to contain more.

How can God forget what he fully loves? If God fully loves thee, he has not forgotten thee; he cannot forget thee. A creature's love may fail; for what is a creature? a clay vessel, a breath of wind that passeth away, and cometh not again. But the Creator's love cannot fail; it is full love towards an object infinitely worthy of his love, in which thou sharest.

3. *It is an unchanging love.* A mother's love is, of all creature-love, the most unchangeable. A boy leaves his father's roof, he crosses a thousand seas, he labors beneath a foreign sky; he comes

back, he finds his aged mother changed, her head is grey, her venerable brow is furrowed with age; still he feels, while she clasps him to her bosom, that her heart is the same. But, ah! far more unchanging is the love of God to Christ, and to a soul in Christ: "I am the Lord; I change not." The Father that loves has no variableness. Jesus, who is loved, is the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever. How can that love change? It flowed before the world was; it will flow when the world has passed away.

If you are in Christ, that love shines on you: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

(1.) *Comfort downcast believers.* Many of you may be cast down, and your souls disquieted. You think God has dealt bitterly with you; he has written you childless; he has met you as a lion, and as a bear bereaved of her whelps; or he has blasted your gourd; or he has deserted you, so that you seek him, and find him not. Look still to Jesus; the love of God shines on him; nothing can separate Jesus from that love; nothing can separate you. At the very time when Zion was saying, "My God hath forgotten me;" at that moment God was saying: "I will not forget thee."

Your afflictions and desertions only prove that you are under the Father's hand. There is no time when the patient is an object of such tender interest to the surgeon, as when he is under his knife; so, you may be sure, if you are suffering from the hand of God, his eye is all the more bent on you. "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms."

(2.) *Invite poor sinners to come and taste of this love.* It is a sweet thing to be loved. I suppose the most of you have tasted a mother's love. You know what it is to be rocked in her arms, to be watched by her gentle eye, to be cheered by her smile; but, oh! brethren, this is nothing to the love of your God. That dear mother's eye will close in death; that dear mother's arm will moulder in the dust. Oh! come and share the love of Him who cannot die. There is one spot alone on which the love of God continually falls unclouded; it is the head of Jesus: "The Father loveth the Son." He loves him from his very nature; so that the perfections of God must change before this love can change. He loves him fully. The whole treasures of love that are in the infinite bosom of Jehovah are pouring continually into the bosom of the Son. He loves unchangingly; no cloud can ever come between; no veil, no distance. But what is this to me? Everything to you, sinner. Jesus stands a refuge for sinners, ready to receive even thee. Flee into him, sinner; abide in him, and that

love shall abide on you. You are a worm; but you may enter into the joy of your Lord. You may share the love of God with Jesus in a way that holy angels cannot do. Oh! sinner, had you rather remain under the wrath of God? "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." "God is angry with the wicked every day;" but, ah! "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."

Oh! it is sweet to pass from wrath to love, from death to life. That poor murderess would leap in her cell, when the news came that she was not to die the murderer's death;* but, ah! ten thousand times sweeter would it be to you, if God were, this day, to persuade you to embrace Christ freely offered in the Gospel.

SERMON XLI.

THANKSGIVING OBTAINS THE SPIRIT.

"It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets, and cymbals, and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying, For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord; so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God."—2 Chron. v., 13, 14.

THE day here spoken of appears to have been a day of days. It seems to have been the day of Pentecost in Old Testament times, a type of all the glorious days of an outpoured Spirit that ever have been in the world, a foretaste of that glorious day when God will fulfil that amazing, soul-satisfying promise, "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh."

My dearly beloved flock, it is my heart's desire and prayer that this very day might be such a day among us, that God would indeed open the windows of heaven, as he has done in times past, and pour down a blessing, till there be no room to receive it.

Let us observe, then, how thanksgiving brings down the Spirit of God.

I. *How the people were engaged:* "In praising and thanking the Lord." Yea, you have their very words: "For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever." It was thus the people were engaged when the cloud came down and filled the house. They had been engaged in many other most affecting duties. The

* Alluding to a recent occurrence.

Levites had been carrying the ark from Mount Zion and placing it under the wings of the cherubim; Solomon and all his people had been offering sacrifices, sheep and oxen, which could not be told for multitude, still no answer came from heaven. But when the trumpeters and singers were as one in praising and thanking the Lord, when they lifted up their voices, saying, "For he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever;" then the windows of heaven were opened, then the cloud came down and filled the whole temple.

My dear flock, I am deeply persuaded that there will be no full, soul-filling, heart-ravishing, heart-satisfying, out-pouring of the Spirit of God, till there be more praise and thanking the Lord. Let me stir up your hearts to praise.

1. *He is good.* Believers should praise God for what he is in himself. Those that have never seen the Lord cannot praise him. Those that have not come to Christ, have never seen the King in his beauty. An unconverted man sees no loveliness in God. He sees a beauty in the blue sky, in the glorious sun, in the green earth, in the spangling stars, in the lily of the field; but he sees no beauty in God. He hath not seen him, neither known him; therefore there is no melody of praise in that heart. When a sinner is brought to Christ, he is brought to the Father. Jesus gave himself for us, "that he might bring us to God." Oh! what a sight breaks in upon the soul, the infinite, eternal, unchangeable God! I know that some of you have been brought to see this sight. Oh! praise him, then, for what he is. Praise him for his *pure, lovely holiness*, that cannot bear any sin in his sight. Cry, like the angels, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty." Praise him for his *infinite wisdom*, that he knows the end from the beginning. In him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Praise him for his *power*, that all matter, all mind, is in his hand. The heart of the king, the heart of saint and sinner, are all in his hand. Hallelujah! for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. Praise him for his *love;* for God is love. Some of you have been at sea. When far out of sight of land, you have stood high on the vessel's prow, and looked round and round, one vast circle of ocean without any bound. Oh! so it is to stand in Christ justified, and to behold the love of God, a vast ocean all around you, without a bottom and without a shore. Oh! praise him for what he is. Heaven will be all praise. If you cannot praise God, you never will be there.

2. *For his mercy, for what he has done for us.* The Lord has done much for me since we parted. We were once in perils of water; but the Lord saved the ship. Again and again we were in danger of plague; we nightly heard the cry of the mourner; yet no plague came near our dwelling. Again and again we were in perils of robbers; the gun of the murderous Arab has been levelled at us; but the Lord stayed his hand. I have been at the gates of death since we parted. No man that saw me would

have believed that I could be here this day; yet he hath healed our diseases, and brought me back to open once more to you the unsearchable riches of Christ. I, then, have reason to praise him; for his mercy endureth for ever. The Lord has done much for you since we parted. My eyes filled with tears when I left you; for I thought he had done it in anger. I thought it was anger to me, and I thought it was anger to you; but now I see it was all love—it was all mercy to unworthy you and to unworthy me. The Lord gave you my dear brother to care for your souls; and far better than that, for to give you a man only would have been a poor gift, but he has given you his Holy Spirit. "Bless the Lord, O my soul!" Praise him, O my people! for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever. Are there not some of you brands plucked out of the burning? You were in the burning; the pains of hell were actually getting hold on you. You had a hell in your own hearts; you had a hell yawning to receive you; but the Lord snatched you from the burning. Will you not praise him? Are there not some of you whom I left blind, and deaf, and dumb, and dead? You saw no beauty in Him who is fairer than the children of men; you saw no glory in Immanuel—God manifest in the flesh. But the Lord has said: "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam;" and whereas you were blind, now you see. Oh! praise him that hath done it. In heaven, they praise God most of all for this: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." Oh! have you no praise for Jesus for all his love—for the Father—for the Spirit? Some of you cannot sing; "No man could learn that song but those that were redeemed from the earth." Some of you are worse than when I left you. You have resisted me; you have resisted my brother; and, oh! worse than all, you have resisted the Holy Ghost. You are prayerless yet, Christless yet. Ah! unhappy souls, unredeemed, unrenewed, remember it will be too late to learn to praise when you die. You must begin now. I will tell you what a dear friend of my own once said before dying. She desired all the servants to be brought in, and she said very solemnly: "There's nothing but Christ between me and weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. Oh! Forrest, if you have not Christ, then there is nothing between you and weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth." You that will not praise Christ now, shall wail because of him soon.

II. *The manner of their praise.*

As one. Their hearts were all as one heart in this exercise. There were a thousand tongues, but only one heart. Not only were their harps, and cymbals, and dulcimers, all in tune, giving out a harmonious melody, but their hearts were all in tune. God had given them one heart, and then the blessing came down. The same was the case on the day of Pentecost; they were all with *one accord* in one place; they were looking to the same Lamb of God. The same thing will be the case in that day prophesied of

in the 133d psalm: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" "There God commands the blessing, even life for evermore." This is the very thing which Jesus prayed for in that prayer which none but God could have asked, and none but God could answer: "Neither 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: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me;" and then follows the blessing: "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."

Dear children of God, unite your praises. Let your hearts no more be divided. You are divided from the world by a great gulf. Soon it will be an infinite gulf; but you are united to one another by the same spirit; you have been chosen by the same free, sovereign love; you have been washed in the same precious blood; you have been filled by the same blessed Spirit. Little children, love one another. He that loveth is born of God. Be one in your praises. Join in one cry: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain; thou art worthy to open the book; thou art worthy to reign in our hearts." And, oh! be fervent in praise. Lift up your voices in it; lift up your hearts in it. In heaven they wax louder and louder. John heard the sound of a great multitude; and then it was like many waters, and then it was like mighty thunderings, crying: "Hallelujah! hallelujah!" I remember Edwards's remark, that it was in the singing of praises that his people felt themselves most enlarged, and then that God was worshipped somewhat in the beauty of holiness. Let it be so among yourselves. Learn, dearly beloved, to praise God heartily; to sing with all your heart and soul in the family, and in the congregation. But, oh! remember that even your praises must be sprinkled with blood, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

III. *Effects.*

1. *The cloud filled the house.* This cloud is the very same which led them through the Red Sea, and went before them forty years in the wilderness. It was a pillar of cloud by day, to shade them from the heat; it was a pillar of fire by night, to guide Israel on their way to the promised rest; and now it came and filled the holiest of all and the holy place. Such was the wonderful effect which followed their united fervent praises. God himself came down, and filled every chamber of the house with his presence. "This is my rest for ever; here will I dwell; for I have desired it." Now, my dear friends, we are not now to expect that God will answer our prayers, or follow our praises with a pillar of

cloud or a pillar of fire. These were but the shadows; now we receive the reality, the substance. If ye will but unite in unanimous and heartfelt praises, then am I persuaded that God will give his Holy Spirit to fill this House, to fill every heart in the spiritual temple. How glorious this will be!

(1.) *For the children of God.* Are there not some of you who have come to Christ, and nothing more? Guilty, weary, heavy laden, you have found rest; redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins. Oh! do not stop there. Do not rest in mere forgiveness; cry for the indwellings of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter. Forgiveness is but a means to an end. You are justified in order that you may be sanctified. Remember, without holiness, you will never see the Lord; and without this indwelling Spirit, you never will be holy.

Are there not some of you groaning under a body of sin and death, and crying, with the apostle: "Oh! wretched man, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Do you not feel the plague of your own heart? Do you not feel the power of your old nature? How many in this state lean upon themselves, trust in their resolutions, attempt, as it were, by force, to put down their sins: but here is the remedy. Oh! cry for the flood-tide of God's Spirit, that he may fill every chamber of your heart; that he may renew you in the spirit of your mind.

Are there not many who are cold, worldly Christians, those who were long ago converted, but have fallen sadly back, under the power of the world, either its gaiety or its business, its mirth or its money, and they have got into worldly habits, deep ruts of sin? Ah! see what you need. He that created man in his own image at first, must create you over again. You need an almighty indwelling Comforter. Oh! it is he only who can melt your icy heart, and make it flow out in love to God, who can fill you with all the fulness of God.

Are there not some who read the Bible, but get little from it? You feel that it does not sink into your heart, it does not remain with you through the week. It is like the seed cast in the wayside, easily plucked away. Oh! it is just such an outpoured Spirit you require to hide the Word in your heart. When you write with a dry pen, without any ink in it, no impression is made upon the paper. Now, ministers are the pens, and the Spirit of God is the ink. Pray that the pen may be filled with that living ink, that the Word may remain in your hearts, known and read of all men —that you may be sanctified through the truth.

(2.) *For the unconverted.*—So it was in the day of Pentecost—the Spirit came first on the small company of disciples, and then on the three thousand. You have seen the hills attracting the clouds, and so drawing down the shower into the valleys; so do God's children, having their heads within the veil, obtain the Spirit of God in fulness, and dispense it to all around. You have seen

some tall tree or spire catching the lightning, and conveying it down into the ground, so does the fire of God's Spirit come first upon the trees of righteousness, and from them descends to the dead souls around them.

A word to dead souls.—Keep near to God's children at such a time as this. Do not separate from them—do not mock at them; you may yet receive the grace of God through them. Dear believers, for the sake of the dead souls around you, for the sake of this great town, full of wickedness, for the sake of our land, filled with formality and hypocrisy, oh! unite in prayer, and unite in praise, and prove the Lord, if he will not pour out a blessing. Not for your own sakes only, but for the sake of those perishing around you, let us wrestle and pray for a fuller time of the Spirit's working than has ever been seen in Scotland yet.

2. *The priests could not stand to minister.*—Before the cloud came down, no doubt the priests were all busily engaged burning incense, and offering sacrifices; but when the cloud came down, they could only wonder and adore. So it ever will be when the Lord gives much of his Spirit; he will make it evident that it is not the work of man. If he were to give only a little, then ministers would begin to think they had some hand in it; but when he fills the house, then he makes it plain that man has nothing to do with it. David Brainard said, that when God awakened his whole congregation of Indians, he stood by amazed, and felt that he was as nothing—that God alone was working. Oh! it is this, dear friends, that we desire and pray for, that the Lord, the Spirit, would himself descend, and with his almighty power tear away the veil from your hearts, convince you of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, that Jesus himself would take his sceptre, and break your hard hearts, and take all the glory—that we may cry out: "Not unto us, Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory."

St. Peter's, Nov. 24, 1839 (*after returning from Palestine*).

SERMON XLII.

AN EXCEEDING GOOD LAND.

"And they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land which we passed through to search it is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us, a land that floweth with milk and honey."—Numb. xiv., 7, 8.

When the children of Israel arrived at the border of the promised land, Moses, at the command of God, sent twelve men to spy out the good land. They searched it for forty days from the one end

to the other, and then returned, bringing a bunch of grapes, borne between two, on a staff, from the fruitful Valley of Eschol. But ten of the spies brought an evil report of the land. The land, they said, was good; but the inhabitants were giants, and the cities walled up to heaven; and the conclusion they came to was: "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we."—Verse 31.

Joshua and Caleb alone tried to still the people. They did not deny that the men were tall, and that the cities were walled; but they pointed to the pillar-cloud to answer all objections: "The Lord is with us," and we shall subdue the people as easily as we eat bread. "The land which we passed through to search it is an exceeding good land."

Doctrine.—If God delight in a soul, he will bring it into the good land.

I. *Show who they are that God delights in.*

1. *God has no delight in a natural soul.*—"If thou shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?" "Thou art not a God that delighteth in wickedness; neither shall evil dwell with thee." "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity." "Surely thou wilt slay the wicked, O God." Eli's sons hearkened not unto the voice of their father; for the Lord would slay them. It is God's very nature to loathe and turn away from that which is sinful. A person with a fine ear for music cannot delight in a jarring discord. It is impossible in his very nature. So it is impossible in God to delight in a naked sinner. A person covered with sin is quite contrary to God's nature; and therefore, when naked sinners and God meet in the judgment, God will have no mercy, neither will his eye spare. He will say: "Bind them hand and foot, and cast them into outer darkness."

Oh! you that are covered over with sin, think of this. You that are uncovered in the sight of God, prepare to meet your God. How will you come into the presence of one who abhors sin, when he puts your most secret sins in the light of his countenance, when he brings to light all the hidden works of darkness, when you shall give account of every idle word? Ah! where will you appear?

2. *He delights in one sprinkled with the blood of Christ.*—When a hell-deserving sinner is enlightened in the knowledge of Christ, when he believes the record that God hath given concerning his Son, and joyfully consents that the Lord Jesus be his surety, then the blood of Christ is, as it were, sprinkled over that soul. When Aaron and his sons were set apart for the priesthood, the blood of the ram was put upon the tip of their right ear, and the thumb of their right hand, and the great toe of their right foot, to signify that they were dipped in blood from head to foot; so when God looks upon a soul in Christ, he sees it dipped in the blood of the

Saviour. He looks upon that soul as having suffered all that Christ suffered; therefore he delights in that soul. His sense of justice is pleased. God has an infinite sense of justice. His eyes behold the things that are equal; now when he sees the blood of his Son sprinkled upon any soul, he sees that justice has had its full satisfaction in that soul, that that man's sins have been more fully punished than if he had borne them himself eternally.

His sense of mercy is pleased. He delighteth in mercy. Even when justice was crying out, "Thou shalt surely slay the wicked," his mercy was yearning over sinners, and he provided a ransom. And now when the sinner has laid hold on the ransom, mercy is poured down in forgiveness. God delighteth in mercy; he delights to forgive the soul. It is sweet to notice how Jesus loves to forgive sins. In the woman that washed his feet, how he seems to dwell on it! "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven." And again he said unto her: "Thy sins are forgiven thee;" and again, a third time: "Go in peace." And so God loves to forgive: "There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth."

Invite trembling sinners to come to Jesus.—Some of you are trembling under a sense of being exposed to God's wrath. Which of his commandments have you not broken? Your case is, indeed, a dismal one, your fears are most just and reasonable; and if you saw your condition fully, they would be ten thousand times greater. Yet here is a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness. If only you are willing to come to the Lord Jesus, you do not need to remain another moment out of God's favor. You see how completely safe you would be, if you would take this blood. A just and merciful God would rejoice over you to forgive you. It is all in vain that you try your own righteousness; it will never make God delight in you, for it is filthy rags in his sight. But the blood of atonement, the blood of the Lamb, speaketh peace.

3. *God delights in the sanctified.*—You remember, in the Book of Revelation, how often Jesus says, "I know thy works." He says it with delight in the case of Smyrna: "I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty; but thou art rich." When God brings a soul into Christ, he makes him a new creature; then God loves the new creature. Just as when God made the world, he saw all that he had made, and smiled, for all was very good: so, when God makes a new creation in the heart, God delights in it. He says it is all very good.

Obj. My graces are all imperfect. They do not please me, how can they please God? I cannot do the things that I would.

Ans. All true; yet God loves his own workmanship in the soul. His Spirit prays in you, lives in you, walks in you. God loves the work of his own Spirit. Just as you love flowers of your own planting, as you love a spot that you have laid out much on; so God loves his children, not for anything of their own, but for what he has done for them, and in them. They are dear-bought, he has

bought them with his own blood. He waters them every moment, lest any hurt them; he keeps them by night and by day, and how can he but love them? He loves the place where his Spirit dwells.

Just as God loved the temple: "This is my rest: here will I dwell, for I have desired it," not for any good in it, but because it was the place of his feet; because he had done so much for it; so God loves his Christians, just because he dwells in them, and has done so much for them. Just as it was with Aaron's rod: it was a dry stick, like any other rod; but God made it bud forth, and bloom blossoms, and bear ripe almonds; and therefore he caused it to be laid up in the holiest of all. So is a Christian a dry tree; but God makes him bear fruit, and loves the work of his own hands. Dear Christians, walk after the Spirit, and please God more and more. He saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. His countenance doth behold the upright: "I love them that love me."

II. *God will bring all his people to glory.*—There are many difficulties in the way. 1. So it was with Israel. The cities were walled and very great; the inhabitants were gigantic and strong; they fell before them like grasshoppers. 2. So it is with God's children: they have many and great enemies—the devil, and his angels, once the brightest and highest of created intelligences, now the great enemy of souls. He is against the Christian. The world is full of giants, all opposing God's children. The persecutions of the ungodly, the allurements of pleasure, these are great enemies in the way. There are giant lusts in the heart: the lust of praise, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, the pride of life. Before these the soul feels like a grasshopper, without strength: "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we."

Arg. If he delight in us, he will bring us into this land.

He is able; "If God be for us, who can be against us?" 1. *God is stronger than Satan.* Satan is nothing in his hand. It is easier for God to crush Satan under our feet, than for you to crush a fly. God is infinitely stronger than Satan. Satan can no more hinder God from carrying us to glory than a little fly can, which you crush with your foot. "He shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." Submit yourselves to God, resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 2. *Stronger than the world.* The world often comes against us like armed men; but if God be for us, who can be against us? "The people shall be like bread." It is as easy to overcome all opposition when God is with us, as for a hungry man to eat bread. It was God that girded Cyrus, though he did not know him. So he does still: worldly men are a rod in God's hand. God puts it this way or that way, to fulfil all his pleasure; and when he has done with it he will break it in pieces, and cast it into the fire. 'So fear not them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do." Oh! Christian, if

you would live by faith, you might live a happy life! 3. *Stronger than our own heart.* There is many a Jericho in our own heart walled up to heaven, many a fortress of sin, many giant lusts which threaten our souls. "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" "If the Lord delight in us, he will bring us into the good land." By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were compassed about seven days. God made the walls of Jericho fall flat, by a mere breath of wind—a noise; so he is able still. Settle it in your hearts; there is no Jericho in your hearts which God is not able to make fall in a moment. You have seen a shepherd carrying a sheep on his shoulder; he meets with many a stone on the way, many a thorn, many a stream; yet the sheep feels no difficulty; it is carried above all. So it is with every soul that yields itself to God; the only difficulty is to lie on his shoulder.

Apply to young Christians. Learn where your sanctification lies—in God: "With thee is the fountain of life." "Your life is hid with Christ in God." Your holiness does not depend on you, but on him. It is a hard lesson to learn, that you cannot sanctify yourself, that you cannot overcome these giants, and scale these walls. You have learned one humbling lesson, that you have no righteousness; that nothing you have done or can do will justify you. Now, learn another humbling lesson, that even when pardoned you have no strength. It is the most humbling of all things to lie like a sheep on his shoulders; but, oh! it is sweet. Be like Aaron's rod, a dry stick in yourself, till he shall make you bud, and blossom, and bear fruit. Say like Ephraim: "I am a green fir tree;" and hear God say: "From me is thy fruit found."

To fallen Christians. Some of you may have fallen into sin. The reason was just this: you forgot where your strength lay. It was not the force of passion nor the power of Satan, nor the allurement of the world that made you fall, it was unbelief; you did not lie in his hand.

To aged Christians. You have come to the border of the promised land, and still your enemies seem giants, and the cities walled up to heaven, and you feel like a grasshopper. Still, if the Lord delight in you, he will keep you in the love of God. He that saved you out of the mouth of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, will save you out of the hand of this Philistine. Trust God to the end.

Even in the valley of the shadow of death, look back over all your deliverances; look over all the Ebenezers you have raised, and say:—

> After so much mercy past,
> Canst thou let me sink at last?

SERMON XLIII.

FAMILY GOVERNMENT.

"For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him."—Gen xviii., 19

THERE are three things very remarkable in these words. 1. *That Abraham used parental authority in governing his family:* "I know him, that he will command his children and servants after him." He did not think it enough to pray for them, or to teach them, but he used the authority which God had given him, he commanded them. 2. *That he cared for his servants as well as his children.* In chap. xiv., verse 14, we learn that Abraham had three hundred and eighteen servants born in his house. He lived after the manner of patriarchal times; as the Arabs of the wilderness do to this day. His family was very large, and yet he did not say, "They are none of mine." He commanded his children and his household. 3. *His success:* "They shall keep the way of the Lord." It is often said that the children of good men turn out ill. Well, here is a good man, and a good man doing his duty by his children, and here is the result. His son Isaac was probably a child of God from his earliest years. There is every mark of it in his life. And what a delightful specimen of a believing, prayerful servant was Eliezer.—Gen. xxiv.

It is the duty of all believers to rule their houses well.

I. *The springs of this duty.*

1. *Love to souls.*—As long as a man does not care for his own soul, he does not care for the souls of others. He can see his wife and children living in sin, going down to hell, he does not care. He does not care for missions, gives nothing to support missionaries. But the moment a man's eyes are opened to the value of his own soul, that moment does he begin to care for the souls of others. From that moment does he love the missionary cause. He willingly spares a little to send the Gospel to the Jew and the perishing Hindus. Again, he begins to care for the Church at home, for his neighbors, all living in sin. Like the maniac at Decapolis, he publishes the name of Jesus wherever he goes. And now he begins to care for his own house. He commands his children and his household after him. How is it with you? Do you rule well your own house? Do you worship God, morning and evening, in your family? Do you deal with your children and servants touching their conversion? If not, you do not love their souls. And the reason is, you do not love

your own. You may make what outward profession you please; you may sit down at sacraments, and talk about your feelings, &c., but if you do not labor for the conversion of your children, it is all a lie. If you but felt the preciousness of Christ, you could not look upon their faces without a heart-breaking desire that they might be saved. Thus Rahab, Josh. ii., 13.

2. *Desire to use all talents for Christ.*—When a man comes to Christ, he feels he is not his own.—1 Cor. vi., 19. He hears Christ say, "Occupy till I come." If he be a rich man, he uses all for Christ, like Gaius. If a learned man, spends all for Christ, like Paul. Now, parental authority is one talent, the authority of a father and master is a talent, for the use of which men will be judged. He uses this also for Christ. He commands his children and his household after him. How is it with you? Do you use this talent for Christ? If not, you have never given yourself away to him, you are not his.

II. *Scripture examples of it.*

1. *Abraham.* The most eminent example of it, the father of all believers. Are you a child of Abraham? Then walk in his steps in this. Wherever Abraham went, he built an altar to the Lord.

2. *Job.* Upon every one of his sons' birth-days Job offered sacrifice, according to the number of them all.—Chap. i., 5.

3. *Joshua:* "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."—Chap. xxiv., 15.

4. *Eunice.* From a child, little Timothy knew the Scriptures; and the reason of this you understand, when you read of the faith of his mother Eunice.—2 Tim. iii., 15, with i., 5. Such was the manner in Scotland in the days of our fathers; and if ever we are to see Scotland again a garden of the Lord, it must be by the reviving of family government.

III. *The manner of it.*

1. *Worship God in your family.*—If you do not worship God in your family, you are living in positive sin; you may be quite sure you do not care for the souls of your family. If you neglected to spread a meal for your children to eat, would it not be said that you did not care for their bodies? And if you do not lead your children and servants to the green pastures of God's Word, and to seek the living water, how plain is it that you do not care for their souls! *Do it regularly*, morning and evening. It is more needful than your daily food, more needful than your work. How vain and silly all your excuses will appear, when you look back from hell! *Do it fully.* Some clip off the psalm, and some the reading of the Word; and so the worship of God is reduced to a mockery. *Do it in a spiritual, lively manner.* Go to it as to a well of salvation. There is, perhaps, no mean of

grace more blessed. Let all your family be present without fail, let none be awanting.

2. *Command, use parental authority.*—How awfully did God avenge it upon Eli, "because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not!" Eli was a good man, and a holy man; and often he spoke to his two wicked sons, but they heeded not. But herein he failed, he did not use his parental authority, he did not restrain them. Remember Eli. It is not enough to pray for your children, and to pray with them, and to warn them; but you must restrain them. Restrain them with the cords of love. From wicked books, from wicked companions, from wicked amusements, from untimely hours, restrain them.

3. *Command servants as well as children.*—So did Abraham. Remember you are in the place of a father to your servants. They are come under your roof; and they have a claim on your instructions. If they minister to you in carnal things, it is but fair that you minister to them in spiritual things. You have drawn them away from under the parental roof, and it is your part to see that they do not lose by it. Oh! what a mass of sin would be prevented, if masters would care for their servants' souls!

4. *Deal with each as to the conversion of his soul.*—I have known many dear Christian parents who have been singularly neglectful in this particular. They worship God in the family, and pray earnestly in secret for their children and servants, and yet never deal with them as to their conversion. Satan spreads a kind of false modesty among parents, that they will not inquire of their little ones, Have you found the Lord, or no? Ah! how sinful and foolish this will appear in eternity. If you should see some of your children or servants in hell, all because you did not speak to them in private, how would you look? Begin to-night. Take them aside and ask, What has God done for your soul?

5. *Lead a holy life before them.*—If all your religion is on your tongue, your children and servants will soon find out your hypocrisy.

IV. *The blessing.*

1. *You will avoid the curse.*—You will avoid Eli's curse. Eli was a child of God, and yet he suffered much on account of his unfaithfulness. He lost his two sons in one day. If you would avoid Eli's curse, avoid Eli's sin. "Pour out thy fury on the families that have not called on thy name"—Jer. x., 25. If you do not worship God in your house, a curse is written over your door. If I could mark the dwellings in this town where there is no family prayer, these are the spots where the curse of God is ready to fall. These houses are over hell.

2. *Your children will be saved.*—So it was with Abraham. His dear son Isaac was saved. What became of Ishmael I do not know. Only I remember his fervent cry: "O that Ishmael might

live before thee!" Such is the promise: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Such is the promise in baptism. Ah! who can tell the blessedness of being the saved father of a saved family? Dear believers, be wise. Surely if anything could mar the joy of heaven, it would be to see your children lost through your neglect. Dear unconverted souls, if one pang can be more bitter than another in hell, it will be to hear your children say: "Father, mother, you brought me here."

SERMON XLIV.

AND IN THIS MOUNTAIN.

"And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth; for the Lord hath spoken it."—Isa. xxv., 6–8.

These words are yet to be fulfilled at the second coming of the Saviour. It is true that the Lord of hosts has long ago prepared this feast, and sent out his servants, saying: "Come, for all things are ready." But it is just as true, that the veil that is spread over all nations is not yet taken away; and Paul tells us plainly, in 1 Cor. xv., 54, that it is in the resurrection morning that these words shall be quite fulfilled: "He hath swallowed up death in victory."

Still these words have been in some measure fulfilled wherever there has been a peculiar outpouring of the Spirit upon any place. Often at sacrament seasons in our own land, these words have been fulfilled. God has made Christ a feast of fat things to hungry souls. The veil of unbelief has been torn from many hearts, and the tears wiped away from many eyes. It is my humble but earnest desire that next Sabbath day may be such a day in this place.* I want to engage all of you who are the children of God to secret and united prayer that it may be so; and I have therefore, chosen these words by which to stir you up to pray.

I. Consider the Feast. II. The tearing away of the veil. III. The effects of it.

1. *The Feast.*

* The Communion Sabbath.

1. *Where is it? Ans.* "In this mountain." (1.) *Moriah?* Ah! it was here that Abraham offered up Isaac. It was here that the passover lamb used to be slain. It was here that Jesus stood and cried, "If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink." (2.) *Mount Olivet?* It was here that Jesus said, "I am the true vine." It was here that Jesus had the cup of wrath set down before him, in that night in which he was betrayed. (3.) *Mount Calvary?* It was here that they crucified Jesus—and two thieves, one on each hand. It was here that the passers-by wagged their heads, the chief priests mocked, and the thieves cast the same in his teeth. It was here that there was three hours' darkness. It was here they pierced his hands and feet. It was here that God forsook his own Son. It was here that infinite wrath was laid upon an infinite Saviour: "In this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things."

To anxious souls.—The world tries to cheer you; they bid you go into company, see more of the world, enjoy pleasure, and drive away these dull thoughts. They spread a feast for you in some lighted hall, with brilliant lamps; and the pipe and the tabor, and wine are in their feasts. Oh! anxious soul, flee these things: remember Lot's wife. If you are anxious about your soul, flee from the feasts of the world. Stop your ears, and run. Look here how God tries to cheer you: he, too, prepares a feast; but where? On Calvary. There is no light; it is all darkness round the cross; no music, but the groan of a dying Saviour: "Eli! Eli!—my God! my God!" Oh! anxious soul, it is there you will find peace and rest. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The darkest hour that ever was in this world gives light to the weary soul. The sight of the cross brings within sight of the crown. That dying sigh, which made the rocks to rend, alone can rend the veil, and give you peace. The Place of a Skull is the place of joy.

2. *What is it?—A feast of fat things, of wines on the lees.*

(1.) A feast. It is not a meal, but a feast. At a meal, it is well if there be enough for all who sit round the table: but at a feast, there should be more than enough; there is a liberal abundance. The Gospel is compared to a feast: "Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine that I have mingled."—Prov. ix.

Again, in the Song of Songs: "He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love." "Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples; for I am sick of love." Again, in Matt. xxii.: "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."

So it is in Jesus; there is bread enough and to spare. He came that we might have life, and might have it more abundantly. There is a feast in a crucified Jesus. His dying in the stead of sinners is enough, and more than enough, to answer for our sins.

It is not only equal to my dying, but it is far more glorifying to God and his holy law, than if I had suffered a hundred deaths. "Comfort ye, comfort ye; ye have received at the Lord's hand double for all your sins." His obeying in the stead of sinners is enough, and more than enough, to cover our nakedness. It is not only equal to my obeying, but it is far more glorifying to God than if I had never sinned. His garment not only clothes the naked soul, but clothes from head to foot; so that no shame appears; only Christ appears, the soul is hid. His Spirit is not only enough, but more than enough, to make us holy. There is a well in Christ which we never can exhaust—still rivers of grace which we never can drink dry.

Christians, learn to feed more on Christ: "Eat, O friends! drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved!" When you are asked to a feast, there is no greater affront you can put upon the entertainer than by being content with a crumb below the table. Yet this is the way the Christians of our day affront the Lord of glory. Oh how few seem to feed much on Christ! how few seem to put on his white flowing raiment! how few seem to drink deep into his Spirit! Most are content with now and then a glimpse of pardon, a crumb from the table, and a drop of his Spirit. Awake, dear friends! "These things have I spoken unto you that your joy may be full."

(2.) A feast of fat things, of wines on the lees.

The fat things full of marrow are intended to represent the richest and most nourishing delicacies; and the wines on the lees well refined, to represent the oldest and richest wines; so that, not only is there abundance in this feast, but abundance of the best. Ah! so it is in Christ. *First*, There is forgiveness of all past sins. Ah! this is the richest of all delicacies to a heavy laden soul. As cold water to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country. A good conscience is a perpetual feast. Oh! weary sinner, taste and see. "I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste." These are the apples that a weary soul cries out for: "Comfort me with apples; for I am sick of love." *Second*, There are the smiles of the Father. The Father himself loveth you. Oh, to pass from the frown of an angry God into the smile of a loving Father! this is a feast to the soul; this is to pass from death unto life. *Third*, The droppings of the Spirit into the soul—ah! it is this which comforts the soul. This is the oil of gladness that makes the face to shine. This makes the cup run over. This is the full well rising within the soul, at once comforting and purifying. Dear friends, be not filled with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit. These are the flagons that stay the soul. May you be in the Spirit on the Lord's-day!

3. *For whom is it?* Unto all people. "The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the

Jew first, and also to the Greek." "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." Ah! there is not a creature under heaven for whom the feast is not prepared. There is not a creature from whom we can keep back the message: "All things are ready; come to the marriage."

Dear anxious souls, why do you keep away from Christ? you say Christ is far from you; alas! he has been at your door all day. Christ is as free to you as to any that ever came to him. Come hungry, come empty, come sinful, come as you are to feed on glorious Jesus. He is a feast to the hungry soul.

Dear dead souls, that never felt one throb of anxiety, that never uttered one heartfelt cry to God, this message is for you. The feast is for all people. Christ is as free to you as to any other: "How long, ye simple ones, will ye love your simplicity?" "The Spirit and the bride say, Come."

II. *The tearing away of the veil.*

1. *Observe there is a veil over every natural heart, a thick impenetrable veil.* (1.) There was a veil in the temple over the entrance to the holiest of all, so that no eye could see the beauty of the Lord within. (2.) There was a veil over the face of Moses, when he came down from the mount, for something of the brightness of Christ shone in his countenance. When the veil was down they could not see his glory. (3.) So there is a veil upon the hearts of the Jews to this day, when Moses and the prophets are read to them. (4.) So is there a veil over your hearts, so many of you as are in your natural state; a thick, impenetrable veil; its name is unbelief. The same veil that hid the beauty of the promised land from Israel in Kadesh-barnea—"for they could not enter in, because of unbelief"—that veil is over your hearts this day.

Learn the great reason of your indifference to Christ. The veil is upon your heart. God may lay down all the riches of his bosom on the table—the unsearchable riches of Christ; yet so long as that veil is over you, you will not move. You see no form nor comeliness in Christ: "And when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him."—Isa. liii., 2. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."—1 Cor. ii., 14.

2. *Who takes the veil away? Ans.* The Lord of hosts: he that makes the feast is he that tears the veil away. Ah! it is a work of God to take away that covering. We may argue with you till midnight, telling you of your sin and misery—we may bring all the sweetest words in the Bible to show you that Christ is fairer than the children of men; still you will go home and say, We see no beauty in him. But God can take away the veil; sometimes he does it in a moment—sometimes slowly; then Christ

is revealed, and Christ is precious. There is not one of you so sunk in sin and worldliness—so dull and heartless in the things of God—but your heart would be overcome by the sight of an unveiled Saviour. Oh! let us plead this promise with God: "He will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations." Come and do it, Lord. "I will pour out my Spirit unto you." Pour quickly, Lord.

3. *Where?* "In this mountain"—in the same place where he makes the feast; he takes the soul to Calvary. Ah, yes; it is within sight of the crucified Saviour that God takes every veil away.

Anxious souls, wait near the cross. Meditate upon Christ, and him crucified. It is there that God tears the veil away. Be often at Gethsemane—be often at Golgotha. Oh! that next Sabbath he may reveal himself to all in the breaking of bread. As easy to a thousand as to one soul!

III. *Effects.*

1. *Triumph over death.* (1.) Even here this is fulfilled. Often the fear of death is taken away in those who trembled before. The soul that has really had the veil taken away can go through the valley, if not singing, at least humbly trusting, and can say at the end, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" Ah! nothing but a real sight of Christ can cheer in death. Worldly people can die stupidly and insensibly; but the unveiled Christian alone can feel in death that the sting is taken away. (2.) In resurrection. When we stand like Christ in body and soul—"When the sea has given up the dead that are in it, and death and hell the dead that are in them"—"When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption—then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."

Dear friends, what solemn scenes are before us! Ah! nothing but a sight of Christ as our own Surety and Redeemer can uphold us, in sight of opening graves and reeling worlds. We shall remember his own words, and be still: "I will ransom them from the power of the grave: I will redeem them from death. O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction." "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me may be with me, where I am, that they may behold my glory."

2. *Triumph over sorrow.* (1.) Even here, God wipes away the tears of conviction, the tears of sin and shame, by revealing Christ. A work of grace always begins in tears; but when God takes the soul to Calvary—look here: There are thy sins laid upon Immanuel; there the Lamb of God is bearing them; there is all the hell that thou shalt suffer. Oh, how sweetly does God wipe away the tears! Anxious souls, may God do this for you next Sabbath-day! (2.) Complete fulfilment after. There will always be tears

here, because of sin, temptation, sorrow ; but there "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."

3. *Triumph over reproaches.*—Even here God lifts his people above reproaches ; he enables them to bless, and curse not : "Love your enemies ; bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." But there shall be full triumph yonder. He will clear up our character. Here we may endure reproaches all the way ! Christians are slighted, despised, trampled on, here ; but God will acknowledge them as his jewels at last. The world will stand aghast.

SERMON XLV.

THE HEART DECEITFUL.

"The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked : who can know it ? I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings."—Jer. xvii., 9, 10.

I. *The state of the natural heart.*—Verse 9. This is a faithful description of the natural heart of man : The heart of unfallen Adam was very different. "God made man upright." His mind was clear and heavenly. It was riveted upon divine things. He saw their glory without any cloud or dimness. His heart was right with God. His affections flowed sweetly and fully towards God. He loved as God loved, hated as God hated. There was no deceit about his heart then. It was transparent as crystal. He had nothing to conceal. There was no wickedness in his heart ; no spring of hatred, or lust, or pride. He knew his own heart. He could see clearly into its deepest recesses ; for it was just a reflection of the heart of God. When Adam sinned, his heart was changed. When he lost the favor of God he lost the image of God. Just as Nebuchadnezzar suddenly got a beast's heart, so Adam suddenly got a heart in the image of the devil. And this is the description ever since. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked."—Verse 9.

1. *It is "deceitful above all things."*—Deceit is one of the prime elements of the natural heart. It is more full of deceit than any other object. We sometimes call the sea deceitful. At evening the sea appears perfectly calm, or there is a gentle ripple on the

waters, and the wind blows favorably; during the night a storm may come on, and the treacherous waves are now like mountain billows, covering the ship. But the heart is deceitful *above all things:* more treacherous than the treacherous sea. The clouds are often very deceitful. Sometimes, in a time of drought, they promise rain; but they turn out to be clouds without rain, and the farmer is disappointed. Sometimes the clouds appear calm and settled; but, before the morning, torrents of rain are falling. But the heart is deceitful above all things. Many animals are deceitful. The serpent is more subtle than any beast of the field; sometimes it will appear quite harmless, but suddenly it will put out its deadly sting and give a mortal wound. But the natural heart is more deceitful than a serpent; *above all things.* It is deceitful in two ways; in deceiving others and itself.

(1.) *In deceiving others.*—Every natural man is a hypocrite. He is different in reality from what he appears to be. I undertake to say, that there is not a natural man present here to-day in his true colors. If every natural man here were to throw off his disguise, and appear as he really is, this church would look more like the gate of hell than the gate of heaven. If every unclean man were to lay bare his heart, and show his abominable, filthy desires and thoughts; if every dishonest man were now to open his heart, and let us see all his frauds, all his covetous, base desires; if every proud, self-conceited one were now to show us what is going on below his coat, or below that silk gown; to let us see the paltry schemes of vanity and desire of praise; if every unbeliever among you were openly to reveal his hatred of Christ and of the blessed Gospel, O what a hell would this place appear! Why is it not so? Because natural men are deceitful; because you draw a cloak over your heart, and put on a smooth face, and make the outside of a saint cover the heart of a fiend. Oh! your heart is deceitful above all things. Every natural man is a flatterer. He does not tell other men what he thinks of them. There is no plain, honest dealing between natural men in this world. Those of you who know anything of this world, know how hollow the most of its friendships are. Just imagine for a moment that every natural man were to speak the truth, when he meets his friends; suppose he were to tell them all the bitter slanders which he tells of them a hundred times behind their back; suppose he were to unbosom himself, and tell all his low, mean ideas of them; how worldly and selfish they are in his eyes; alas! what a world of quarrels this would be. Ah, no! natural man, you dare not be honest; you dare not speak the truth one to another; your heart is so vile that you must draw a cloak over it; and your thoughts of others so abominable that you dare not speak them out: "The heart is deceitful above all things."

(2.) It shows itself in another way, in self-deceit. Ever since my coming among you I have labored with all my might to sepa-

rate between the precious and the vile. I have given you many marks, by which you might know whether or not you have undergone a true conversion, or whether it has only been a deceit of Satan—whether your peace was the peace of God or the peace of the devil—whether you were on the narrow way that leads to life, or on the broad way that leads to destruction. I have done my best to give you the plainest Scripture marks by which you might know your real case; and yet I would not be in the least surprised, if the most of you were found at the last to have deceived yourselves. Often a man is deeply concerned about his soul; he weeps and prays, and joins himself to others who are inquiring. He now changes his way of life, and changes his notions; he talks of his experience, and enlargement in prayer; perhaps he condemns others very bitterly; and yet has no true change of life, walks after the flesh still, not after the Spirit. Now, others think this man a true Christian, and he believes it himself; yea, he thinks he is a very eminent Christian; when, all the time, he has not the Spirit of Christ, and is none of his. Ah! "the heart is deceitful above all things."

2. "*Desperately wicked.*"—This word is borrowed from the book of the physician. When the physician is called to see a patient past recovery, he shakes his head and says: This is a desperate case. This is the very word used here. "The heart is desperately wicked," past cure by human medicine. *Learn that you need conversion, or a new heart.* When we speak of the necessity of a change to some people, they begin to be affected by it, and so they put away some evil habits, as drinking, or swearing, or lying; they put these away, and promise never to go back to them; and now they think the work is done, and they are in a fair way for heaven. Alas, foolish man! it is not your drinking, or your swearing, or your lying, that are desperately wicked, but your heart. You have only been cutting off the streams, the heart remains as wicked as ever. It is the heart that is incurable. It is a new heart you need. Nothing less will answer your need. *Learn that you must go to Christ for this.* When the woman had spent her all upon physicians, and was nothing better, but rather worse, she heard of Jesus. Ah! said she, if I may but "touch the hem of his garment I shall be made whole." Jesus said to her: "Daughter, be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole." Come, then, incurable, to Christ. The leprosy was always regarded as incurable. Accordingly, the leper came to Jesus, and worshipping, said: "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. Jesus said, I will, be thou clean; and immediately his leprosy was cleansed." Some of you feel that your heart is desperately wicked; well, kneel to the Lord Jesus, and say: "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." You are a leper—incurable; Jesus is able—he is also willing to make you clean.

3. *Unsearchably wicked: "Who can know it?"*—No man ever yet knew the badness of his own heart. We are sailing over a sea the depths of which we have never fathomed. (1.) *Unawakened persons* have no idea of what is in their heart. When Elijah told Hazael what a horrible murderer he would be, Hazael said: "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?" The seeds of it were all in his heart at that moment; but he did not know his own heart. If I had told some of you, when you were little children playing beside your mother's knee, the sins that you were afterwards to commit, you would have said: "Am I a dog, that I should do this thing?" andyet you see you have done them. If I could show each of you the sins that you are yet to commit, you would be shocked and horrified. This shows how ignorant you are of your own heart. I suppose that the most of you think it quite impossible you should ever be guilty of murder, or adultery, or apostasy, or the sin against the Holy Ghost; this arises from ignorance of your own black heart: "Who can know it?" (2.) *Some awakened persons* have an awful sight given them of the wickedness of their own hearts. They see all the sins of their past life, as it were, concentrated there. They see that their past sins all come out of their heart—and that the same may come out again. And yet the most awakened sinner does not see the ten thousandth part of the wickedness of his heart. You are like a person looking down into a dark pit; you can only see a few yards down the side of the pit; so you can only see a little way down into your heart. It is a pit of corruption which is bottomless: "Who can know it?" (3.) *Some children of God* have amazing discoveries given them of the wickedness of their own hearts. Sometimes it is given them to see that the germs of every sin are lodging there. Sometimes they see that there never was a sin committed, in heaven, in earth, or in hell, but it has something corresponding to it in their own heart. Sometimes they see, that if there were not another fountain of sin, from which the fair face of creation might be defaced, their own heart is a fountain inexhaustible, enough to corrupt every creature, and to defile every fair spot in the universe. And yet even they do not know their own hearts. You are like a traveller looking down into the crater of a volcano; but the smoke will not suffer you to look far. You see only a few yards into the smoking volcano of your own heart.

Learn to be humbled far more than you have ever been. None of you have ever been sufficiently humbled under a sense of sin; for this reason, that none of you have ever seen fully the plague of your own heart. There are chambers in your heart you have never yet seen into. There are caves in that ocean you have never fathomed. There are fountains of bitterness you have never tasted. When you have felt the wickedness of your heart to the uttermost, then lie down under this awful truth, that you have only seen a few yards into a pit that is bottomless, that

you carry about with you a slumbering volcano; a heart whose wickedness you do not and cannot know.

II. *The witness of the heart.*

1. "*I, the Lord.*" We have seen that we do not know one another's hearts; for "the heart is deceitful." Man looketh on the outward appearance. We have seen that no man knows his own heart, that the most know nothing of what is there; and those who know most, see but a short way down. But here is an unerring witness. He that made man knows what is in man.

2. *Observe what a strict witness he is:* "I, the Lord, search the heart, I try the reins." It is not said, I *know* the heart—but, I *search* it. The heart of man is not one of the many objects upon which God turns his all-seeing eye, but it is one which he singles out for investigation: "I search the heart." As the astronomer directs his telescope upon the very star which he wishes to examine, and arranges all his lenses, that he may most perfectly look at it, so doth God's calm eye pore upon the naked breast of every man. As the refiner of silver keeps his eye upon the fining-pot, watching every change in the boiling metal; so doth God's eye watch every change in the bosom of man. Oh! natural man, can you bear this? How vain are all your pretences and coverings; God sees you as you are. You may deceive your neighbor, or your minister, or yourself, but you cannot deceive God.

3. *Observe he is a constant witness.*—He does not say I have searched, or I will do it—but, I *search*—I do it now, and always. Not a moment of our life but his pure, calm, searching eye has been gazing on the inmost recesses of our hearts. From childhood to old age his eye rests on us. The darkness hideth not from him. The darkness and the light are both alike to him.

4. *Observe his end in searching:* "Even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings." Verse 10. In order to know the true value of an action, you must search the heart. Many an action that is applauded by men, is abominable in the sight of God, who searches the heart. To give an alms to a poor man, may either be an action worthy of an eternal reward, or worthy of an eternal punishment. If it be done out of love to Christ, because the poor man is a disciple of Christ, it will in no wise lose its reward; Christ will say; "Inasmuch as ye did it to the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me." If it be done out of pride or self-righteousness, Christ will cast it from him: he will say, "Depart ye cursed—ye did it not unto me." The reason, then, why Christ searches the heart is, that he may judge uprightly in the judgment. Oh, sirs! how can you bear this, you that are Christless? How can you bear that eye on your heart all your days, and to be judged according to what his pure eye sees in you? Oh! do you not see it is a gone case with you? "Enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight shall

no flesh living be justified." Oh! if your heart be desperately wicked, and his pure eye ever poring on it, what can you expect, but that he should cast you into hell? Oh! flee to the Lord Jesus Christ for shelter, for blood to blot out past sins, and righteousness to cover you. "See, God, our shield."

Learn the amazing love of Christ.—He was the only one that knew the wickedness of the beings for whom he died. He that searches the hearts of sinners died for them. His eye alone had searched their hearts; aye, was searching at the time he came. He knew what was in man; yet he did not abhor them on that account—he died for them. It was not for any goodness in man that he died for man. He saw none. It was not that he saw little sin in the heart of man, that he pitied him and died for him. He is the only being in the universe that saw all the sin that is in the unfathomable heart of man. He saw to the bottom of the volcano, and yet he came and died for man. Herein is love! When publicans and sinners came to him on earth, he knew what was in their hearts. His eye had rested on their bosoms all their life, he had seen all the lusts and passions that had ever rankled there; yet in no wise did he cast them out. So with you. His eye hath seen all your sins; the vilest, darkest, blackest hours you have lived, his pure eye was resting on you; yet he died for such, and invites you to come to him; and will in no wise cast you out. Amen.

SERMON XLVI.

TRUST IN THE LORD.

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding."—Prov iii., 5.

When an awakened soul is brought to God to believe on Jesus, he enjoys for the first time that calm and blessed state of mind which the Bible calls *peace in believing*. The sorrows of death were compassing him, and the pains of hell getting hold on him; but now he can say: "Return unto thy rest, O my soul." It is not to be wondered at, that when this heaven upon earth is first realized in the once anxious bosom, the young believer should often imagine that heaven is already gained, and that he has bid farewell to sin and sorrow for evermore. But, alas! it may need but the passing away of one little day to convince him that heaven is not yet gained, that though the Red Sea may be passed, yet there is a wide howling wilderness to pass through, and many an enemy

to be overcome, before the soul can enter into the land of which it is said, that "the people are all righteous."

The first breath of temptation from without, or the first rise of corruption from within, awakens new and strange anxieties within the believing bosom. He had just put on the breastplate of the Redeemer's righteousness, but these noxious vapors tarnish and bedim its burnished steel. Alas! he cries, what good will it do me to be rid of all accusations from past sins, if I am not secure from raising up new accusers in the days to come? What good will the forgiveness of past sins do me, if, every step of my life, I am to fall into new sin?

The young believer in this state of mind is just like a traveller in the midst of a dangerous wood. He has been brought into a place of perfect security for the present. He can hear the cry of the wolves behind him without the least alarm, for he is brought into a fortress, a strong tower, where he is safe; but when he thinks of his further journey, when he remembers that he is still in the midst of the wood, and still far from home, alas! he knows not how to move; he knows not which path will lead him right, and which will lead him wrong. When the lost sheep was found by the good shepherd, it was safe in that moment, as safe as if it were already in the fold; and yet it was doubtless in great perplexity how to get back again, it had wandered so far over the mountains, and down into the valleys, and across the brooks, and through the thorny brakes, that it was impossible the bewildered sheep could find its way back; and therefore it is said that the good shepherd laid it on his shoulder rejoicing.

And just so it is with the soul that is found by Christ. Washed in his blood, he may feel as secure and as much at peace as if he were already in heaven; but when he looks to the thousand entanglements in the midst of which he has wandered, the evil habits, the evil companions that lay snares for him on every hand, alas! he is forced to cry: How shall I walk in such a world as this? I thought I was saved; but, alas! I am only saved to be lost again. So real and so painful is this state of mind, that some young believers have actually wished to die that they might be rid of these tormenting anxieties. But there is a far more excellent way pointed out in the words before us:

> "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart:
> And lean not to thine own understanding
> In all thy ways acknowledge him,
> And he shall direct thy paths."

This is a word in season to the bewildered believer; and "a word spoken in due season, how good is it!"

First of all, Consider what this grace is that is here recommended: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart."

When the Philippian jailer cried out: "What must I do to be saved?" the simple answer was: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." His great anxiety was to escape from under the wrath of the God of the earthquake; and, therefore, they simply pointed to the bleeding Lamb of God. He looks to Jesus doing all that we should have done, and suffering all that we should have suffered; and while he looks, his anxiety is healed, and a sweet heavenly peace springs up within, the peace of believing. But the inquirer who is spoken to in the text is one who already enjoys the peace of a justified man, but wants to know how he may enjoy the peace of a sanctified man. A new anxiety hath sprung up within his bosom, as to how he shall order his steps in the world; and unless this anxiety also can be healed, it is to be feared his joy in believing will be sadly interrupted. How seasonable then, is the word which points at once to the remedy! and how amazing is the simplicity of the Gospel method of salvation, when the soul is directed just to look again to Jesus: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart." When you came to us weary and heavy laden with guilt, we pointed you to Jesus; for he is the Lord our righteousness. When you come to us again, groaning under the power of indwelling sin, we point you again to Jesus; for he is the Lord our strength. It is the true mark of a false and ignorant physician of bodies, when to every sufferer, whatever be the disease, he applies the same remedy. But it is the true mark of a good and faithful physician of souls, when, to every sick and perishing soul, in every stage of the disease, he brings the one, the only remedy, the only balm in Gilead.

Christ was anointed not only to bind up the broken-hearted, but also to proclaim liberty to the captives; so that, if it be good and wise to direct the poor broken-hearted sinner, who has no way of justifying himself, to Jesus, as his righteousness, it must be just as good and wise to direct the poor believer, groaning under the bondage of corruption, having no way to sanctify himself, to look to Jesus as his wisdom, his sanctification, his redemption. Thou hast once looked unto Jesus as thy covenant head, bearing all wrath, fulfilling all righteousness in thy stead, and that gave thee peace; well, look again to the same Jesus as thy covenant head, obtaining by his merits gifts for men, even the promise of the Father, to shed down on all his members; and let that also give thee peace. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart." Thou hast looked to Jesus on the cross, and that gave thee peace of conscience; look to him now upon the throne, and that will give thee purity of heart. I know of but one way in which a branch can be made a leafy, healthy, fruit-bearing branch; and that is by being grafted into the vine, and abiding there. And just so I know of but one way in which a believer can be made a holy, happy, fruitful child of God; and that is by believing in Jesus, abiding in him, walking in him, being rooted and built up in him.

And observe it is said; "Trust in the Lord *with all thine heart.*" When you believe in Jesus for righteousness, you must cast away all your own claims for pardon; your own righteousness must be filthy rags in your eyes; you must come empty, that you may go away full of Jesus. And just so, when you trust in Jesus for strength, you must cast away all your natural notions of your own strength; you must feel that your own resolutions, and vows, and promises, are as useless to stem the current of your passions, as so many straws would be in stemming the mightiest waterfall. You must feel that your own firmness and manliness of disposition, which has so long been the praise of your friends and the boast of your own mind, are as powerless, before the breath of temptation, as a broken reed before the hurricane. You must feel that you wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with spirits of gigantic power, in whose mighty grasp you are feeble as a child; then, and then only, will you come with all your heart to trust in the Lord your strength. When the believer is weakest, then is he strongest. The child that knows most its utter feebleness, intrusts itself most completely into the mother's arms. The young eagle that knows, by many a fall, its own inability to fly, yields itself to be carried on the mother's mighty wing. When it is weak, then it is strong; and just so the believer, when he has found out, by repeated falls, his own utter feebleness, clings with simplest faith, to the arm of the Saviour—leans on his Beloved, coming up out of the wilderness, and hears with joy the word: "My grace is sufficient for thee; my strength is made perfect in weakness."

But *secondly,* Consider how this grace of trusting hinders the believer from leaning to his own understanding.

> "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart;
> And lean not to thine own understanding."

Well may every soul that is untaught by the Spirit of God exclaim: "This is a hard saying, who can hear it?" and, indeed, there is perhaps no truth that calls forth more of the indignant opposition of the world than this blessed one—that they who trust in the Lord with all their heart, do not lean to their own understanding. The understanding, here, plainly includes all the observing, knowing, and judging faculties of the mind, by which men ordinarily guide themselves in the world; and, accordingly, it is with no slight appearance of reasonableness that the world should brand with the name of fanatics a peculiar set of men, who dare to say that they are not to lean upon these faculties, to guide them in their every-day walk and conversation.

But surely it might do something to moderate, at least, the opposition of the world (if they would but listen to us), to tell them that we never refuse to *be guided by* the understanding, although

we altogether refuse *to lean* upon it. Every enlightened believer, however implicitly he depends upon the breathing of the Holy Ghost, without whose almighty breathing he knows that his understanding would be but a vain and useless machine, leading him into darkness, and not into light, yet follows the guidance of the understanding as scrupulously and as religiously as any unconverted man is able to do; and, therefore, it ought never to be said by any man who has a regard for truth, that the believer in Jesus casts aside the use of his understanding, and looks for miraculous guidance from on high. The truth is this, that he trusts in a divine power, enlightening the understanding, and he therefore follows the dictates of the understanding more religiously than any other man.

When a man comes to be in Christ Jesus, he becomes a new creature, not only in heart, but in understanding also. The history of the world, the history of missions, and individual experience, fully prove this; and it may not be difficult to point out what may be called natural reasons for the change.

1. When a man becomes a believer, a new and untried field is opened up for the understanding to penetrate into. It is true that unconverted men have made dives into the character of God, his government, his redemption. But the unconverted man never can gaze on these things with the love of one interested in them; and, therefore, he cannot know them at all; for God must be loved in order to be known. But reconcile a man to God, and the intelligence springs forward with a power unfelt before, and feels that this is life eternal, to know God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent. And,

2. When a man becomes a believer, he enters into every pursuit impelled by heavenly affections. Before, he had none but earthly motives to impel him to gather knowledge; but now a holy inquisitiveness is instilled into his mind, and a retentiveness which he never had before. He looks with new eyes upon the fields, the woods, the hills, the broad resplendent rivers, and says: "*My Father made them all.*"

But if these are natural reasons for the change, there is one supernatural reason which is greater than all. The believer's understanding is new; for the Spirit of God is now a dweller in his bosom. He leans upon this almighty guest—trusts in the Lord the Spirit—with all his heart, and leans not to his own understanding. In the Prophet Hosea, the gift of the Spirit is compared to dew: "I will be as the dew unto Israel." Now, it is peculiarly true of the dew that it moistens everything where it falls; it leaves not one leaf unvisited; there is not a tiny blade of grass on which its diamond drops do not descend; every leaf and stem of the bush is burdened with the precious load; just so it is peculiarly true of the Spirit, that there is not a faculty, there is not an affection, a power, or passion of the soul, on which the Spirit does not

descend—working through all, refreshing, reviving, renewing, recreating all. And if we are really in Christ Jesus, abiding in him by faith, we are bound to expect this supernatural power to work through our understanding; for if we be not led by the Spirit, we are none of his. But the more implicitly we lean on this loving Spirit, is it not plain as day that we all the more implicitly follow the guidance of our understanding? We do not lean upon our own understanding; for we lean upon the Spirit of grace and of wisdom, who is promised to guide us into all truth, and guide our footsteps in the way of peace. But we do not throw away our own understanding; because it is through that understanding alone that we look for the guidance of the Spirit.

In a mill where the machinery is all driven by water, the working of the whole machinery depends upon the supply of water. Cut off that supply, and the machinery becomes useless. Set on the water, and life and activity is given to all. The whole dependence is placed upon the outward supply of water; still, it is obvious that we do not throw away the machinery through which the power of the water is brought to bear upon the work. Just so in the believer, the whole man is carried on by the Spirit of Christ, else he is none of his. The working of every day depends upon the daily supply of the living stream from on high. Cut off that supply, and the understanding becomes a dark and useless lump of machinery; for the Bible says that unconverted men have the understanding darkened. Restore the divine Spirit, and life and animation is given to all—the understanding is made a new creature. Now, though the whole leaning or dependence here is upon the supply of the Spirit, still it is obvious that we do not cast away the machinery of the human mind, but rather honor it far more than the world.

Now, however difficult it may be to explain all this to the world, it is most beautiful to see how truly it is acted on by the simplest child of God.

If you could overhear some simple cottage believer at his morning devotions—how simply he brings himself in lost and condemned, and therefore cleaves to Jesus, the divine Saviour!—how simply he brings himself in dark, ignorant, unable to know his way—unable to guide his feet, his hands, his tongue, throughout the coming day; and, therefore, pleading for the promised Spirit to dwell in him—to walk in him—to be as the dew upon his soul; and all this with the earnestness of a man who will not go away without the blessing—you would see what a holy contempt a child of God can put upon his own understanding, as a refuge to lean upon. But, again, if you could watch him in his daily walk—in the field and in the market-place—among the wicked world, and see how completely he follows the guidance of a shrewd and intelligent mind, you would see with what a holy confidence a child of God can make use of the faculties which

God hath given him; you would see the happy union of the deepest piety and the hardest painstaking; you would know the meaning of these words: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart: and lean not unto thine own understanding."

Dundee Presbytery, 1836

SERMON XLVII.

NOT A JEW WHICH IS ONE OUTWARDLY.

"He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly: and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."—Rom. ii., 28, 29.

FORMALITY is, perhaps, the most besetting sin of the human mind. It is found in every bosom and in every clime; it reigns triumphant in every natural mind; and it constantly tries to re-usurp the throne in the heart of every child of God. If we were to seek for proof that fallen man is "without understanding," that he hath altogether fallen from his primitive clearness and dignity of intelligence; that he hath utterly lost the image of God, in knowledge, after which he was created; we would point to this one strange, irrational conceit by which more than one-half the world is befooled to their eternal undoing; that God may be pleased with mere bodily prostrations and services; that it is possible to worship God with the lips, when the heart is far from him. It is against this error, the besetting error of humanity, and pre-eminently the besetting error of the Jewish mind, that Paul directs the words before us; and it is very noticeable, that he does not condescend to argue the matter. He speaks with all the decisiveness and with all the authority of one who was not a whit behind the very chiefest of the apostles, and he lays it down as a kind of first principle to which every man of ordinary intelligence, provided only he will soberly consider the matter, must yield his immediate assent, that "he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."

In the following discourse I shall show very briefly, 1*st*, That external observances are of no avail to justify the sinner; and, 2*d*, That external observances can never stand in the stead of sanctification to the believer.

I. *External observances are of no avail to justify the sinner.*

In a former discourse I attempted to show several of the refuges of lies to which the awakened soul will run, before he can be persuaded to betake himself to the righteousness of God; and in every one of them we saw that he that compassed himself about with sparks of his own kindling, received only this of God's hand, to lie down in sorrow. First of all, the soul generally contents himself with slight views of the divine law, and says: "All these have I kept from my youth up;" but when the spirituality of the law is revealed, then he tries to escape by undermining the whole fabric of the law; but, when that will not do, he flies to his past virtues to balance accounts with his sins; and then, when that will not do, he begins a work of self-reformation, in order to buy off the follies of youth by the sobrieties of age. Alas! how vain are all such contrivances, invented by a blinded heart, urged on by the malignant enemy of souls.

But there is another refuge of lies which I have not yet described, and to which the awakened mind often betakes itself with avidity, to find peace from the whips of conscience and the scorpions of God's law; and that is, a form of godliness. He will become a religious man, and surely that will save him. His whole course of life is now changed. Before, it may be, he neglected the outward ordinances of religion. He used not to kneel by his bedside; he never used to gather his children and servants around him to pray; he never used to read the Word in secret, or in the family; he seldom went to the house of God in company with the multitude that kept holy day; he did not eat of that bread which, to the believer, is meat indeed, nor drink of that cup which is drink indeed.

But now his whole usages are reversed, his whole course is changed. He kneels to pray even when alone; he reads the Word with periodical regularity; he even raises an altar for morning and evening sacrifice in his family; his sobered countenance is never awanting in his wonted position in the house of prayer. He looks back, now, to his baptism with a soothing complacency, and sits down to eat the children's bread at the table of the Lord. His friends and neighbors all observe the change. Some make a jest of it, and some make it a subject of rejoicing; but one thing is obvious, that he is an altered man; and yet it is far from obvious that he is a new man, or a justified man. All this routine of bodily exercise, if it be entered on before the man has put on the divine righteousness, is just another way of going about to establish his own righteousness, that he may not be constrained to submit to put on the righteousness of God. Nay, so utterly perverted is the understanding of the unconverted, that many men are found to persevere in such a course of bodily worship of God, while, at the same time, they persevere as diligently in some course of open or secret iniquity. Such men seem to regard

external observance not only as an atonement for sins that are past, but as a price paid to purchase a license to sin in time to come. Such appears to have been the refuge of lies which the poor woman of Samaria would fain have sat down in, when the blessed Traveller, sitting by the well, awakened all the anxieties of her heart, by the searching words: "Go call thy husband, and come hither." Her anxious mind sought hither and thither for a refuge, and found it. Where? In her religious observances: "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship?" She thrusts away the pointed conviction of sin by a question as to her outward observances; she changes her anxiety about the soul into anxiety about the place where men ought to worship; whether it should be Mount Zion or Mount Gerizim. Oh! if he would only settle that question; if he would only tell her on which of these mountains God ought to be worshipped, she was ready to worship all her lifetime in that favored place. If Zion be the place, she would leave her native mountain and go and worship there, that that might save her. Oh! how fain she would have found here a refuge for her anxious soul. With what divine kindness, then, did the Saviour sweep away this refuge of lies, by the answer; "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, and now is, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet in Jerusalem, worship the Father. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth."

Now it is with the very same object, and with the very same kindness, that Paul here sweeps away the same refuge of lies from every anxious soul, in these decisive words: "He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."

Is there any of you whom God hath awakened out of the deadly slumber of the natural mind?—has he drawn aside the curtains, and made the light of truth to fall upon your heart, revealing the true condition of your soul?—has he made you start to your feet alarmed, that you might go and weep as you go to seek the Lord your God?—has he made you exchange the careless smile of gaiety for the tears of anxiety—the loud laugh of folly, for the cry of bitter distress about your soul?—are you asking the way to Zion with your face directed thitherward?—then take heed, I beseech you, of sitting down contented in this refuge of lies. Remember he is not a Jew which is one outwardly; remember no outward observances, no prayers, or church-going, or Bible-reading, can ever justify you in the sight of God.

I am quite aware that when anxiety for the soul enters in, then anxiety to attend ordinances will also enter in. Like as the stricken deer goes apart from the herd to bleed and weep alone,

so the sin-stricken soul goes aside from his merry companions, to weep, and read, and pray, alone. He will desire the preached Word, and press after it more and more: but remember, he finds no peace in this change that is wrought in himself. When a man goes thirsty to the well, his thirst is not allayed merely by going there. On the contrary, it is increased every step he goes. It is by what he draws out of the well that his thirst is satisfied. And just so it is not by the mere bodily exercise of waiting on ordinances that you will ever come to peace; but by tasting of Jesus in the ordinances—whose flesh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed.

If ever, then, you are tempted to think that you are surely safe for eternity, because you have been brought to change your treatment of the outward ordinances of religion, remember, I beseech you, the parable of the marriage feast, where many were called; many were invited to come in, but few, few were found having on the wedding garment. Many are brought within the pale of ordinances, and read and hear, it may be, with considerable interest and anxiety about all the things that are ready—the things of the kingdom of God; but of these many, few are persuaded to abhor their own filthy rags, and to put on the wedding garment of the Redeemer's righteousness. And these few alone shall sit still to partake of the feast—the joy of their Lord; the rest shall stand speechless, and be cast out into outer darkness, where shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. You may read your Bible, and pray over it till you die; you may wait on the preached Word every Sabbath-day, and sit down at every sacrament till you die; yet, if you do not find Christ in the ordinances; if he do not reveal himself to your soul in the preached Word, in the broken bread and poured-out wine; if you are not brought to cleave to him, to look to him, to believe in him, to cry out with inward adoration: "My Lord, and my God"—"how great is his goodness! how great is his beauty!"—then the outward observance of the ordinances is all in vain to you. You have come to the well of salvation, but have gone away with the pitcher empty; and however proud and boastful you may now be of your bodily exercise, you will find in that day that it profits little, and that you will stand speechless before the King.

II. *External observances can never stand in the stead of sanctification to the believer.*

If it be a common thing for awakened minds to seek for peace in their external observances, to make a Christ of them, and rest in them as their means of acceptance with God, it is also a common thing for those who have been brought into Christ, and enjoy the peace of believing, to place mere external observances in the stead of growth in holiness. Every believer among you knows how fain the old heart within you would substitute the hearing of sermons, and the repeating of prayers, in place of

that faith which worketh by love, and which overcometh the world. Now, the great reason why the believer is often tempted to do this is, that he loves the ordinances. Unconverted souls seldom take delight in the ordinances of Christ. They see no beauty in Jesus, they see no form nor comeliness in him, they hide their faces from him. Why should you wonder, then, that they take no delight in praying to him continually, in praising him daily, in calling him blessed? Why should you wonder that the preaching of the cross is foolishness to them, that his tabernacles are not amiable in their eyes, that they forsake the assembling of themselves together? They never knew the Saviour, they never loved him; how, then, should they love the memorials which he has left behind him?

When you are weeping by the chiselled monument of a departed friend, you do not wonder that the careless crowd pass by without a tear. They did not know the virtues of your departed friend, they do not know the fragrance of his memory. Just so the world care not for the house of prayer, the sprinkled water, the broken bread, the poured-out wine; for they never knew the excellency of Jesus. But with believers it is far otherwise. You have been divinely taught your need of Jesus; and therefore you delight to hear Christ preached. You have seen the beauty of Christ crucified; and therefore you love the place where he is evidently set forth. You love the very name of Jesus, it is as ointment poured forth; therefore you could join for ever in the melody of his praises. The Sabbath-day, of which you once said, "What a weariness is it!" and, "When will it be over, that we may set forth corn?" is now a "delight," and "honorable," the sweetest day of all the seven. The ordinances, which were once a dull and sickening routine, are now green pastures and waters of stillness to your soul; and surely this is a blessed change. But still you are in the body, heaven is not yet gained, Satan is hovering near; and since he cannot destroy the work of God in your soul, therefore he tries all the more to spoil it. He cannot stem the current; therefore he tries to turn it aside. He cannot drive back God's arrow; and therefore he tries to make it turn awry, and spend its strength in vain. When he finds that you love the ordinances, and it is in vain to tempt you to forsake them, he lets you love them; aye, he helps you to love them more and more. He becomes an angel of light, he helps in the decoration of the house of God, he throws around its services a fascinating beauty, hurries you on from one house of God to another, from prayer-meetings to sermon-hearing, from sermons to sacraments. And why does he do all this? He does all this just that he may make this the whole of your sanctification, that outward ordinances may be the all in all of your religion, that in your anxiety to preserve the shell, you may let fall the kernel.

If there be one of you, then, in whose heart God hath wrought the amazing change of turning you from loathing to loving his ordinances, let me beseech you to be jealous over your heart with godly jealousy. Pause this hour, and see if, in your haste and anxious pursuit of the ordinances, you have not left the pursuit of that holiness without which the ordinances are sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. I have a message from God unto thee. It is written, "He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of man, but of God." He is not a Christian which is one outwardly, neither is that baptism which is merely the outward washing of the body; but he is a Christian which is one inwardly, and true baptism is that of the heart, when the heart is washed from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

Remember, I beseech you, that the ordinances are means to an end; they are stepping stones, by which you may arrive at a landing-place. Is your soul sitting down in the ordinances, and saying, It is enough? Are you so satisfied that you can enjoy the ordinances of Christ, that you desire no higher attainments? Remember the word that is written: "This is not your rest." Would you not say he was a foolish traveller, who should take every inn he came to for his home—who should take up his settled rest, and instead of preparing himself for hard journeying on the morrow, should begin to take the ease and enjoyment of the house as his all? Take heed that you be not this foolish traveller. The ordinances are intended by God to be but the inns and refectories where the traveller Zion-ward, weary in well-doing, and faint in faith, may betake him to tarry for a night, that, being refreshed with bread and wine, he may, with new alacrity, press forward on his journey home as upon eagles' wings.

Take, then, this one rule of life along with you, founded on these blessed words: "He is not a Jew which is one outwardly"—that if your outward religion is helping on your inward religion, if your hearing of Christ on the Sabbath-day makes you grow more like Christ through all the week, if the words of grace and joy which you drink in at the house of God lead your heart to love more, and your hand to do more, then, and then only, are you using the ordinances of God aright.

There is not a more miserably deceived soul in the world than that soul among you who, like Herod, hears the preached Gospel gladly, and yet, like Herod, lives in sin. You love the Sabbath-day, you love the house of God, you love to hear Christ preached in all his freeness and in all his fulness; yes, you think you could listen for ever if only Christ be the theme; you love to sit down at sacraments, and to commemorate the death of your Lord.

And is this all; is this all your holiness? Does your religion end here? Is this all that believing in Jesus has done for you? Remember, I beseech you, that the ordinances of Christ are not means of *enjoyment*, but means of *grace;* and though it is said that the travellers in the Valley of Baca dig up wells, which are filled with the rain from on high, yet it is also said: "They go from strength to strength." Awake, then, my friends, and let it no more be said of us, that our religion is confined to the house of God and to the Sabbath-day. Let us draw water with joy from these wells, just in order that we may travel the wilderness with joy and strength, and love and hope—blessed in ourselves, and a blessing to all about us. And if we speak thus to those of you whose religion seems to go no further than the ordinances, what shall we say to those of you who contradict the very use and end of the ordinances in your lives? Is it possible you can delight in worldliness, and vanity, and covetousness, and pride, and luxury? Is it possible that the very lips which are so ready to sing praises, or to join in prayers, are also ready to speak the words of guile, of malice, of envy, of bitterness? Awake, we beseech you; we are not ignorant of Satan's devices. To you he hath made himself an angel of light. Remember, it is written: "If any among you seemeth to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain. Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God!" Amen.

Preached before the Presbytery of Dundee, Nov. 2, 1836.

SERMON XLVIII.

CHRIST'S COMPASSION ON THE MULTITUDES.

"And Jesus 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 But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest"—Matt. ix., 35–38.

I. "*When Jesus saw*, he was moved with compassion."—From Matt. iv., 23, we learn that when Jesus first entered on the minis-

try, Galilee was the scene of his labors: "He went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people." And we learn also (verse 25), that great multitudes followed him. Chapters v., vi., and vii., contain a specimen of what he taught and preached; chapters viii. and ix., of the manner in which he healed: and now, at verse 35, we are told that he had gone over all the cities and villages of Galilee—he had finished his survey; and "when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion." Galilee was at that time a thickly peopled country; its towns and villages swarmed with inhabitants; so that it got the name of "Galilee of the nations," or populous Galilee. What I wish you to observe, then, is, that it was an actual survey of the crowded cities, of the over-peopled villages, of the crowds that followed him; it was an actual sight and survey of these things, that moved the Saviour's compassion. His eye affected his heart: "When he saw, he was moved with compassion."

1. *This shows that Christ was truly man.*—The whole Bible shows that Christ was truly God, "that he was with God and was God," that he was "God over all, blessed for ever." But this event shows that he was as truly man. It is the part of a man to be overcome by what he sees. When you sit by the fire of a winter evening, when you hear the pelting of the pitiless storm, the rain and the sleet driving against the window, when you think of some houseless, homeless wanderer; your heart is a little moved, you heave a passing sigh, and utter a passing expression of sympathy. But if the wanderer comes to your door—if you open the door, and see him, all wet and shivering, the sight affects the heart—your heart flows out in a thousandfold greater compassion, and you invite him in to sit before the fire.

When the full bloom of health is upon your cheek, if you hear of some sick person, you are a little affected; but if you go and see, if you lift up the latchet of the door, and enter in with quiet step, and see the pale face, the languid eye, the heaving breast; then does the eye affect the heart, and your compassion flows like a mighty river. This is humanity, this is the way with man, this was the way with Christ: "When he saw, he was moved with compassion." Once they brought him to the grave of a dearly loved friend. They said: "Come and see;" and it is written: "Jesus wept." Another time he was riding on an ass's colt across Mount Olivet—the hill that overhangs Jerusalem; and when he came to the turn of the road, where the city burst upon the view, "when he came near, and beheld the city; he wept over it." And just so here. He had gone round the cities and villages of Galilee; he had looked upon the poor scattered multitudes, hastening on to an undone eternity: "And when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion."

Let me speak to believers. *Jesus is your elder brother.* He says to you as Joseph said to his brethren: "I am Joseph, your brother." In all your afflictions, he is afflicted. For he is not an high priest which cannot be touched with a feeling of your infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Some of you have little children pained, and tossing in fever. Jesus pities them; for he was once a little child. Little children, if you would take Jesus for a Saviour, then you might carry all your griefs to him; for Jesus knows what it is to be a little child. Grown believers, you know the pains of weariness, and hunger, and thirst, and nakedness. Tell these things to Jesus; for he knew them too. You know the pains of inward heaviness, of a drooping heart, exceeding sorrowful, even unto death—of the hidden face of God; Jesus knew them too. Go to Jesus, then, and he will heal them all.

2. *This shows that Christians should go and see.*—Many Christians are content to be Christians for themselves; to hug the Gospel to themselves; to sit in their own room, and feast upon it alone. This did not Christ. It is true he loved much to be alone. He once said to his disciples: "Come into a desert place, and rest awhile." He often spent the whole night in prayer on the lone mountain side; but it is as true that he went about continually. He went and saw, and then he had compassion. He did not hide himself from his own flesh. You should be Christ-like. Your word should be: "Go and see." You should go and see the poor; and then you will feel for them. Remember what Jesus says to all his people: "I was sick, and in prison, and ye visited me." Be not deceived, my dear friends; it is easy to give a cold pittance of charity at the church door, and to think that that is the religion of Jesus. But, "Pure religion and undefiled, before God and the Father, is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep yourself unspotted from the world."

II. *What it was that Jesus saw.*

1. *He saw the multitudes.*—He had gone through the crowded cities and villages of populous Galilee; and O how many faces he had looked upon! This made him sad. There is something very saddening to a Christian to look upon a multitude. To stand in the crowded streets of a large metropolis, and to see the current of human beings flowing onward to eternity, brings an awful sadness over the spirit. Even to stand in the house of God, and look upon the dense mass of assembled worshippers, fills the bosom of every true Christian with a pitiful sadness.

Why is this? Because the most are perishing souls. Ah! it was this that filled the bosom of the Redeemer with compassion. Of all the bustling crowds that hurry through the streets of your town—of all the teeming multitudes that issue forth from your crowded factories—ah! how few will stand on the right hand of

Jesus. Nay, to come nearer still, of the hundreds now before us in this house of God—souls committed to my care and keeping—willing and anxious as you are to hear, yet how few believe our report, how few will be to me a crown of joy and rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus!

Just think how dreadful, my friends, if there be one soul here that is to perish—one body and soul with us, in health and strength to-day, that is to be with devils in a short while, feeling the worm, and the flames, and the gnashing of teeth. If there were but one in the whole town, I do think it would be enough to sadden the soul. But, ah! does not the Bible say: "Many are called, but few are chosen?" Ah! then, you will know why Jesus was moved with compassion; and surely you will never look upon a crowd, but the same feeling will rise in your breast.

2. *He saw the multitudes fainting.*—Perhaps for hunger—poor, weak, frail men! There is something most moving in the sight of weak men, when they are in an unconverted condition. What would a spider be, if it were thrown into one of your great blast-furnaces? It would be as it were nothing; so weak, so miserable, so unable to resist the scorching flame. Just such was the sight Jesus saw, poor, frail men, fainting for lack of food, and yet perishing for lack of knowledge; and he thought, Alas! if they be unable to bear a little bodily want, how will they bear my Father's anger, when I shall tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury? Oh! no wonder Jesus was sad. Think of this, you who are very feeble and frail, unable to bear hunger or a little sickness. Think what a poor thing you are in a fever, when you need some one to turn you in your bed; how will you bear to die Christless, and to fall into the hands of the living God? If you cannot contend with God now, how do you think you will contend with him after you die?

3. *He saw them scattered abroad.*—When the sheep have been driven away from the fold, they do not all go in a flock; but they are scattered over the mountains; they run every one to his own way. This is what Jesus saw in the multitudes; they were all scattered, turning every one to his own way. In the cities and villages he saw men going every one after different things. One set of men were going after money, making it their chief good, toiling night and day over their work; yet not enjoying the money they made. Another set went after pleasure—the dance, the song, the pipe, and the tabor. Another set went after the joys of the deep carousal—their bellies were their god, and they gloried in their shame. Like the leech, they said: "Give, give." Another set went after still darker and more abominable things, of which it is a shame even so much as to speak. Jesus saw all—the hearts of all—and had compassion; because they were all thus scattered, none seeking after God. Observe, Jesus was not angry; Jesus did not threaten; Jesus was moved with compassion.

Let me speak to the unconverted. You are thus scattered, every one to his own way. Each of you have got your favorite walk in life, your favorite footpath. You all go different ways; and yet all away from God. I do not know what it is that your heart loves most; but this I know, that you love to go away from Christ and from God. Christ's eye is upon you all, your histories, your hearts. He knows every step you have taken, every sin you have committed, every lust that reigns in your heart. His eye is now on this assembly. I will ask you a question. What does Jesus feel when he looks upon you? Some will say, Anger, some will say, Revenge. What does the Bible say? Compassion. Christ pities you, he does not wish you to perish. Oh! the tender pity of Jesus. He would often have gathered you, as a hen gathers its chickens; but you would not.

4. *As sheep having no shepherd.*—This was the saddest thing of all. If the sheep be driven away from the fold, fainting and scattered upon the mountains, and if there be a number of shepherds to seek the lost, and bring them back to the fold, the sight is by no means so painful; but when they are sheep that have no shepherd, then the case is desperate. So it was with the people of Galilee in Christ's day. If they had had pastors after God's own heart, then their case would not have been so bad; but they were like sheep that had no shepherd. This made Jesus sad.

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Just as he went through the towns and villages of Galilee, beholding the multitudes, so does he now go through the towns and villages of our beloved land; and, oh! if his heart was moved with compassion over the thousands of Galilee, surely it must be breaking with intensest pity over the tens of thousands of Scotland. There may be some of you who can look coldly and carelessly on the fifty thousand of Edinburgh that never cross the threshold of the house of God. There may be some of you who can hear unmoved of the eighty thousand of Glasgow who know neither the melody of psalms nor the voice of prayer. There may be some of you who can look upon the haggard and vice-stricken countenances of the mill-population of your own town, thousands of whom show, by their dress, and air, and open profligacy, that they are utter strangers to the message of a preached Saviour. Some of you may look on them, and never shed one tear of pity, never feel one prayer rising to your lips; but there is One above these heavens, whose heart beats in his bosom at the sight of them; and if there could be tears in heaven, that tender Saviour would weep; for he sees the multitudes fainting and scattered, and, oh! worst of all, as sheep that have no shepherd.

Some of you have no compassion on the multitudes. Some of you think we have enough of ministers. See here, how

unlike you are to Christ. You have not the Spirit of Christ in you, you are none of his. Some of you know the Lord Jesus, and tremble at his Word. Learn this day to be like-minded to Jesus: "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." Christ had compassion on the multitudes; and, oh! will you have none? Christ gave himself for them; what will you give? Surely the stones of this house will rise against you in judgment, and condemn you, if you be not like Christ in this: "Freely ye have received, freely give."

III. *The remedy.*

1. *More laborers.* "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few." Christ looked upon the towns of Galilee as upon a mighty harvest, field after field ready for the sickle. He and his apostles seemed like a small band of reapers. But what are they to such a harvest? The ripe corn will be shaken, and shed its fruit upon the ground, before it can be cut down and gathered in. The word of Christ, then, is, "Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest."

There is a striking resemblance between this day and Christ's day. (1.) Our cities and villages are crowded like those of Galilee, and the little band of faithful ministers are indeed nothing to such a harvest. (2.) The people are willing to hear. Wherever men of God have been sent, they have gathered around them multitudes, eager to hear the words of eternal life. The harvest is ripe, ready to be gathered in. Oh! then, do not say it is a scheme of man's devising, do not say we are seeking to enrich ministers, do not say we are seeking our own things. We are doing what Christ bids us do: "Pray ye the Lord of the harvest."

2. *Laborers sent of God.* (1.) This shows we should seek ordained ministers, men sent out or thrust out by God. Some well-meaning people are satisfied if we can get private Christians, or unordained men, to do the work of the ministry. This is a deep snare into which Satan leads good men. Does not the whole Bible bear witness that no man taketh this honor to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron? and even Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest. Woe be to them that run unsent! It was a good wish in Uzzah to hold up the ark; yet Uzzah died for it.

(2.) *Converted ministers.* If men may not run without an outward call, far less without an inward call. There were crowds of ministers in Christ's day. At every corner of the street you might have met them. But they were blind leaders of the blind. So we may have plenty of ministers raised amongst us, and yet be as sheep that have no shepherd.

Ah! you that know Christ, and love him; ye Jacobs who

wrestle with God till morning light, wrestle ye with God for this. Give him no rest until he grant it. I have a sweet persuasion in my own breast, that if we go on in faith and prayer, building up God's altars that are desolate, God will hear the cry of his people, and give them teachers according to his own heart, and that we shall yet see days such as have never before shone upon the Church of Scotland—when our teachers shall not be removed into corners any more; when the great Shepherd shall himself bless the bread, and give it to the under shepherds, and they shall give to the multitudes, and all shall eat, and be filled.

St. Peter's, Nov. 12, 1837.

SERMON XLIX.

CHRIST LOVED THE CHURCH.

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that he might present it to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish."—Eph. v., 25-27.

In this passage the apostle, under the guidance of the Spirit, is teaching wives and husbands their duties to one another. To the wives, he enjoins submission—a loving yielding to their husbands in all lawful things; to the husbands, love; and he puts before them the highest of all patterns—Christ and his Church.

I. *Christ's love to his Church.*

1. *The object of his love.* The Church—all who are chosen, awakened, believing, justified, sanctified, glorified—all who are finally saved—all who shall stand with the Lamb, the hundred and forty and four thousand redeemed ones, all looked on as the bright company; the Church—all who are awakened and brought to Christ, all who shall sit down at the marriage supper. I believe Jesus had compassion for the whole world. He is not willing that any should perish. He willeth all men to be saved. He shed tears over those who will finally perish. Still, the peculiar object of his love was the Church. He loved the Church. On them his eye rested with peculiar tenderness before the world was. He would often say: These shall yet sit with me on my throne; or, as he read over their names in his book of life, he would say: These shall yet walk with me in white. When they lived in sin, his eye was upon them. He would not let them die, and drop into hell: "I have much people in this city." I have no doubt, brethren, Christ is marking some of you, that are now

Christless, for his own. When they came to Christ, he let out his love towards them on the land where they dwelt; a delightsome land. His eye rests on the houses of this town, where his jewels live. Christ loves some streets far better than others—some spots of earth are far dearer to him than others.

Christ loved his Church. Just as a husband at sea loves the spot where his dear wife dwells, so does the Lord Jesus: "I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands."—Isa. xliii., 4. He loves some in one house far more than others. There are some apartments dear to Christ, where he is often present, where his hands are often on the door: "Open to me, my love."

2. *The state of the Church when first loved.*—(1.) They were all under the curse of God, under condemnation, exposed to the just wrath of God, deserving nothing but wrath; for "he gave himself for it." The Church had no dowry to attract the love of Jesus, except her wrath and curse. (2.) *Impure.* For he had to 'sanctify and cleanse it;" unholy within, opposed to God, no beauty in the eye of Jesus: I am black, spotted, and wrinkled. (3.) *Nothing to draw the love of Christ.* Nothing that he could admire in them. He admires whatever is like his Father. He had eternally gazed upon his Father, and was ravished with that beauty; but he saw none of this, not a feature, no beauty at all. Men love where they see something to draw esteem. Christ saw none. (4.) *Everything to repel his love:* "Polluted in thine own blood," cast out, loathsome (Ezek. xvi.); yet that was the time of his love. Black, uncomely: "Thou hast loved me out of the pit of corruption." (5.) *Not from ignorance.* Men often love, where they do not know the true character, and repent after. But not so Christ. He knew the weight of their sins, the depths of their wicked heart.

Nothing is more wonderful than the love of Christ. *Learn the freeness of the love of Christ.* It is unbought love. "If a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would be utterly contemned."—Song viii., 7. He drew all his reasons from himself: "I knew that thou wast obstinate." You have no cause to boast. He loved you, because he loved you, for nothing in you. O what a black soul wast thou, when Christ set his love upon thee!

3. *The greatness of that love:* "He gave himself." This is unparalleled love. Love is known by the sacrifice it will make. In a fit of love, Herod would have given away the half of his kingdom. If you will sacrifice nothing, you love not. Hereby we know that men love not Christ, they will sacrifice nothing for him. They will not leave a lust, a game, a companion, for Christ 'Greater love than this hath no man." But Christ gave himself. Consider what a self. If he had created ten thousand millions of worlds, and given them away, it had been great love, had he given a million of angels; but he gave the Lord of angels, the Creator

of worlds. "Lo, I come." He gave the pearl of heaven. O what a self! Jesus! all-loveliness!

4. *What he gave himself to.*—He gave himself to be put in their place, to bear their wrath and curse, and to obey for them. We shall never know the greatness of this gift. He gave himself to bear the guilt of the Church. There cannot be a more fearful burden than guilt, even if there be no wrath. To the holy soul of Jesus, this was an awful burden. He was made sin: "Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up."—Ps. xl. "Mine iniquities are gone over mine head; as a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me."—Ps. xxxviii. He endured the cross, despising the shame. He laid his soul under their guilt, shame and spitting; silent like a lamb.

To bear their wrath.—A happy soul shrinks from suffering. Ask one that has always been in the love of God, what would he give to cast himself out of that love, to bear as much wrath as he is bearing love, to receive the lightning instead of the sunshine? Not for ten millions of worlds. Yet this did Jesus. He became a curse for us: Pour it out on me. See how he shrunk back from it in the garden. Yet he drank it.

"God commendeth his love to us, in that, while we were yet enemies, Christ died for us." Pray to know the love of Christ. It is a great ocean, without bottom or shore.* In the broken bread you will see it set forth, so that a child may understand: "This is my body, broken for you;" "This is my blood, shed for many."

II. *His purpose in time.*—Verse 26. Christ's work is not done with a soul when he has brought it to pardon, when he has washed it in his own blood. Oh, no! the better half of salvation remains, his great work of sanctification remains.

1. *Who is the author?*—He that gave himself for the Church, the Lamb that was slain. God having raised his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning every one of you away from your iniquities. He is exalted by the right hand of God, and, having obtained the promise of the Father, sheds him down. There is no hand can new create the soul, but the hand that was pierced. Many look to a wrong quarter for sanctification. They take pardon from Christ, then lean on themselves, their promises, &c., for holiness. Ah, no! you must take hold of the hand that was pierced, lean on the arm that was racked, lean on the Beloved coming up from the wilderness. You might as well hold up the sun on its journey, as sanctify yourself. It needs divine power. There are three concerned in it. The Father, for this is his will; the Son, he is the Shepherd of all he saves; the Holy Ghost.

* "It is as if a child could take the globe of earth and sea in his two short arms." —*Samuel Rutherford*

2. *The means:* "The Word." I believe he could sanctify without the Word, as he created angels and Adam holy, and as he sanctifies infants whose ear was never opened; but I believe in grown men he never will, but through the Word. When Jesus makes holy, it is by writing the Word in the heart: "Sanctify them through thy truth." When a mother nurses her child, she not only bears it in her arms, but holds it to her breast, and feeds it with the milk of her own breast; so does the Lord. He not only holds the soul, but feeds it with the milk of the Word. The words of the Bible are just the breathings of God's heart. He fills the heart with these, to make us like God. When you go much with a companion, and hear his words, you are gradually changed by them into his likeness; so when you go with Christ, and hear his words, you are sanctified. Oh, there are some whom I could tell to be Christ's, by their breathing the same sweet breath! Those of you that do not read your Bible, cannot turn like God—you cannot be saved. You are unsavable; you may turn like the devil, but you never will turn like God. Oh, believers, prize the Word!

3. *The certainty of it.*—Some are afraid they will never be holy: "I shall fall under my sin." You shall be made holy. *It was for this Christ died.* This was the grand object he had in view. This was what was in his eye; to build a holy Church out of a world of lost sinners; to pluck brands out of the fire, and make them trees of righteousness; to choose poor, black souls, and make them fair brothers and sisters round his throne. Christ will not lose this object.

Look up, then—be not afraid. He redeemed you to make you holy. Though you had a million of worlds opposing you, he will do it: "He is faithful, who also will do it."

III. *His purpose in eternity—twofold.*

1. *Its perfection:*—"A glorious Church." At present believers are sadly imperfect. They have on the perfect righteousness that will be no brighter above; but they are not perfectly holy; they mourn over a body of sin, spots and wrinkles. Neither are they perfectly happy. Often crushed; waves go over them; like the moon wading. But they shall be perfectly glorious. Perfect in righteousness—White robes, washed in the blood of the Lamb. Perfect in holiness—Filled with the Holy Spirit. Perfect in happiness—This shall be. It is all in the covenant.

2. *He will present it to himself*—He will be both Father and Bridegroom. He has bought the redeemed, he will give them away to himself. The believer will have great nearness, he shall see the king in his beauty. Great intimacy, walk with him, speak with him. He shall have oneness with him, "All that I have is thine."

St. Peter's, Jan, 1841.—(Action Sermon.)

SERMON L.

CHRIST BECAME POOR FOR SINNERS.

"For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."—2 Cor. viii., 9.

In these words, there is brought before you the amazing grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the broken bread and poured out wine you will this day see the same thing brought before your eyes. Before your eyes Jesus Christ is this day to be evidently set forth crucified. It is the most awakening sight in all this world. Oh! pray that many secure sinners may this day be brought to look on Him whom they have pierced, and to mourn. It is the most peace-giving sight in this world. Oh! pray that the Holy Spirit may be poured upon awakened souls, that they may look to a crucified Jesus and be saved. It is the most sanctifying sight in this world. Oh! pray that all God's children may look upon this gracious Saviour, till they are changed into his image.

I. *The Lord Jesus was rich.*

The riches here spoken of are not the riches which he now possesses as Mediator, but the riches which he had with the Father before the world was. He was full of all riches.

1. *He was rich in the love and admiration of all the creatures.*—All holy creatures loved and adored him. This is shown in Isa. vi.: "I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke." John (xii., 41) tells us; "These things said Esaias when he saw his glory, and spake of him."

It was from all eternity the will of God that every creature should honor the Son even as they honor the Father. The brightest seraphs bowed down before him. The highest angels found their chief joy in always beholding his face. He was their Creator: "By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him."—Col. i., 16. And, therefore, it was little wonder that they poured out their perpetual adorations before him. Now there is great joy in being loved by one holy creature; it fills the heart with true joy; but every holy creature loved Je-

sus with their whole heart and strength. This, then, was part of his riches—part of his infinite joy.

2. *He was rich in the love of the Father.* This is shown in Prov. viii., 22, 30: "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him." To be loved by God is the truest of all riches. The love of the creatures is but poor love, may soon die; but the love of God is undying, unchanging love. The creatures may love us, and yet not be able to help us; but God's love is a satisfying portion.

But none ever enjoyed the love of God as Jesus did. True, God's love to the holy angels is infinite; and he says, in John xvii., 26, that he loves believers with the same love with which he loves Christ: "That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them;" still there is this infinite difference between believers and Christ, that they can contain but a few drops of the love of God; they are but vessels, they cannot open their mouth wide enough. But Jesus could contain all the infinite ocean of the love of God. In the Son there was an object worthy of the infinite love of the Father; and if the Father's love was infinite, so the bosom of the Son was infinite also. From all eternity there was the flowing of infinite love from the bosom of the Father into the bosom of the Son: "The Father loveth the Son"—"Rejoicing always before him." This was the greatest riches of the Lord Jesus. This was the infinite treasure of his soul. If a man has the love of God, he can well want all other things. If a man want food and raiment; if he be like Lazarus at the rich man's gate, full of sores; still, if he be lying in the love of God, he is truly rich. Much more the well-beloved Son of God, the only begotten of the Father, was rich in the full outpouring of the Father's love from all eternity.

3. *He was rich in power and glory.* He was the Creator of all worlds: "Without him was not anything made that was made." He was the Preserver of all worlds: "By him all things consist," and hang together. All worlds, therefore, were his domain; he was Lord of all. He could say: "Every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof."—Ps. l., 10–12. All lands sang aloud to him: the sea roared his praise—the cedars bowed before him in lowly adoration. Nay, he could say: "All things that the Father hath are mine" (John xvi., 15); and he could speak to his Father of the glory which he had with him before the world was. Whatever of power, glory, riches, blessedness, the Father had, dwelt with equal fulness in the Son; for he was in the form of God, and thought

it no robbery to be equal with God. This was the riches of the Lord Jesus.

Oh, brethren! can you trust your salvation to such an one? You hear it was he that undertook to be the surety of sinners, and died for them. Can you trust your soul in the hands of such an one? Ah! surely if so rich and glorious a being undertake for us, he will not fail nor be discouraged, "till he have set judgment in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his law."

II. *Christ became poor.*

He was in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God; but he made himself of no reputation (εκενωσεν), 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. He became poor in all those things wherein he had been rich.

1. *At his birth.* (1.) *He laid aside the adoration of the creatures.* He left the hallelujahs of the heavenly world for the manger at Bethlehem. No angel bowed before the infant Saviour; no seraph veiled his face and feet before him. The world knew him not. A few shepherds from the fields of Bethlehem came and kneeled to him, and the wise men saw and adored the infant King; but the most despised saw him. His mother wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, for there was no room for them in the inn: "He became poor." (2.) *He left the love of God.* The moment that babe was born, he became the surety of a guilty world. He was born of a woman, made under the law. The law took hold of him, even in infancy, as our surety. From the cradle to the cross he was bearing the sins of many; and therefore he says: "I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up; while I suffer thy terrors, I am distracted."—Ps. lxxxv., 15. Ah! what a change was here, from the infinite joy of his Father's love to the misery and terror of his Father's frown: "He became poor." (3.) *He left the power and glory that he had.*—Instead of wanting nothing, he became a helpless baby in want of everything. Instead of saying: "If I were hungry, I would not tell thee," he needed now the milk of his mother's breast. Instead of holding up worlds with his arm, he needed now to be supported—to be wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger, watched by a mother's tender eye: "He was rich, and became poor."

2. *In his life.*—He that was adored by the myriads of heaven was lightly esteemed. Few believed on him; they called him glutton, wine-bibber, deceiver. Once they sought to cast him over the rocks, often they plotted to kill him. He that before received the full love of God, now received his full frown. The cloud became every day darker over his soul. Many of the hills and valleys of this world re-echoed with his cries and bitter agony.

Gethsemane was watered with his blood. He that had all things as his domain, now wanted everything. Certain women ministered to him of their substance.—Luke viii., 3. He had no money to pay the tribute, and a fish of the sea had to bring it to him.—Matt. xvii., 27. The creatures of his hand had a warmer bed than he: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head."—Matt. viii. Every man went to his own home—Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. And again, we are told, as they sailed, Jesus was asleep on a pillow. Another time he sat wearied at the well, and said: "Give me to drink." He that was God over all, blessed for ever, could say, "I am a worm, and no man:" "He became poor."

3. *In his death most of all he became poor.*

(1.) Once his ear was filled with the holy songs of angels, hymning their pure praises: "Holy, holy, holy;" now his ears are filled with the cry of his creatures: "Not this man, but Barabbas," "Crucify him, crucify him." Once every face was veiled before him; now rulers deride him, soldiers mock him, thieves rail on him. They shoot out the lip, they wag the head, they give him vinegar to drink. "He became poor" indeed. (2.) Once God loved him without a cloud between; now not a ray of divine love fell upon his soul: but instead of it a stream of infinite wrath. He that once said: "The Lord possessed me: I was daily his delight," now cried: "*Eloi. Eloi, lama sabacthani.*" Ah! this was poverty indeed. (3.) Once he gave being to unnumbered worlds, gave life to all—he was the Prince of life; but now he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. He lay down in the grave among worms. He became a worm, and no man.

Ah! this is what is set before you in bread and wine to-day: The Son of God became poor. He takes simple bread, to show you it is a poor man that is set before you—broken bread, to show that he is a crucified Saviour. Ah! sinners, whilst you gaze on these simple elements, remember the sufferings of him who was Lord of glory, and who died for sinners. "This do in remembrance of me."

III. *For what end?*—"For your sakes, that ye through his poverty might be rich."

The persons for whom:—"For your sakes." Corinth was one of the most wicked cities that ever was on the face of the world. It lay between two seas; so that luxury came flowing in from the east and from the west. These Corinthians had been saved from the deepest abominations, as you learn from 1 Cor. vi., 11: "Such were some of you;" and yet it was for the sake of such that the Lord of glory became poor—"for your sakes." In like manner, Paul, writing to the Romans, says (v. 6): "When we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." Ah! see

what names are here given to those for whom Christ died: "*Without strength*," unable to believe, or to think a right thought; "*ungodly*," living as if there were no God; "*sinners*," breaking God's holy law; "*enemies*," hating and opposing a holy God of love.

Oh, brethren! this is good news for the most wicked of men. Are there some of you who feel that you are like a beast before God, or all over sin, like a devil? Some of you have lived in the abominations of Corinth. Some of you are like the Romans—without strength, ungodly, sinners, enemies; yet for your sakes Christ became poor. He left glory for souls as vile as you. He left the songs of angels, the love of his Father, and the glories of heaven, for just such wretches as you and me. He died for the ungodly. Do not be afraid, sinners, to lay hold upon him. It was for your sakes he came. He will not, he cannot cast you out.

Oh, sinners! you are poor indeed; but he will make you rich. All the riches he left he is ready to raise you to. He will make you rich in the love of God—rich in the peace that passeth all understanding, if you truly lay hold on him. The wrath of God will pass away from you, and he will love you freely. The love wherewith God loves Christ shall be on you. He will make you rich in holiness. He will fill you with all the fulness of God. He will make you rich in eternity. You will behold his glory; you will enter into his joy; you will sit with him on his throne.

IV. *The grace in all this* :—"Ye know the grace."

There is much to be seen in this amazing work. There is deep wisdom—"the wisdom of God—the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory;" there is power, the power of God unto salvation; but most of all, grace is to be seen in it from beginning to end. "Ye know the grace of the Lord Jesus."

When Jesus washed the disciples' feet, when he came to Peter, Peter said: "Lord, dost thou wash *my* feet?" Three things amazed him:—1. The glorious being that knelt down before him: "Thou." 2. The lowly action he was going to perform: "Dost thou wash?" 3. The vile wretch whose feet were to be washed: "*My* feet." He was amazed at the grace of the Lord Jesus. So in this amazing work you may see a threefold grace:—1. The glorious being that undertook for sinners: "He who was rich." 2. The depth to which he stooped: "He became poor." 3. The wretches whose souls were to be washed: "For your sakes." Ah! well may you be amazed this day, and cry out: "Dost thou wash my soul?"

Lastly, *The sin and danger of not knowing*.

1. *I would speak to those who do not know the grace of the Lord Jesus.*—I fear the most of you are still ignorant of Christ: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him." Ah, brethren! think this day who it is you are lightly esteeming. Did you ever see the son of a king lay by his robes, and his glory, and become a poor man, and die in misery; and all this for nothing? Do you think the Lord Jesus left his Father's love, and the adoration of angels, and became a worm, and died under wrath, and all for no purpose? Is there no wrath lying upon you? Have you no need of Christ? Ah! why, then, do you not flee unto him?

> "Ungrateful sinners! whence this scorn
> Of God's long-suff'ring grace?
> And whence this madness, that insults
> Th' Almighty to his face?"

Ah! remember, as long as you come not to Christ, you are despising the grace of the Lord Jesus, and sinning against the love of God. What though you make a show of coming to Christ? What though you pretend it by coming to his table, and doing honor to the poor bread and wine? The poor Papist adores the bread, while he denies the Saviour; and so you may waste your honor on the bread and wine, while you are all the time rejecting and despising the grace of the Lord Jesus.

2. *I would welcome poor sinners to Jesus Christ.*—He became poor for such as you. He did not come for those "who are rich and increased in goods, and stand in need of nothing." Do not say you are too vile for such a Saviour. If you have all the pollutions of a Corinthian, all the wicked heart of a Roman, he came on purpose for such as you. You are the very souls he came to seek and save. His salvation is all of grace. Free favor to those that deserve hell! Do not deny the grace of the Lord Jesus. It is false humility that keeps any back from Christ; for, "there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him." "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money come; let him buy wine and milk without money and without price."

3. *To you that know Jesus, and his grace.*—Oh! study him more. You will spend eternity in beholding his glory; spend time in beholding his grace. That you may know your own vileness, that you may abhor yourself, that you may see what a poor hell-deserving creature you are, oh! study the grace of the Lord Jesus. That your peace may be like a river, full, deep, and lasting, learn more of the grace of the Lord Jesus. Come and declare with joy at the Lord's table all that he has done for your soul. Oh! learn more. Few know much of Christ. You have infinitely more to learn than you have ever known.

St. Peter's, April 18, 1841.—(Action Sermon.)

SERMON LI.

ENEMIES RECONCILED THROUGH DEATH.

"And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy, and unblamable, and unreprovable in his sight: if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel."—Col. i., 21-23.

I. *The past condition of all who are now believers:* "You that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works." When two families have quarrelled with one another, they become alienated from one another: they do not visit one another any more; their children are not allowed to speak together as formerly; if they meet in the street, they look another way. So it is with unconverted sinners and God; they are alienated from God; they do not visit God; they do not seek his presence; they do not love to meet his children; they do not like their words nor their ways. When God meets them in a pointed sermon or providence, they try to look another way, that they may not meet God's eye.

1. *Alienated.*—This word is used three times: "Ye were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel." Eph. ii., 12. "Alienated from the life of God." Eph. iv., 18. And again here. In all, it paints to the life the true character of every unconverted man. It is vain to conceal it, dear unconverted brethren. You may pretend the greatest love to ministers, to sacraments, to meetings of Christians; still the true state of your heart is estrangement from God. Ah! I fear there are many of you come to the church, and even to the sacrament, with the name of Christ on your lips, and a cold, estranged heart in your breast: "They did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues; for their heart was not right with God." Psalm lxxviii., 36.

2. *Enemies in your minds.*—This is more than estrangement. You may be strange to a man, and yet not hate him; but unconverted souls hate God. The whole Bible bears witness that all unconverted men hate God. In Rom. i., 29, it is said: "They did not like to retain God in their knowledge;" so that God gave them up to a reprobate mind, so that they became "HATERS OF GOD." In Exod. xx., 5, God says: "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." And again: "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity against God? Whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world, must be the enemy of God." James iv., 4.

Would God say this if it were not the case? God knows best

what is really in the heart of man. It is true you may not show this hatred in your words, or in your manner; you may not curse God, not even in a whisper; but God says it is in your mind. It is at the bottom of that muddy pool. In hell, where all restraints are lifted away, you will curse God through all eternity.

The most amazing trial of this that could be, was when God came into this world. God was manifest in the flesh. In him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. All the perfections of God flowed through his bosom. There was not a feature of God but it was shining through his glorious countenance, yet softened to human eyes by all the perfections of his manhood. Did men love him when they saw him? Let Isaiah (liii.) answer: "He is despised and rejected of men." Or, hear his own words: "The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it that the works thereof are evil."—John vii., 7. And, again: "He that hateth me, hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father."—John xv., 23, 24. How did they deal with him? They slew him, and hanged him on a tree, they buffeted him and spat on him, they scourged and crucified him, they nailed and pierced him. They were no worse than other men; men of like passions as we are: and yet the opportunity showed what is in man.

It is vain for you to conceal it, dear unconverted brethren, that your heart is full of enmity to God; that you are haters of God. Although it is fearful to think of, yet it is true, that all of you who are friends of the world are enemies of God; and though I believe in my heart there is not one of you here present that would wantonly kill a fly or a worm, yet I fear there are many who, if you could, would kill God.

What is the reason of this enmity? *Ans.* "By wicked works." It is the love of their sins that makes men hate God. Jesus himself tells you this: "Me it hateth, because I testify of it that the works thereof are evil." You could hardly imagine it possible that any one could hate the Lord Jesus. "He is altogether lovely." There is no perfection in God but it dwelt in him; there is no loveliness in man but it shone in him. And then his errand was one of purest love. He came to seek and to save that which was lost. He healed all that came; spoke lovingly to all. Even his threatenings were mingled with tears of compassion. How could they hate him? He told them of their sins; that these sins were sinking them to hell. He said: "Ye shall die in your sins, and whither I go ye cannot come." He offered to save them from their sins; to give them rest; rest from the weary load of guilt; rest from the tossing of a wicked heart. It was this which enraged them. They loved their wicked works; they did not want to be saved out of them; therefore, they hated Jesus.

So is it still. Many of you, when you first heard the Gospel,

said; "This is very fine; we will hear thee again of this matter." The offer of pardon and heaven, a crown and a harp, and freedom from hell—all this sounded well; but when you found out that you must "break off your sins by righteousness," that Christ "will save his people from their sins," then you began to linger, to ponder, to hesitate, to turn back and hate God. When you saw that Christ would part you from your glass, from your oaths, from your cards and dice, from your lusts—then you hated him. Alas! what a sad choice you have made! loved your sin, and hated the Saviour! "They that hate me love death."

Children of God, this was *your* state. Eat bitter herbs with your passover this day. Oh! do not forget your sin. You were sometime alienated and enemies of God by wicked works. Can you look back without being confounded?

II. *The reconciliation:* "Yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death."—Verse 21. This is the amazing work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and this is the blessed state into which he brings every saved soul.

1. *He took on him a body of flesh.* Out of pure love to hell-deserving worms, "he that was in the form of God, and thought it no robbery to be equal with God, emptied himself, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." In order to be the Saviour of sinners, he must obey the law, which we had never obeyed—he must live a lifetime of sinless obedience; but how shall the great God who made the law do this? He was made of a woman, made under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law. Again: if he will save sinners, he must drink their cup of suffering, he must bear their stripes, their sins—on his own body. But how shall the infinitely holy, happy, and unchangeable God, suffer this? Because the children were of flesh, he himself likewise took part of the same. He became united to a weak, frail, human soul and body; so that he could suffer, weep, groan, bleed, die. "Great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh." Again: if he will be the Saviour and elder brother of sinners; if he will know their sorrows, and be their tender shepherd; he must have a human heart; a breast filled with all the milk of a mother's tenderness. But how can this be, when he is infinitely holy, wise, just, and true? Ah! he became bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. "When all the tribes of Israel came to David to Hebron, they said, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh" (2 Sam. v., 1); and so can we in going to Christ: "He is one that can be touched with a feeling of our infirmity." Ah! to all eternity the incarnation of Jesus will be the theme of our wonder and praise. Brethren, you will all see that face. Some of you will wail when you see it. When that lovely countenance gleams through the

clouds, you will call on rocks and mountains to cover you. It is the Saviour you have rejected and despised.

2. *He died:* "*Through death.*"—The death of Christ is the most amazing event that ever took place in the universe; and therefore the Lord's supper is the most amazing of all ordinances. The angels desire to look into it. I doubt not that angels hover round the communion table, and sing their sweetest praises to the Lamb, when they see that bread broken, and that wine poured out. If the incarnation of Jesus was wonderful, far more wonderful was his *dying*. This was the highest summit of his obedience: "Obedient unto death." It was the lowest depth of his humiliation. He stood silent under our accusations; he lay down under our curse; he bore our hell, and died our death. He was the great Lawgiver—the Judge of all—before whom every creature must stand and be judged; and yet he consented to come and stand at the bar of his wicked creatures, and to be condemned by them! He was adored by every holy creature; their sweetest praises were poured out at his feet; and yet he came to be spit upon and reviled—to be mocked, and nailed, and crucified, by the vilest of men! "In him was life." He was the Prince of life—the author of all natural and spiritual life; he gave to all life and breath, and all things; and yet they killed him. He gave up the ghost—he lay in the cold grave. The Father loved him infinitely, eternally—without beginning, or intermission, or end; and yet he was made a curse for us—bore the same wrath that is poured upon damned spirits.

Ah! brethren, herein was infinite love. Infidels scoff at it—fools despise it; but it is the wonder of all heaven. The Lamb that was slain will be the wonder of eternity. To-day Christ is evidently set forth crucified among you. Angels, I doubt not, will look down in amazing wonder at that table. Will you look on with cold, unmoved hearts? It is a sight of the Lamb slain that moves the hosts of heaven to praise.—Rev. v., 8. When that Lamb, as it had been slain, appears, they fall down before him, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors. Will you not praise him?

3. *He hath reconciled us:* "*Yet now hath he reconciled.*"—Sinners, we are not reconciled in the day of our election, nor at the death of Christ, but in the hour of conversion. Oh! that is a precious now: "*Now* hath he reconciled." It is a happy moment, when the Lord Jesus draws near to the sinful soul, and washes him clean in his precious blood, and clothes him in his white raiment, and so reconciles him to God. There is a double reconciliation takes place in the hour of believing. (1.) *God becomes reconciled to the soul.* When the soul is found in Christ, the Father says: "I will heal his backsliding, I will love him freely; for mine anger is turned away from him."—Hos. xiv., 4. The soul replies to God: "I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with

me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me." God does not impute to that soul his trespasses; he reckons to him the obedience of the Lord Jesus. God justifies him: "He will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love; he will joy over thee with singing."—Zeph. iii., 17. (2.) *The soul is reconciled to God.* The Holy Spirit, who bends the soul to submit to Jesus, changes the heart to love him. When the beasts came into the ark, their natures were changed; they did not tear one another to pieces, but lovingly entered two and two into the ark; the lion did not devour the gentle deer, nor did the eagle pursue the dove. So, when sinners come to Christ, their heart is changed from enmity to love.

Dear brethren, has he reconciled you to God? You were sometime afar off; have you been brought nigh? You were sometime darkness; have you been made light in the Lord? You were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind; has he reconciled you? has he brought you into the light of God's reconciled countenance? Is God's anger turned away from you? Can you sing; "O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me" (Isa. xii.); or, "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?"—Ps. ciii. Have you been changed to love God? Do you love his Word, his people, his way of leading you?

III. *The future object in view:* "That he might present you holy, and unblamable, and unreprovable in his sight."

Sacrament days are solemn days: but there is a more solemn day at hand, even at the door. Here we meet to teach you and feed you, and get you to meet with Christ, and to live upon him; there we shall meet to present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. In that day Christ will take those of you whom he has redeemed and reconciled, and present you to himself a glorious Church. He will confess your name before his Father, and present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. There is a double perfection the saints will have in that day.

1. *You will be perfectly righteous.* You will be "unreprovable." Satan will accuse you, and the world, and conscience; but Christ will say: "The chastisement of their peace was upon me." Christ will show his scars, and say: "I died for that soul."

2. *You will be perfectly holy:* "Holy and unblamable." The body of sin you will leave behind you. The Spirit who dwells in you now will complete his work. You will be like Jesus; for you will see him as he is. You will be holy as God is holy, pure as Christ is pure.

Every one whom Christ reconciles he makes holy, and con-

fesses before his Father: "Whom he justified, them he glorified." If Christ has truly begun a good work in you, he will perform it to the day of Christ Jesus. Christ says: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending." Whenever he begins, he will make an end. Whenever he builds a stone as the foundation, he will preserve it unshaken to the end. Only make sure that you are upon the foundation, that you are reconciled, that you have true peace with God, and then you may look across the mountains and rivers that are between you and that day, and say: "He is able to keep me from falling." You have but two shallow brooks to pass through—sickness and death; and he has promised to meet you, to go with you, foot for foot. A few more tears, a few more temptations, a few more agonizing prayers, a few more sacraments, and you will stand with the Lamb upon Mount Zion!

IV. *Perseverance is needful to salvation:* "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel."—Verse 23. All whom Christ reconciles will be saved; but only in the way of persevering in the faith. He grounds and settles them in the cleft rock, and keeps them from being moved.

Dear believers, see that you continue in the faith. Remember you will be tried.

1. *You may be tried by false doctrine.* Satan may change himself into an angel of light, and try to beguile you by another Gospel. "Hold fast the form of sound words."

2. *You will be tried by persecution.* The world will hate you for your love to Christ. They will speak all manner of evil against you falsely.

3. *You will be tried by flattery.* The world will smile on you. Satan will spread his paths with flowers; he will perfume his bed with myrrh, and aloes, and cinnamon.

Will you continue in the faith? Will you not be moved away? Can you withstand all these enemies? Remember, perseverance is needful to salvation; as needful as faith, or as the new birth. True, every one that believes in Christ will be saved; but they will be saved through perseverance: "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." Behold, in Jesus there is strength for perseverance. This bread and wine to-day are a pledge of that. Seek persevering grace to-day. Ask this when you take that bread and wine.

Hypocrites! you will one day be known by this. Many of you seem to be united, who truly are not. All who have had convictions of sin which have passed away, all who have the outward appearance of Christians, but within an unconverted heart, all who attend ordinances, but live in some way of sin, you will soon be discovered. You put on an appearance, you pretend that

you do cleave to Christ, and get grace from Christ, oh! how soon you will be shown in your true colors. Oh! that the thought may pierce your heart, that even now, though you came with a lying profession in your right hand, you may be persuaded to cleave to Jesus in truth. Amen.

St. Peter's, Aug. 1, 1841.—(Action Sermon.)

SERMON LII.

MY GOD, MY GOD.

"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—Matt. xxvii., 46.

THESE are the words of the great Surety of sinners, as he hung upon the accursed tree. The more I meditate upon them, the more impossible do I find it to unfold all that is contained in them. You must often have observed how a very small thing may be an index of something great going on within. *The pennant* at the mast-head is a small thing; yet it shows plainly which way the wind blows. *A cloud* no bigger than a man's hand is a small thing; yet it may show the approach of a mighty storm. *The swallow* is a little bird; and yet it shows that summer is come. *So is it with man.* A look, a sigh, a half-uttered word, a broken sentence, may show more of what is passing within than a long speech. *So it was with the dying Saviour.* These few troubled words tell more than volumes of divinity.

May the Lord enable us to find something here that will feed your souls!

I. *The completeness of Christ's obedience.*

1. *Words of obedience:* "My God, my God." He was obedient unto death. I have often explained to you how the Lord Jesus came to be a doing as well as a dying Saviour, not only to suffer all that we should have suffered, but to obey all that we should have obeyed; not only to suffer the curse of the law, but to obey the commands of the law. When the thing was proposed to him in heaven, he said: "Lo, I come to do thy will, O my God!" "Yea, thy law is within my heart." Now, then, look at him as a man obeying his God. See how perfectly he did it, even to the last! God says: Be about my business, he obeys: "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"

God says: Speak to sinners for me, he obeys: "I have meat to eat that ye know not of; my meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." God says: Die in the room of sinners, wade through a sea of my wrath for the sake of enemies,

hang on a cross, and bleed and die for them, he obeys: "No man taketh my life from me." The night before he said: "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" But perhaps he will shrink back when he comes to the cross? No; for three hours the darkness had been over him, yet still he says: "My God, my God." Sinner, do you take Christ as your surety? See how fully he obeyed for thee! The great command laid upon him was to die for sinners. Behold how fully he obeys!

2. *Words of faith:* "My God, my God." These words show the greatest faith that ever was in this world. Faith is believing the word of God, not because we see it to be true, or feel it to be true, but because God has said it. Now Christ was forsaken. He did not see that God was his God, he did not feel that God was his God; and yet he believed God's word, and cried: "My God, my God." (1.) *David* shows great faith in Ps. xlii., 7, 8: "Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy water spouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me. Yet the Lord will command his loving kindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life." He felt like one covered with a sea of troubles. He can see no light, no way of escape; yet he believes the word of God, and says: "Yet the Lord will." This is faith, believing when we do not see. (2.) Jonah showed great faith: "All thy billows and thy waves passed over me: then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again towards thy holy temple."—Jonah ii., 3, 4. He was literally at the bottom of the sea. He knew no way of escape, he saw no light, he felt no safety; yet he believed the word of God. This was great faith. (3.) *But, ah! a greater than Jonah is here.* Here is greater faith than David's, greater faith than Jonah's, greater faith than ever was in the world, before or after. Christ was now beneath a deeper sea than Jonah's. The tossing billows of God's anger raged over him. He was forsaken by God, he is in outer darkness, he is in hell; and yet he believes the word of God: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell." He does not feel it, he does not see it, but he believes it, and cries: "My God." Nay, more, to show his confidence, he says it twice: "My God, my God." "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." Dear believer, this is your surety. You are often unbelieving, distrustful of God; behold your surety, cling to him, you are complete in him.

3. *Words of love.*—"My God, my God." (1.) Those were words of sweet submission and love which Job spake, when God took away from him property and children: "Naked came I out of my mother's womb." Sweet, that he could bless God even in taking away from him. (2.) Words of sweet submissive love which old Eli spake, when God told him that his sons should die; "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." (3.) The same sweet temper in the bosom of the Shunamite who lost her

child, when the prophet asked: "Is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband? is it well with the child? And she answered, It is well." (4.) But, ah! here is greater love, greater, sweeter submission, than that of Job, or Eli, or the Shunamite, greater than ever was breathed in this cold world before. Here is a being hanging between earth and heaven, forsaken by his God, without a smile, without a drop of comfort, the agonies of hell going over him; and yet he loves the God that has forsaken him. He does not cry out, Cruel, cruel, Father! no, but with all the vehemence of affection, cries out, "My God, my God."

Dear, dear souls, is this your surety? Do you take him as obeying for you? Ah! then, you are complete in him. You have very little love for God. How often you have murmured, and thought God cruel in taking things away from you; but, behold your surety, and rejoice in him with exceeding joy. All the merit of his holy obedience is imputed to you.

II. *The infinity of Christ's sufferings.*—He was forsaken by God; "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The Greek Liturgy says: "We beseech thee by all the sufferings of Christ, known and unknown." All the more we know of Christ's sufferings, the more we see they cannot be known. Ah! who can tell the full meaning of the broken bread and poured-out wine?

1. *He suffered much from his enemies.* (1.) He suffered in all parts of his body. In his head; that was crowned with thorns, and smitten with the reed. In his cheeks; for they smote him on the face, and he gave his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: "I hid not my face from shame and spitting." In his shoulders, that carried the heavy cross. In his back; "I gave my back to the smiters." In his hands and feet: "They pierced my hands and my feet." In his side; a soldier thrust a spear into his side. Ah! how well he might say, "This is my body, broken for you." (2.) He suffered in all his offices. As a prophet: "They smote him on the face, and said, Prophesy who smote thee?" As a priest, they mocked him when offering up that one offering for sins. As a king, when they bowed the knee, and said, "Hail! king of the Jews." (3.) He suffered from all sorts of men, from priests and elders, from passers by and soldiers, from kings and thieves: "Many bulls have compassed me; strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round"—"Dogs have compassed me"—"They have compassed me about like bees." (4.) He suffered much from the devil: "Save me from the lion's mouth." His whole suffering was one continued wrestling with Satan; for he "spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in his cross."

2. *From those he afterwards saved.*—How bitter would be the scoffing of the thief who that day was to be forgiven and accept-

ed! How bitter the cries of the three thousand who were so soon brought to know him whom they crucified!

3. *From his own disciples.*—They all forsook him and fled. John, the beloved, stood afar off, and Peter denied him. It is said of the chamomile flower, that the more you squeeze and tread upon it, the sweeter is the odor it spreads around. Ah! so it was in our sweet Rose of Sharon. It was the bruising of the Saviour that spread sweet fragrance around. It is the bruising that makes his name as ointment poured forth.

4. *From his Father.*—All other sufferings were nothing in comparison of this: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Other sufferings were finite—this alone was infinite suffering. It was little to be bruised by the heel of man or devils; but, ah! to be trodden by the heel of God: "It pleased the Father to bruise him."

Three things show the infinity of his sufferings.

1. *Who it was that forsook him.* Not his people Israel, not Judas the betrayer, not Peter his denier, not John that lay in his bosom, he could have borne all this; but, ah! it was his Father and his God. Other things little affected him compared with that. The passers by wagged their heads; he spoke not. The chief priests mocked him; he murmured not. The thieves cast it in his teeth; he was as a deaf man who heareth not. God brought a three hours' darkness over him—the outward darkness being an image of the darkness over his soul—ah! this was infinite agony: "My God, my God, why hast *thou* forsaken me?"

2. *Who it was that was forsaken: "Me."* (1.) One infinitely dear to God. Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. yet thou hast forsaken me. I was always by thee; rejoicing always before thee. I have basked in the beams of thy love. Ah! why this terrible darkness to *me?* "My God, my God." (2.) One who had an infinite hatred of sin. How dreadful to an innocent man to be thrust into the cell of a condemned criminal! but, ah! how much more dreadful to Christ, who had an infinite hatred of sin, to be regarded by God as a sinner. (3.) One who had an infinite relish of God's favor. When two friends of exalted minds meet together, they have an intense relish of one another's love. How painful to meet the cold averted looks of one in whose favor you find this sweet joy! But, ah! this is nothing to Christ's pain.

3. *What God did to him—forsook him.* Dear friends, let us look into this ocean through which Christ waded. (1.) He was without any comforts of God—no feeling that God loved him; no feeling that God pitied him; no feeling that God supported him. God was his sun before; now that sun became all darkness. Not a smile from his Father, not a kind look, not a kind word. (2.) He was without God; he was as if he had no God. All that God had been to him before was taken from him now. He was Godless; deprived of his God. (3.) He had the feeling of the con-

demned, when the Judge says: "Depart from me, ye cursed," "who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." He felt that God said the same to him. Ah! this is the hell which Christ suffered. Dear friends, I feel like a little child casting a stone into some deep ravine in the mountain side, and listening to hear it fall —but listening all in vain; or like the sailor casting the lead at sea, but it is too deep—the longest line cannot fathom it. The ocean of Christ's sufferings is unfathomable.

III. Answer the Saviour's *why?*

Because he was the surety of sinners, and stood in their room.

1. *He had agreed with his Father,* before all worlds, to stand and suffer in the place of sinners: Every curse that should fall on them, let it fall on me. Why should he be suprised that God poured out all his fury? "Why hast thou forsaken me?" Because thou didst covenant to stand in the room of sinners.

2. *He set his face to it:* "He set his face like a flint." "He set his face steadfastly." God set down the cup before him in the garden, saying: Art thou willing to drink it, or no? He said: "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" "Therefore it pleased the Lord to bruise him." Why? Because thou hast chosen to be the surety; thou wouldst not draw back?

3. *He knew that either he or the whole world must suffer.* It was his pity for the world made him undertake to be a Saviour: "He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor. Therefore his arm brought salvation unto him, and his righteousness it sustained him." Why? Either thou or they; hell for thee or hell for them.

1. *Lesson to Christless persons.* Learn your danger. Wherever God sees sin he will punish it; angels, Adam, old world, Sodom. He saw sins laid on Christ, and forsook his own Son. You think nothing of sin. See what God thinks of it. If so much as one sin upon you unconverted you cannot be saved. Though thou wert the signet on my right hand; though thou wert the son of my bosom; yet would I pluck thee thence. Oh, let me persuade you this day to an immediate closing with Jesus Christ!

2. *Lesson.* Admire the love of Christ. Oh, what a sea of wrath did he lie under for you! Oh, what hidings did he bear for you, vile, ungrateful soul! The broken bread and poured-out wine are a picture of his love. Oh, when you look on them, may your heart break for longing towards such a Saviour!

3. *Lesson.* Say to all who close with Jesus Christ, he was forsaken in the room of sinners. If you close with him as your surety, you will never be forsaken. From the broken bread and poured-out wine seems to rise the cry: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

For *me*—for *me*. May God bless his own Word!
(Action Sermon.)

SERMON LIII.

DEATH OF STEPHEN.

"And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."—Acts vii., 59.

STEPHEN was the first to die as a martyr in the cause of Christ; and he seems to have resembled the Saviour more than any that followed after. His very face appeared like the face of an angel. His irresistible wisdom in arguing with the Jews was very like Christ's; his praying for his enemies with his dying breath nearly in the same words as the Saviour, and his recommending his soul into the hands of the Lord Jesus, were in the same spirit of confidence as that in which Christ said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." There cannot be a doubt that it was by looking unto Jesus that he became thus Christ-like; and the last view which he got of Christ seems especially to have given him that heavenly composure in dying, which is so much above nature.

Two things are to be noticed:—1. That it was a sight of Christ at the right hand of God. 2. That it was a sight of Christ standing there. Christ being at the right hand of God is mentioned sixteen times in the Bible; thirteen times he is described as seated there; twice as being there; but here only is he spoken of as standing. This appears to have made a deep and lively impression on the mind of Stephen, for he cries out, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God;" and then, with a sweet assurance that Christ's hands were stretched out to receive him, he cried, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

Doctrine.—Since Christ is at the right hand of God, and since he rises up to receive the dying believer, believers should commend their spirit to the Lord Jesus.

I. *If Christ be at the right hand of God, the believer's sins must be pardoned, so that he can peacefully say, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."* If the grave had closed over the head of Christ for ever, if the stone had remained at the mouth of the sepulchre to this day, then we might well be in doubt whether he had suffered enough in the stead of sinners. "If Christ be not risen, your faith is vain, you are yet in your sins." But is it true that Christ

is at the right hand of God? then the stone has been rolled away from the sepulchre. God has let him go free from the curse that was laid on him. The justice of God is quite satisfied. If you saw a criminal put into prison, and the prison doors closed behind him, and if you never saw him come out again, then you might well believe that he was still lying in prison, and still enduring the just sentence of the law; but if you saw the prison doors fly open, and the prisoner going free, if you saw him walking at large in the streets, then you would know at once that he had satisfied the justice of his country, that he had suffered all that it was needful to suffer, that he had paid the uttermost farthing. So with the Lord Jesus; he was counted a criminal, the crimes of guilty sinners against God were all laid at his door, and he was condemned on account of them. He was hurried away to the death of the cross, and the gloomy prison-house of his rocky sepulchre, the stone was rolled to the mouth of the grave. If you never saw him come out, then you might well believe that he was still enduring the just sentence of the law. But, lo! "he is risen, he is not here," "Christ is risen indeed." God, who was his judge, hath raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places; so that you may be quite sure he has satisfied the justice of God. He has suffered everything that it was needful for him to suffer, he has paid the uttermost farthing. Now is there any of you hearing me, who cleaves to the Lord Jesus? is this the Saviour whom you take to be your surety? "Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee." For if your surety is free, then you are free. It was this which gave such a tranquil peace to the dying Stephen. He had the same vile nature which you have, he had committed the same sins as you have, he had the same condemnation over him which you have; but when he saw Jesus Christ, whom he had taken as his surety, standing free at the right hand of God, then he felt that the condemnation had been already borne, that God's anger was quite turned away from his soul; and thus being inwardly persuaded of pardon, he committed his spirit into the hand of Christ: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

Oh! brethren, cleave to the same Lord Jesus; he is still as free as he was when Stephen died. He always will be free; death hath no more power over him; for he hath suffered all. Take him as your surety; cleave to him as your Saviour. and you may this day have the same peace that Stephen had, and may die with the same peaceful breast, saying: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

II. *If Christ be at the right hand of God, then the believer is accepted with God, and may peacefully say with Stephen: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."*

The Son of God came to be a surety for men in two respects: 1. In suffering the wrath which they deserved to suffer; and, 2.

In rendering the obedience which men had neglected to render. If he stood as surety in suffering, then every dying sinner that cleaved to him was to be freed from the curse of God. If he stood as surety in obeying, then he and every sinner that cleaved to him was to be rewarded with a place in glory. Now if Christ had not risen from the dead, then it would have been manifest that God had not accepted his obedience as worthy of eternal life. But if Christ is risen, and not only so, but if he be at the right hand of God, the place of highest glory in heaven, where are pleasures for evermore, then I am quite sure that God is satisfied with Christ as a surety for man. If you saw some peer of the realm sent away by the king upon a distant and hazardous undertaking, with the promise that, if he succeeded, he should be advanced to the seat nearest the throne—if you never saw that peer return to claim his reward, then you would say at once that he had failed in his undertaking. But if you saw him return, amid the applause of assembled multitudes, and if you saw him received into the palace of the king, and seated on the right hand of majesty, then you would say at once that he had succeeded in that which he undertook, and that the king upon the throne was well pleased with it.

Just so, dear brethren, if you had been in heaven on that most wonderful day that ever was, of which the Christian Sabbath is an ever-enduring monument, when Christ ascended to his Father and our Father, had you seen the smile of ineffable complacency wherewith God received back into glory the surety of men, saying: "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee;" as if he said, "Never till this day did I see thee so worthy to be called my Son;" and again, "Sit thou at my right hand, till I make thy enemies thy footstool," had you seen all this, then you would have known how excellent the obedience of Christ is in the eyes of the Father. But all this obedience was endured, not for himself, but as a surety for men. He was accepted himself before he left heaven. He was infinitely near and dear to the Father, and did not need to become man, to obey for himself. Everything that Jesus Christ did or suffered was as a surety in the stead of sinners. Do you take him for your surety? Do you cleave to the Lord Jesus, because you have nothing of your own to recommend you to God? Then look up with the eye of faith, and see him at the right hand of God. If you cleave to him, you are as much accepted with God as Christ is, you are as near to God as your surety is. Ah! it was this that gave the dying Stephen such calm tranquillity. He had the same vile nature that you have, he had as little obedience to God as you have, he was a naked sinner as you are; but he took the Lord Jesus to be his surety, the man in his stead; so that, when he saw him at the right hand of God, he felt that Christ was accepted, and that he, also, was accepted in the Beloved. And thus being inwardly persuaded

that in Christ he had a safe way to the Father, he cried, with dying breath, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

Oh! trembling, naked sinner, cleave to the Lord Jesus. He is as much offered to you as he was to Stephen. Take him as your surety—cleave to him as your Saviour, and you may this day have the same sense of acceptance which Stephen had, and you may die with the same sweetly confiding cry: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

III. *If Christ stands up to receive the dying believer, this gives the believer great confidence, so that he may peacefully say: "Lord Jesus, receive my Spirit."*

When believing souls seek for peace and joy in believing, they do very generally confine their view to Christ upon the earth. They remember him as the good Shepherd seeking the lost sheep; they look to him sitting by the well of Samaria; they remember him saying to the sick of the palsy: "Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee;" but they too seldom think of looking where Stephen looked—to where Jesus is now—at the right hand of God. Now, my friends, remember if you would be whole Christians, you must look to a whole Christ; you must lift your eye from the cross to the throne, and you will find him the same Saviour in all—"the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." I have already observed, that wherever Christ is mentioned as being at the right hand of God, he is spoken of as seated there upon his throne; here, and here only, are we told that he is standing. In other places he is described as enjoying his glory, and entered into his rest; but here he is described as risen from his throne, and standing at the right hand of God.

1. *He rises to intercede:* "He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." How often would a believer be a castaway, if it were not for the great intercessor! How often faith fails!—"flesh and heart faint and fail;" but see here, Christ never fails. On the death-bed, often the mind is taken off the Saviour, by pains of body, and distress of mind; but, oh! happy soul that has truly accepted Christ. See here, he rises from his throne to pray for you, when you cannot pray for yourself. Look up to him with the eye of faith, and cry: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

2. *He rises to defend.*—(1.) The world is a sore enemy to the believer—by temptation on the one hand, and persecution on the other. Oh! how hard it strives to cast him down. Happy believer, you are safe in a dying hour! 1*st.* Because the world cannot reach beyond death. The sneering tongue cannot spit its venom beyond the grave. The stone of violence may kill the body, but it hath no more that it can do. 2*d.* Even if it were possible that some arrow of the world might reach beyond the grave

Jesus hath risen up to defend. His everlasting arms are underneath the departing soul. (2.) The devil is a worse enemy in that hour. He stands close by the dying bed. He often molests, but he cannot destroy, if you be cleaving to Jesus. Christ has all power in heaven and in earth, and he rises up to defend your soul. "Be not afraid," he says, "it is I." Ah! dear brethren, cleave to the Lord Jesus now, if you would have him to stand up for you in a dying hour—if you would cry with confidence: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

3. *He rises to receive the departing soul.*—This is the sweetest of all comforts to the godly. It is a sweet thought, that the holy angels are waiting to receive the believing soul. When Lazarus died, the good angels carried him into Abraham's bosom. But, oh! it is sweeter far, to think that Jesus looks down upon the dying bed, and stands up to receive the soul that loves him.

Oh! dear brethren, he is the same kind Saviour in death that he is through life. (1.) Once you lived without prayer—without God—without Christ, in the world; did Christ not stretch out the hands all the day, even then? (2.) Once you were lying under convictions of sin; you felt yourself worthy of hell, and that God would be just if he never had mercy on your soul; did not Christ draw near to your soul, saying: "Peace be unto you?" (3.) Again, you were groaning under the power of temptation, crying against indwelling sin: "O wretched man! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" did not Christ draw near and say: "My grace is sufficient for thee; my strength is made perfect in weakness?" (4.) Once more: you may yet groan under the weight of dying agonies. The last enemy is death—it may be a hard struggle—it may be a dark valley; yet look where Stephen looked; and, lo! Jesus is standing at the right hand of God, waiting to receive you to himself. Oh! sweet death, when God is with you, the Spirit within you, and Christ waiting to receive you. Behold! he stretches out his hands to receive your departing spirit. Breathe it into his hand, saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

1. Learn that death is no death to the Christian: "He that liveth and believeth on me, shall never die." It is only giving the soul into the hand of Christ. He knows its value; for he died for it.

2. Learn that to die is, to the believer, better than to live. If Christ rises up to receive the soul, then the soul goes to be with Jesus. But to be with Christ, is to be in glory; therefore it is far better. Oh! be willing, Christians, to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord. There you shall be free from pain of persecuting stones; no more sneering, cruel friends, no more doubts about your soul, no more sin within your heart. "*Oh, that I had the wings of a dove, that I might flee away and be at rest!*"

3. Learn the dreadfulness of having no interest in Jesus Christ. You must die; and yet, how will you die, poor Christless soul?

To whom will you commend your dying spirit? (1.) There will be no good angels waiting round your bed; no gentle hands of ministering spirits stretched out to receive your trembling soul. (2.) You will have no Christ rising up to receive you. You never washed in his blood; you would not come to him to have life; he often stretched out the hands, but you pushed them away; and now he will have no pity for you. (3.) You will have no God; God will not be your God; he will not be your friend; you have always been his enemy. Your proud heart will not be reconciled to him; and now you will find him an enemy indeed.

Where will you go? Die you must. Your breath must cease. These eyes that look on me this day, must close in death; that heart you feel beating in your bosom, must cease to beat. And what will you do with your soul? to whom will you commend it, a naked, guilty, shivering thing, with the wrath of God abiding on it? None of the angels will dare to shelter it. No rocks, or caves, or mountains, can hide it. Hell itself will not be a hiding-place from the just wrath of God. Oh! be wise now: "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?"

4. Learn, if you have lost any friends in Christ, to be comforted over them. It is true they are gone from you; but remember they have gone into far tenderer hands. You stood up to bend over their dying body; but the Lord Jesus stood up to receive their undying soul. Your feeble, but affectionate hands, were stretched out to smoothe their dying pillow; but the Almighty hands of the Saviour formed a sweeter, softer bed for their departing soul. Follow their faith; look to the same Saviour; and when you come to die, you will use the same sweet words: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

St. Peter's, Dundee, Aug. 13, 1837.

SERMON LIV.

TIME IS SHORT.

"But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not, and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away."—1 Cor. vii., 29–31.

In this chapter the apostle is discoursing concerning marriage. The mind of God upon this subject seems to be, 1. *That in ordinary times marriage is honorable in all, provided it be in the Lord.* There are some who seem to imagine that there is peculiar

holiness about an unmarried life; but this seems quite contrary to the Word of God. In the sinless world, before man fell, God said: "It is not good for man to be alone;" and the closest walker with God in Old Testament times was a married man Enoch walked with God three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters. 2. *That in a time of distress and trouble to the Church it is better not to marry*: "I suppose therefore that this is good, for the present distress." Verse 26. When the ark of God is in danger, as at present in our Church, it seems the mind of the Spirit, that all who can, should keep themselves as much as possible disentangled from earthly engagements. When the wife of Phinehas heard that the ark of God was taken, she travailed in birth, and died, calling her child Ichabod, The glory is departed. So, brethren, it does not become those who love Zion to be marrying and giving in marriage when the ark of God is in danger. 3. *That even in such times it is lawful to marry:* "But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned." Verse 28. I doubt not, brethren, the days are near when they shall say: "Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps that never gave suck." Still, if any will venture to meet these times, and if you think the faith of two may bear you up better than the faith of one, "*I spare you.*" I would lay no snare upon you. You have not sinned.

Having opened up this subject, the apostle proceeds with this affecting statement, suitable to all, married or unmarried: "But this I say, brethren, the time is short; it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away." In these words there is—1. *A statement made:* "The time is short;" and, again: "The fashion of this world passeth away." The time to be spent in this world is very short; it is but an inch of time—a short half-hour. In a very little, it will be all over; and all that is here is changing—the very hills are crumbling down; the loveliest face is withering away; the finest garments rot and decay: "The fashion of this world passeth away." 2. *A lesson drawn from this.* Believers should sit loose to everything here. Believers should look on everything in the light of eternity—value nothing any more than you will do then. Sit loose to the objects, griefs, joys, occupations of this world; for you must soon change them for eternal realities.

Doctrine.—The shortness of time should make believers sit loose to all things under the sun.

I. *Show the shortness of time.* True in two respects.

1. *The time a believer has to live in this world is very short.* (1.) *The whole lifetime is very short.* From the cradle to the grave is but a short journey: "The days of our years are threescore

years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away." The half of men die before the age of twenty. Even when men lived for many hundred years, it was but a short life—a moment, compared to eternity. Methuselah lived nine hundred and sixty-nine years, and he died. Men are short-lived, like the grass. "All flesh is as grass;" and the rich and beautiful are like the flower of the field—a little fairer and more delicate. "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it."—Isa. xl., 7. "For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."—James iv., 14. You know how swiftly a weaver's shuttle flies; but your life flies more swiftly: "My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle."—Job vii., 6. "My days are swifter than a post; they are passed away as the swift ships; as the eagle that hasteth to the prey."—Job ix., 25, 26. (2.) *How much is already passed away.* Most believers spend their first days in sin. Many hearing me gave their best days to sin and the world. Many among you have only the lame, and the torn, and the sick, to give to God. All of you can look on the past as a sleep, or as a tale that is told. The time since I came among you appears to me just like a dream. (3.) *What remains is all numbered.* All of you hearing me have your Sabbaths numbered—the number of sermons you are to hear. The last one is already fixed upon. Your years are numbered. To many this is the last year they shall ever see in this world. Many will celebrate their next new year in glory. The disease is now in the body of many of you that is to lay you in the dust; and your grave is already marked out. In a little while you will be lying quietly there. Yes, dear brethren, "*the time is short.*"

2. *The time of this world's continuance is short:* "The end of all things is at hand."—"The fashion of this world passeth away." A believer stands on a watch-tower—things present are below his feet—things eternal are before his eyes. A little while, brethren, and the day of grace will be over; preaching, praying will be done. Soon we shall give over wrestling with an unbelieving world—soon the number of believers shall be complete, and the sky shall open over our heads, and Christ shall come. His parting cry was: "Surely, I come quickly." Then we shall see him "whom, having not seen, we loved." A little while, and we shall stand before the great white throne—a little while, and the wicked shall not be; we shall see them going away into everlasting punishment—a little while, and the work of eternity shall be begun. We shall be like him, we shall see him day and night in his temple, we shall sing the new song, without sin and without weariness, for ever and ever. In a little moment, brethren, all this shall be: "For a small moment have I hid my face from thee; but with everlasting mercies will I gather thee."

II. *The believer should learn from this to sit loose to all things under the sun.*

1. *To the dearest objects of this world:* "It remaineth, therefore, that they who have wives be as though they had none." Marriage is honorable in all. Husbands should love their wives, even as Christ loved the Church: "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies." Still it must not be idolatry. A married believer should be, in some respects, as if he were unmarried, as if he had no wife. "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." You cannot be too kind, too gentle, too loving, to the parents whom God has given you; yet be as though you had none. Parents, love your children, and bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; yet feel that the time is short. They are only a loan from the Lord. Be not surprised if he take his own. Esteem your ministers highly in love, for their work's sake; yet be as if you had none. Lean as entirely on Christ as if you had never seen nor heard a minister. Brainerd mentions an instance of one woman, who, after her conversion, was resigned to the divine will in the most tender points: "What if God should take away your husband from you, how do you think you would bear that?" She replied, "He belongs to God, and not to me; he may do with him just what he pleases." When she longed to die to be free from sin, she was asked what would become of her infant; she answered, "God will take care of it; it belongs to him, he will take care of it." Rutherford says, "Build your nest upon no tree here; for you see God hath sold the forest to Death, and every tree whereon we would rest is ready to be cut down, to the end we may flee and mount up, and build upon the rock, and dwell in the holes of the rock." Set not your heart on the flowers of this world; for they have all a canker in them. Prize the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley more than all; for he changeth not. Live nearer to Christ than to the saints, so that when they are taken from you, you may have him to lean on still.

2. *Sit loose to the griefs of this world.* They that weep should be as though they wept not. This world is the vale of tears. There are always some mourning. No sooner is the tear dried up on one cheek than it trickles down another. No sooner does one widow lay aside her weeds, than another takes them up. Those that are in Christ should weep as though they wept not; "for the time is short." Do you weep over those that died in the Lord? It is right to weep; "Jesus wept." Yet "weep as though you wept not;" for "the time is short." They are not lost, but gone before. The sun, when it sets, is not lost; it is gone to shine in another hemisphere; and so have they gone to shine in a brighter world. It is self-love that makes you mourn for them; for they are happy. You would not mourn if they were with a

distant friend on earth, why do you mourn that they are with the sinner's friend? "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light upon them, nor any heat; for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto fountains of living waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."—Rev. vii., 16, 17. "The time is short;" and you will follow after. A few days, and you may be leaning together on the bosom of Jesus; you are nearer them to-day than you were yesterday. "The time is short;" and you will meet with all the redeemed at the right hand of Christ, we shall mingle our voices in the new song, and wave together the eternal palm! "Weep as though you wept not."

Do you weep over those that died out of the Lord? Ah! there is deeper cause for weeping here; and yet the time is short, when all this will be explained to you, and you will not be able to shed a tear over the lost. A little while, and you will see Jesus fully glorified, and you will not be able to wish anything different from what has happened. When Aaron lost his two sons, he held his peace.

Do you mourn over bodily pain, and poverty, and sickness, and the troubles of the world? Do not murmur: "The time is short." If you have believed in Christ, these are all the hell you will ever bear. Think you the dying thief would complain of his pains when he was within a step of paradise? So it is with you. Your hell is dried up, and you have only these two shallow brooks to pass through, sickness and death; and you have a promise that Christ shall do more than meet you, go with you, foot for foot, and bear you in his arms. When we get to the presence of Jesus, all our griefs shall look like children's griefs, a day in his presence will make you remember your miseries no more. Wherefore take courage, and run with patience.

3. *To the enjoyments of this world.*

It is quite right for a believer to use the things of this world, and to rejoice in them. None has such a right as the believer has to rejoice and be happy. He has a right to use the bodily comforts of this world; to eat his meat "with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God." He has a right to all the joys of home, and kindred, and friendship. It is highly proper that he should enjoy these things. He has a right to all the pure pleasures of mind, of intellect, and imagination; for God has given him all things richly to enjoy. Still, he should "rejoice as though he rejoiced not, and use this world as not abusing it;" for "the time is short." In a little while, you will be at your Father's table above, drinking the wine new with Christ. You will meet with all your brothers and sisters in Christ; you will have pure joy in God through ceaseless ages. Do not be much taken with the joys that are here. I have noticed children when they were going out to a feast, they would eat but sparingly, that they might have a

keener appetite for the coming dainties; so, dear friends, you are going to a feast above, do not dull your appetite with earthly joys, sit loosely to them all, look upon them all as fading. As you walk through a flower garden, you never think of lying down, to make your home among its roses; so, pass through the garden of this world's best joys. Smell the flowers in passing; but do not tarry. Jesus calls you to his banqueting house; there you will feed among the lilies on the mountains of spices. Oh! it ill becomes a child of God to be fond of an earthly banquet, when you are looking to sitting down so soon with Jesus; it ill becomes you to be much taken up with dress and show, when you are so soon to see the face that was crowned with thorns. Brethren, if you are ever so much taken up with any enjoyment that it takes away your love for prayer or for your Bible, or that it would frighten you to hear the cry: "The Bridegroom cometh;" and you would say: Is he come already? then you are abusing this world. Oh! sit loose to this world's joy: "The time is short."

4. *To the occupations of the world.* It is right for Christians to be diligent in business. I often wonder how unconverted souls can be so busy; how, when you are bustling along, filling up all your time with worldly things, it never occurs to you that there will be none of this in eternity. How can I be so busy for my body, when my poor soul is unprovided for? But those in Christ may well be diligent. (1.) They have good conscience; that oils the wheels. "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine." A light heart makes easy work. (2.) They love to honor their Lord. They would not have it said that a believer in Jesus was an idler or a sluggard; the love of Jesus constrains them to all that is lovely. And yet a believer should buy as though he possessed not;" for "the time is short." Oh! believers, ye cannot be misers; for you are but stewards. All that you possess here is your Lord's; and the day is at hand when he will transfer you to take care of another property in a brighter land. You are but servants. It would not do if you were to set your hearts on the things of this lower room; for in a few days the Master is to call you to serve in his own dear presence. Dear believers, be ready to leave your loom for the golden harp, at a minute's warning; be ready to leave your desk for the throne of Jesus; your pen for the palm of victory; be ready to leave the market below, for the street of the new Jerusalem, where the redeemed shall walk. If you were in a sinking ship, you would not cling hard to bags of money; you would sit loose to all, and be ready to swim. This world is like a sinking ship, and those who grasp at its possessions will sink with it. Oh! "buy as though you possessed not;" for "the time is short."

III. *What the unconverted should learn from the shortness of time.*

1. *Your folly in losing the past.* Although life be very short, it is all saving time. This is the reason for which God has given it to us. The long-suffering of God is intended for our salvation. God gives men time to hear the Gospel, to pray, to get saving conversion. But unconverted souls have wasted all the past. Think how much time you have lost in idleness. How many golden opportunities for prayer, and hearing the Word, and meditation, have you lost! how much time have you spent uselessly in your bed, or idle talk, or in loitering about your doors! If you saw how short your time is, and how death and hell are pursuing you, you would have fled to Christ; but you have not. Think how much you have spent in sin, at the tavern, or in vain company, or in dances, or in night walking, or in sins of which it is a shame even to speak. God gave you time for saving your soul, and you have spent it in ruining your soul. God gave you time to flee to Christ, and you have spent it in fleeing towards hell. Think how much time you have spent in business without one thought for eternity. Think how you have lost your best time. Youth is your best time for being saved. Many of you have lost it. Time of awakening, Sabbaths, holy time, years of Sabbaths have now gone over many of you. "The harvest is past, the summer is ended; and we are not saved."

2. *Consider what value they put on time who are now in hell.* —Once, brethren, they cared as little for it as you; once, they could see their years pass away without caring; and they could let their Sabbaths slip away; but now they see their folly. What would they now give, brethren, for such an opportunity as you have this day? What would they give for another year of grace, for another week, for another day? It is probable that some of your friends or companions now in hell, are wishing they could come back to tell you how precious is an inch of saving time!

Oh! brethren, be wise. "Why stand ye all the day idle?" It has come to the eleventh hour with some, your unconverted head is grey, your feet are tottering. If you saw a man condemned to die, lying in chains, who had but three hours to live; if you saw that man playing at dice, or singing wanton songs, would you not be shocked? You would say he was a hardened wretch. Ah! are there none among you the same? You are condemned already, your days are numbered, you are hanging by a thread over the mouth of hell; and yet you are cutting and slashing at the hand that holds you. In a little moment, brethren, it will be all over. Throughout the never ending ages of eternity you will remember the few days we spent together. Ah! the remembrance will add fuel to the flame, and be a never-dying worm in your poor soul. Amen.

SERMON LV.

SIR, WE WOULD SEE JESUS.

"And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: the same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, We would see Jesus. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus. And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honor."—John xii., 20–26.

I. *The manner in which these Greeks sought the Lord Jesus.*

1. *They came not direct to Christ,* but in a round-about manner: "The same came to Philip."—Verse 21. Had they felt the intolerable burden of sin that lay upon them, or had they seen the grace and suitableness of the Lord Jesus, they would have run to his feet; but their concern was very slight indeed. When the publicans and sinners were awakened about their souls, it is said they drew near to Jesus. They did not go to Philip, or to Andrew, or to any man, but they pressed near to Christ. They saw that he was the fountain for their guilty souls, and all the world could not keep them back from him. When the woman which was a sinner knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, she came to his feet. She did not ask leave, she could not stay, but cast her guilty soul at his feet, washed them with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. So it is still. If you felt the burden of sin as you ought to feel it, if you felt the free grace of Christ as you ought, you would press through the crowd to come to Jesus. You would say: Make a lane, that I may come to him. He calls me, he calls the chief of sinners. Here, Lord, am I; wash me in thy blood, or else I die. If you feel the crimson color of your soul, and believe the freeness and fulness of the fountain, you will ask no man's leave, but go direct to Jesus.

2. *They asked only to see Jesus:* "Sir, we would see Jesus." This shows how little they were in earnest to be saved by Christ. For the same cause Zaccheus climbed up into the sycamore tree, to see Jesus, who he was. For the same cause Herod wished long to see Jesus; for he hoped to see some miracle done by him; just as you would like to see some juggler or fortune-teller, out of an earthly, worldly curiosity. Some are spoken of: "Ye seek me, because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled."—John vi., 26. Ah! how different when men are truly awakened by the Spirit. When Job was under soul concern, his cry was: "Oh! that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat." How different the cry of the Bride: "I held him, and

would not let him go. My Beloved is mine, and I am his!" How different the cry of Paul: "I count all things but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him." Oh! brethren, if you are under the teaching of the Spirit, no mere outward sight of Christ will satisfy your soul. You must have a heart sight and heart relish of him. You must taste and see that the Lord is gracious. Many of you like to hear about Jesus, you like to be entertained by fine descriptions of Jesus; but if you are under the teaching of the Spirit, nothing will satisfy you but to sit down under his shadow, to be found in him, to be the dove hidden by his own hand "in the clefts of the rock and in the secret places of the stair," to be washed in his blood, and new created by his Spirit.

3. *One reason of their little concern was fear of man.*—The rage of Christ's enemies was waxing hotter and hotter, a few days before they had come to the solemn resolution of putting him to death. Nay, we are told they consulted how they might put Lazarus also to death, so bloodthirsty were they grown.—Verse 10. We are told that many of the chief rulers also believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they durst not confess him (verse 42); for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. There can be no doubt, then, that the heat and anger of Christ's enemies greatly damped the concern of these Greeks. It was probably this that made them apply first to Philip. It made them cautious in their words: "Sir, we would see Jesus." How truly is it said, "The fear of man bringeth a snare!" The roaring of the lion has driven many a soul away from Christ. Is this not the case among you? What will my family say; what will my companions say; what will the world say, if I should go to Christ, and give up all for him? These three roars of the lion have ruined many souls. How many of you have felt a real desire sometimes to be saved? Perhaps you fell on your knees and prayed sincerely to be delivered. But some companion came in, some merry-making was proposed, and you had not courage to say, No. You wished to say, I have begun to seek the Lord, I have been on my knees, I have been praying that I may be saved; but you could not say it, your tongue stuck to your jaws; and so you went back to your vomit, and to wallow in the mire. Alas! you loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. "How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?" What a foolish thing it is to fear the frown of a worm of the dust more than the frown of the infinite God! to fear the laugh of the scorner more than the sentence of Christ, "Depart, ye cursed!" "Fear not them who can kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

II. *Christ's answer.*

1. *He shows them that he must die before men will seek him in*

earnest:—"The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified."—Verse 23. There is something very deep and solemn in this answer of Christ. He saw that these Greeks had no piercing sense of their need of him; and he explains to the disciples that it is only a discovery of him as a crucified Christ that will draw men to him. As if he should say, I am like a corn of wheat, if it be not put into the earth and die, it will abide alone; but if it be sown, and die, it bears much fruit. So if I die not, no men will be drawn to me; but if I die for sinners, and lie down in the grave for them, then they will be drawn to me.

(1.) *The dying of the Lord Jesus is the most awakening sight in the world.*—Why did that lovely One that was from the beginning the brightness of his Father's glory, and express image of his person, degrade himself so much as to become like a small corn of wheat, which is hidden under the earth and dies? why did he lie down in the cold rocky sepulchre? Was it not that there was wrath infinite and unutterable lying upon men? Would Christ have wept over Jerusalem if there had been no hell beneath it? Would he have died under his Father's wrath if there were no wrath to come? Oh! secure sinners, triflers with the Gospel, polite hearers who say often, "Sir, we would see Jesus," but who never find him, go to Gethsemane, see his unspeakable agonies; go to Golgotha, see the vial of wrath poured upon his breaking heart; go to the sepulchre, see the corn of wheat laid dead in the ground. Why all this suffering in the spotless One if there be no wrath coming on the unsheltered, unbelieving head? Oh! the corn of wheat in the ground is the most awakening sight in the universe.

(2.) *It is the most drawing sight:*—"I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." These poor Greeks did not feel much their need of Christ, but still less did they see his suitableness to their need. Had they but seen what shelter there was to be in his wounds for sinners—had they seen how much room there would be for the chief of sinners—they would have burst through every difficulty to come to Jesus. Nothing in the world would have kept them back from Christ. The fear of man would have been like a straw; they would have cried, not, "Sir, we would see Jesus," but, "Draw me, and I will run after thee"—"Hide me in the clefts of the rock"—"Cause me to sit under the shade of the apple tree." It was this sight that drew three thousand to Jesus on the day of Pentecost. The corn of wheat dying for us, is the true loadstone to draw iron hearts after him. In the natural loadstone the iron may be drawn away again, but the soul once drawn to Christ can never be drawn away any more.

Oh! pray for a drawing discovery of the Lord Jesus Christ. Some of you are in this condition. The Lord Jesus is on one side of you, and Satan on the other, and you in the midst, and both are

drawing at your soul. Oh! pray that the Lord Jesus may overcome. His open arms on the cross are drawing you—his wound in the side is inviting you. "In me ye shall have peace."

2. *That men must cleave to him at whatever cost.*—Verse 25. These poor Greeks were under the fear of man. They were afraid they would be put out of the synagogue, or perhaps they would be called Galileans or Nazarenes, or perhaps they would be laughed at, and lose the praise of men; and this made them very cautious in their approach to the Saviour. Now, the Lord Jesus shows them this is not the way that awakened souls must seek him. As if he should say, Go and tell them that in coming to me they are coming for eternal life, and therefore every other consideration must be laid aside. I am the one thing needful—I am the pearl of great price. They that seek me must push aside everything that stands in the way. Even if they lose their life in coming to me, they would find life eternal. "He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." Those that know the real worth of Christ will make everything subordinate to their finding him. Those who will not, never will find him.

(1.) *Consider how precious Christ is:*—"In him is life eternal." In him there is pardon for the vilest of sinners. In him there is sweet peace of conscience—peace with God. In him there is rest for the weary soul—the way to the Father—an open door into the fold of God. In him there is a fountain of living waters—unsearchable riches—full supplies of grace and truth for weak and weary souls. In him there is acquittal at the judgment-day, and a glorious crown. Oh! should you not leave all for this? Shall a lust, or a pleasure, or a game, or the smile of a friend, keep you from all this? "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

(2.) *Consider how sad your case without him.*—The number of your sins is infinite: "Innumerable evils have compassed me about." Your heart is as full as ever—ready to gush out with sin to all eternity. God is angry with you every day. There is no refuge but Christ. If you do not get into him, you will never be saved. You will be outside the ark when the flood comes. You will knock, and cry, Lord! Lord!—but it will be too late. God will be your enemy. The great day of his wrath will be come, and who will be able to stand? Some of you have felt a little touch of concern; you have never felt the millionth part of what is the truth. Oh! then, will you let some poor lust, or pride, or love of dress, some Herodias, keep you out from Christ?

Be entreated to cleave to him at whatever cost—If any business comes between, takes up too much time, disturbs your Sabbaths, hinders you from coming to Christ—let it go. If any pleasure comes between, lulls your convictions, deadens you at prayer and Bible, quickens your desire for the world and sin—let it go. If

any friend comes between you and Christ, if their company indisposes you for seeking Christ, takes off your mind, if their ridicule or vain talk brings you back to the world—let them go. Never mind though they laugh and sneer, think you odd, ridiculous, call you methodist; it matters not; one thing is needful, Christ is precious—eternity is near. If you do not, you will lose your soul. Like Paul, I count all things but loss.

3. *If we would be Christ's, we must give up ourselves to his service for ever.*—The poor Greeks said: "Sir, we would *see* Jesus." Jesus here tells them that a mere sight of him will not do: "If any man serve me, let him follow me." Many people are willing to be saved from hell; but they are not willing to give themselves up to Christ to be his servants and followers; but every one who is under the teaching of the Spirit, gives himself up to be the Lord's. So Matthew. The Lord said: "Follow me; and he arose and left all, and followed Jesus." One who is truly taught of God feels indwelling sin a greater burden than the fear of hell: "In me, that is in my flesh, there is no good thing." "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Therefore, that soul is willing to be Christ's servant for ever—willing to have his ear bored to the door of Christ's house.

This will discover hypocrites. Are you willing to be Christ's servant, to follow him in hard duties, to be brought under the rules of the Gospel? If not, you are a hypocrite. *Count the cost of coming to Christ.*

III. *The reward.*

1. *You will be with Christ.* You may be cast out by men—father and mother—offscouring of all things: "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise"—be with the Lamb on Mount Zion. Sit with me on my throne: "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory."

2. *The Father will honor.* You will lose the praise of men, perhaps of some you esteem; but you will gain the honor of God.

(1.) *In this world.* Ye shall be a peculiar treasure. He will guide you with his eye, hear your prayer, be with you in trouble, fill you with his Spirit, give his angels charge over you, be with you in death.

(2.) *In eternity.* He will receive you, show you his salvation, wipe off tears from your eyes, be your God and portion. Jesus will confess you before his Father: This soul followed me.

SERMON LVI.

THOU THAT DWELLEST IN THE GARDENS.

"Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice: cause me to hear it. Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices."—Song viii., 13, 14.

I. *The description of the Church, or of the believing soul:* "Thou that dwellest in the gardens." This is true of the believer in two ways.

1. *He is enclosed and separated from the world:* "A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse."—Song iv., 12. All believers dwell within an enclosure. Just as the gardens in the East are enclosed with a fence of reeds, or of prickly pear, or by a stone wall, so all that are Christ's are enclosed out of the world. Jesus says: "If ye were of the world, the world would love its own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." Paul says, he was "separated unto the Gospel of God." And again, John says: "The world knoweth us not, even as it knew him not." Great mistakes are made here. There are many hedges that are none of Christ's planting. Many are separated, but not unto the Gospel of God. (1.) Some are separated by education. They are brought up far away from the noise and bustle of the world. They see little of its vices, and hear little of its profanity. They are never allowed to come within its magic ring. They are a kind of separated people. But, ah! they have a world in their own heart. (2.) Some, again, are separated from the world by worldly griefs and distresses, or by sickness of body. Their proud spirit is broken. Their heart used madly to follow the world; but now it sickens and dies within them; desire fails. They have no more heart for their idols. These are a kind of separated people. But, ah! they dwell not in the gardens; that is the separation of nature, not of grace. (3.) Some have a haughty separation from the world, like those that said: "Stand back, for I am holier than thou: like the Pharisees, who would not speak to a publican. These are known by their little compassion for the world. Ah! these do not dwell in Christ's garden. (4.) There is a nominal separation from the world. These people have a name to live, and are dead. They belong, it may be, to a peculiar congregation, and to a peculiar prayer-meeting; they have a Christian name and a Christian appearance; they often speak as Christians, and are spoken of as Christians; the world are afraid of them, and treat them as if they were believers; but all the time beneath that mantle there beats an unchanged, unbelieving, ungodly heart. Ah! brethren, this is a separation of Satan's making.

But all that are truly Christ's are dwellers in the gardens. They are separated from the world by an infinite, impassable chasm.

1*st, By blood.* Just as the houses of Israel were separated from the houses of the Egyptians by having the doors sprinkled with blood; so there are a set of men in this world, the doors of whose hearts have been sprinkled with blood. The blood of Christ upon their conscience marks them out as pardoned men. They had the same nature as other men; the same enmity to God, and desperate departure from him; they had the same love of idols as other men; they spent their youth in the same sins as other men; many of them went into the lowest depths of sin; but the Lord Jesus loved them, and washed them from their sins in his own blood. "Justified by faith they have peace with God." These are they who dwell in the gardens. Ah! brethren, have you been separated by blood?—have you got the red blood of Jesus, making your soul different from the rest of men?

2*d, By his Spirit.* All that are truly Christ's are separated from the world by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. "If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature." He has got new desires given him. Once he desired what other men do; praise of men, a name, power, money, pleasure. These were the chief objects set before him. Now these have lost their power over him. The world is become crucified. Now he desires more nearness to God; more complete change of heart; he desires to spread the knowledge of Jesus over the world. He is separated unto the Gospel of God. He has got new sorrows. Once all his sorrows were worldly sorrows; he wept at the loss of friends or this world's possessions; but now these sorrows are light afflictions. His heaviest grief now is, when he is deserted of God; when he wants the presence of God and the smile of God; or perhaps the absence of the Spirit and the burning of corruption within, or sin abounding around him, makes him sigh and cry; or the ark of God makes his heart tremble. That man is separated—he dwells in the gardens.

Dear souls, have you been thus separated from the world? "We are bound always to thank God for you, beloved: because he hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." Ah! brethren, does the blood of Christ separate you from the unpardoned world? Does the Spirit of Christ separate you from the unregenerate world? Is there a real, eternal separation made between you and the world? If not, you will perish with the world.

2. *Dwelling in the gardens seems also to mean dwelling in delight.* When God made man at the first, he planted a garden eastward in Eden; and out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food—the tree of life also in the midst of the garden. And the Lord God

took the man and put him into the garden of Eden, to dress and to keep it. That garden was a sweet type of the delight of Adam's soul; and there, day by day, he heard the voice of God walking in the garden, in the cool of the day. When Adam fell, God drove him out of the garden into this bleak world, covered with thorns and thistles, to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow. Man no more walked with God in a garden of delights. But when a sinner is brought to Christ, he is brought into Christ's garden: "We, who believe, do enter into rest." He says: "I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste." He becomes one that dwells in the gardens. True, he is one coming up from the wilderness. This world is a wilderness to the believer—full of pain, sickness, sighing, death—a world that crucified his Lord, and persecutes him; a cold, unbelieving, ungodly world. Still, the soul dwells in the gardens: "His soul shall dwell at ease." True, a believer has his times of desertion, and clouds, and doubts, and deep waters. At such times, his cry is; "O wretched man!" Still, when his eye rests on Jesus, his soul dwells in a garden of delights.

Oh! brethren, have you been brought into Christ's garden; have you found great delight in him; a better Eden—a right to the tree of life that is in the midst of the paradise of God? Many of you think it a dull thing to become a Christian. You look upon their outside, their quiet, humble walk, through the world. You think them dull, morose, severe. But, O man! you are only looking at the shell: could you see what is felt within—could you see the sunshine of heaven that rests upon that soul, could you taste for a moment the pleasure of being at peace with God, you would feel that all your pleasures are but the husks which the swine are eating.

"Happy is the man that findeth wisdom,
And the man that getteth understanding.
She is more precious than rubies;
And all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.
Length of days is in her right hand;
In her left hand riches and honor.
Her ways are ways of pleasantness,
And all her paths are peace.
She's a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her:
And happy is every one that retaineth her."

Ah! brethren, go and learn the hymn that begins—

"Shall men pretend to pleasure
That never knew the Lord?
Can all the worldling's treasure
True peace of mind afford?"

II. *The complaint of Christ:* "The companions hear thy voice."

1. The soul in Christ has many sweet companions, brothers and

sisters in Christ Jesus. The soul that is united to the vine tree is united to all the branches: "We know that we are passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren"—"I am a companion of all them that fear thee."

Believers have many things to say to one another; as John says to Gaius: "I had many things to write unto thee, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee: but I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face." So did believers in the days of Malachi: "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened and heard." And so do believers still. They may tell of their past experiences modestly, humbly, with self-loathing, and for the glory of Christ; as Jesus told the maniac: "Return to thine own house, and show how great things God hath done unto thee" (Luke viii., 39); and as David speaks: "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul."—Ps. lxvi., 16.

They speak to one another in their distresses, as it is written, "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." Not comfort yourselves, but comfort one another. It is God's ordinance that comfort should be ministered by believer to believer; that the gentle hand of love should bring the cup of consolation. They speak to one another of Jesus: "Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?"—"Whither is thy Beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? whither is thy Beloved turned aside, that we may seek him with thee?" They exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day.

Ah! this is a true mark of all true believers. "The companions hearken to thy voice." How many of you may know that you are not in Christ by this, that you have never learned the pure language of Canaan. True, there are many have the outward phrase of Christians, and have much talk, who will turn out to be clouds without rain, foolish virgins, having a lamp, and wick, and flame—no drop of oil within; still, if you have not the speech of Canaan, if you have not a word for those that are journeying towards glory, I fear you belong not to that company.

2. *Hear the complaint of Christ.* "Cause me to hear it." Christ complains that we speak more to one another than to him. This is too often the case, especially with young believers. When the bosom is filled with joy, the believer pours it out before his companions, rather than before the Lord. In sorrow, when clouds have covered the soul, Christ is forgotten, and some companion sought out to hear your complaints. In difficulty, how often the believer runs first to some companion on earth for counsel! Now the word of Christ is, "*Cause me to hear it*"—Run first to me.

(1.) *Because Christ is a jealous Saviour:* "I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God." When Christ took us to himself he

said, "Thou shalt call me Ishi, and shalt call me no more Baali; for I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth." Remember how he said, "Lovest thou me more than these?" And we said to him, "What have I to do any more with idols?" Now, the Lord Jesus cannot bear that we should have a nearer friend than himself. He must be our next of kin. We must lean on the Beloved. "Cause me to hear it."

(2.) *Because in him is the full supply of all our need.* True, the companions are lovely and pleasant in their lives; but where did they get all the grace that made them so? Was it not from Christ? Perhaps we love their gentleness and meekness; their holy wisdom, to advise us in difficult circumstances; but ah! where did they get all that? from Jesus. They are but cisterns; Christ is the fountain. They are but creatures; Christ is the Creator. We must leave them, and betake ourselves to him. "Cause me to hear it."

(3.) *Communion with Christ is always sanctifying.* Communion with men, even with good men, often hardens and hurts the soul. Are you telling experiences? you are apt to be man-pleasing, to seek to appear something wonderful, very humble, or very believing; you are apt to seek the praise of men more than the praise of God. Are you seeking comfort? you are apt to lean on the creature, and to forget the only Comforter; but communion with Christ is always sanctifying. Oh! it is good for the soul to meet with Jesus. Oh! if you would go to Jesus and tell him all; if you would cause him to hear it, how much happier lives you would lead! Let there be the utmost frankness between your soul and Christ. Cover no sin before him; pour out every joy, unbosom every grief, seek counsel in every perplexity. See here, he bids you come and tell him all: "Cause me to hear it."

III. *The believer's prayer.*

1. *He prays for a swift return of Christ to his own soul.* It is the presence of Christ with the soul that gives true peace and true holiness. It is not circumstances, nor ministers, nor place, nor time, but Jesus present. To sit under his shadow, gives great delight. To lean upon the Beloved alone supports his faltering steps. A true believer cannot be satisfied while Christ is away; "Make haste, my beloved." One that is not a wife may be content with other lovers; but the faithful wife longs for the return of her Lord. The ordinances are all cold and barren till he return. Ministers speak, but not to the heart. The companions cannot give rest nor ease. Oh, brethren! do you know what it is to long for himself; to cry, "make haste, my Beloved?"

2. *He prays for a swift return of Christ to the Church.*—It is the presence of Christ that makes a sweet time of refreshing in a Church. When he comes leaping on the mountains, skipping upon the hills, the flowers immediately appear on the earth. The

Lord's people are quickened in all their graces; they begin to sing songs of deliverance; anxious souls spring up like the grass; and the whole garden of the Lord sends out spices. Ah! if the Lord Jesus were to come in here with power, I would preach and you would hear in another way than we do. I could not be so hard-hearted, and you would be melted under his Word. Oh! will you not pray, "Make haste, my Beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices." Is not such a time desirable?

3. *He prays for the second glorious coming of Christ.* It is the real visible coming and presence of Jesus, the king, in his beauty, that will perfect the joy of his believing people. (1.) The love of the soul will then be satisfied. At present we are tossed with many doubts. Am I really converted? Am I in Christ? Will I persevere to the end? The soul has oftentimes a hungering after Christ, and cannot get its fill. But when we shall see him as he is, the shadows will all flee away. We shall never have another doubt for ever; we shall be ever with the Lord. (2.) Jesus shall then be fully glorified. At present he is scorned and spit upon. His enemies have the upper hand. Kings despise him, and most men lightly esteem him. But then he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe. All his saints shall then bless him. "Men shall be blessed in him. All nations shall call him blessed."

Ah! my friends, can you honestly say you long for that day? Is it a blessed hope to you? Those only who can say, "My Beloved," can desire his coming. "Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! To what end is it for you? The day of the Lord is darkness, and not light." Ah! brethren, when Jesus comes in the clouds of heaven, every eye shall see him; and most of you, I fear, will wail because of him. Ah, there he is! the Saviour we rejected, neglected all our life, despised; there he comes to take vengeance on us that know not God, and obey not the Gospel. Those of you that can say, "My Beloved" are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Your prayer is: "Make haste, my Beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices."

SERMON LVII.

DRAW WATER WITH JOY.

"And in that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me. 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. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation."—Isa. xii., 1-3.

THESE words do first apply to God's ancient people, the Jews; but they are no less applicable to ourselves.

1. *Observe the time spoken of:* "In that day," the day spoken of in the chapter before: "It shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth."—Verses 11, 12. It is in the day when God restores the Jews to their own land, and converts their souls.

2. *Observe what they will do:* "I will praise thee." They will then be a praising people. At present they are a melancholy people. There is no joy in their service, they are like a company of dry bones; but in that day their voices will be loud in God's praise.

3. *Observe the ground of it:* "Though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me. 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." The ground of their joy is, that God's anger is turned away from them, they have found a divine Saviour: "Behold, God is my salvation." They have found a divine Sanctifier: "The Lord Jehovah is my strength and song." Ah! this is the truest ground of joy and praise in the whole world.

4. *Observe the consequences:* "Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation."—Verse 3. The wells of salvation appear to be the divine ordinances, God's Word and sacraments. The saved Jews will now find all their springs in Zion, they will be joyful hearers of God's Word, they will be joyful partakers in the Lord's supper. With joy shall they draw water out of the wells of salvation.

Doctrine.—Saved souls draw water with joy out of the wells of salvation.

Many among ourselves find no joy in ordinances. Some despise

them altogether. They come not at all. They spend the Sabbath morning in their bed, the Sabbath evening in the pleasures of idleness. The most in this parish have no joy in drawing water. Some come to the house of God; but, oh! it is a weariness, when will it be over? If it were a game of cards, or a merry company, you would not weary; but you know not what it is to have joy in drawing water. Multitudes come to the Lord's table for a name, for custom, for decency, or to obtain baptism to their children. Alas! alas! they are strangers to drawing water with joy. Some weary souls, anxious about their eternity, go from sermon to sermon, from sacrament to sacrament, seeking rest, but finding none. They go to one well, but they find it bitter, to another, but it is dry, to another, but it is deep, and they cannot draw. These are always learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. They never draw water with joy out of the wells of salvation. Here is the error: in one and all of these, they do not come as saved souls, they do not come to Christ to get God's anger away. *Saved souls alone draw water with joy.*

I. *State of the unconverted:* "Thou wast angry with me." Every redeemed soul can look back to a time when they were under the anger of God. God is at present angry with every unconverted soul. Observe,

1. *Whose anger it is:* "Thou." It is the anger of God. If all the men in the world were angry with a soul, it would be in a sad condition. If every man you met were full of rage and anger against you, the rich and the poor, kings and captains, you would think yourself in a bad case. If all the wild beasts of the forest, the lions, and wolves, and tigers, were to be enraged against you, and you were in their power, you would be in a desperate case. But these are but creatures. Every unconverted soul among you is under the wrath of the Creator. He that made you is angry with you.

2. *He is always angry:*—"God is angry with the wicked every day." Whatever day of the week it be, week-day or Sabbath-day, God is angry with unconverted souls. Their sins are continually before him, and, therefore, he is continually provoked by them. The smoke of their sins is continually rising into his nostrils. He that believeth not the Son, the wrath of God abideth on him. Not only is God angry every day, but every moment of the day. There is not a moment of an unconverted man's life, but God's wrath abideth on him. When he is at his work or at his play, sleeping or waking, in church or at market, the sword of God's wrath is over his head. Unconverted souls walk and sleep over hell.

3. *It is increasing anger.*—Unconverted men are treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath. Some unconverted persons think they wipe off many sins by coming to the Lord's table,

whereas, if they knew the truth, they would see that they are heaping up wrath. God's anger is like a river dammed up. It is getting higher and higher, fuller and deeper, every day against every soul that is out of Christ. Every Sabbath your cup is getting fuller; it will soon be full.

4. *It is insufferable.*—Unconverted men sometimes say that if they must go to hell, they will just bear it; but it cannot be borne. If you saw a spider about to be crushed under a great rock, and it should swell out its body in order to bear the shock, it would be miserable folly. Such is the folly of unconverted men saying they will bear the anger of God. How can you bear the anger of your Maker? How can you bear the heel of Omnipotence? "Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong, in the day that I shall deal with thee?"

Learn from this to flee from the wrath to come. Oh! sirs, if ye but knew your condition, you would rise and flee. I declare to you that I sometimes think myself an Infidel, from the cold manner in which I speak to unconverted souls. This is the state of every one of you who is unborn again. However amiable, and gentle, and irreproachable in the sight of man; whatever experiences you have gone through; though you may have attended ordinances and kept up prayer; yet, if you are unconverted, God is angry with you every day.

Learn that anxious souls should be ten thousand times more anxious than they are. This is the day of grace, this is saving time. God has infinite pity for you. His anger is infinite against you, and yet his compassion is also infinite. The more he is angry with you the more he has pity for you. Although his justice cries out for vengeance, sword and bow on your soul; although his holiness demands that you should be cast out of his sight into the blackness of darkness; yet his compassion cries, Let him alone this year also. There is still room for you under the wings of Christ: "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."

II. *The way of salvation:*—"Thine anger is turned away."

1. *Pardon.* (1.) There is abundant provision for the pardon and peace of the sinner; for God's anger is turned away on the head of Christ. The thing which troubles the conscience of awakened souls is the anger of God. It is this which makes them tremble, by night and by day, in public and in secret. An awakened soul feels that he has broken God's law, and is exposed every moment to his wrath. He can find no rest in his bed, no peace at his meals, no joy in his friends; the heavens are black above his head, the earth is ready to open and devour him. If God be a just and holy God, he will pour out his anger. If he be a true God, he will fulfil all his threatenings. If such a soul would take

Christ as his surety, he would find abundant peace. The anger of God has already been turned away on the head of Christ. All the clouds of wrath have been directed, like a water-spout, upon that one head. If you are willing that Christ be your surety, you do not need to fear. The law has had its course, and God does not demand a second punishment. There is no reason for your standing trembling, when there is such a glorious way of pardon. Christ offers himself as a surety to every one of you; and if you accept of him, your wrath is past, it will never fall on you to all eternity. (2.) This will be still more evident, if you consider that Christ is a divine person: "Behold, God is my salvation." If trembling sinners only knew the person who has undertaken to be a Saviour, it would dispel all their fears. He is the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of his person. He is the peerless, matchless Son of God that has undertaken to stand for us. He is the maker of the world, he that sees the end from the beginning. "By him were all things made." He made the sun, moon, and stars; he made the solid earth; he upholds all things by the word of his power. Do you think he would fail in any undertaking? Do you think, if he engages to be a shield for sinners, that he will not be enough to cover them? Oh! be ashamed of your unbelief, and come under this infinite Shield. "Behold, God is my salvation," "I will trust and not be afraid." Come, trembling soul, under this divine Shield, and you will find divine peace. Come under this Rock, and you will find rest for your weary souls. It matters not what sins you have; if you come under Christ, you shall have peace.

2. *Holiness.* "Thou comfortedst me."—"The Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song." When a soul comes first to Christ, he does not know that he needs any more comfort; he feels such joy, he thinks he shall never be sad again. Soon he is made to feel his wants. He feels innumerable enemies within and without. His heart he feels to be a very hell within him; corruptions whose black faces he never saw before, now raise their heads; his breast appears full of hissing serpents. The man shudders at himself; he feels on the brink of a precipice; the smallest breath of temptation he feels will throw him down. In despair of help, he looks above; to Jesus at the right hand of God, able to save to the uttermost. In Jesus it hath pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell. He sends the Comforter; the Holy Spirit comes into the heart of the trembling, tempted one. "I will trust and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song."

Ah! do you know anything of this Comforter, of this strength, of this song? Tell me what do you rest on for holiness. Do you rest on your good thoughts of yourself? Ah! this is like Hazael: "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?" and yet he was the very dog he so much disclaimed. "A haughty spirit

goeth before a fall." Do you rest on your promises to man, or your vows to God? Ah! this is like Peter: "Though all men forsake thee, yet will not I;" and yet his promise was like a breath of wind. No, nothing short of Jehovah can be the strength of thy soul—nothing short of the Lord Jehovah. Creatures cannot hold up creatures. The hand that guides the stars alone can hold thy feet from falling. Is he your strength? Then he is able to keep you from falling. Though the world had ten thousand times more temptation than it has; though your heart were ten thousand times more full of lusts; though Satan and his angels had ten million times their power; they cannot cast down the soul that leans upon Jehovah. Wait on the Lord, be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart. The same hand that holds the sun in his journey holds up the soul of his people. Sing, then, weak, trembling, tempted disciple—sing aloud: "I will trust, and not be afraid."

III. *Joy in ordinances:* "Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation."—Verse 3 How changed are all the wells of salvation to a poor sinner come to Christ!

1. *The Bible.* Once it was a dull, wearisome book; you looked to the end of the chapter when you began it, to see when it would be done. But have you come to Christ?—now the well is a well of salvation—a well of living water.

2. *Prayer.* Once it was wholly neglected by you, or a cold form, which you hurried over; now it is a sweet well of delight. Ah! there is no better test of the soul than delight in secret prayer, unobserved and unknown by man.

3. *The house of prayer.* Once you despised it, or came for show—to show your best clothes, or to see your companions; now you can say: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord."

4. *The Lord's Supper.* Once you sat there, another Judas, with stony heart and dry eyes; now you find it a well of salvation indeed. It is a pledge that Christ is yours. When you see the elements, your heart begins to burn; when you touch them, your bands are loosed; when you taste them, your eyes are enlightened; when you eat them, your whole soul is strengthened. As surely as that bread and wine are yours, you feel that Christ is yours. Oh! come, then, with simple faith, sinners that have come to Christ, and then you will draw water with joy out of this well of salvation. But, ah! have you no saving change in your heart; no faith in Christ; no union to him; no Comforter? Ah! then it will be a sad day to you. You will sit down at the table with the wrath of God abiding on you; the well of salvation will be a poisoned well to you; the bread of life be the bread of death to you; the cup of blessing be the cup of cursing.

SERMON LVIII.

LOOK TO A PIERCED CHRIST.

"And 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, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born . . . . . In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness."—Zech. xii., 10; xiii., 1.

In these words you have a description of the conversion of the Jews, which is yet to come; an event that will give life to this dead world. But God's method is the same in the conversion of any soul. Conversion is the most glorious work of God. The creation of the sun is a very glorious work; when God first rolled him flaming along the sky, scattering out golden blessings on every shore. The change in spring is very wonderful; when God makes the faded grass revive, the dead trees put out green leaves, and the flowers appear on the earth. But far more glorious and wonderful is the conversion of a soul! It is the creation of a sun that is to shine for eternity; it is the spring of the soul that shall know no winter; the planting of a tree that shall bloom with eternal beauty in the paradise of God.

I. *The source of conversion.* The hand of Christ; "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." The Holy Spirit comes from the very hand that was pierced by the nail to the accursed tree. Indeed, the innermost source of the Spirit seems to be the heart of the Father. Jesus calls him "the Spirit of Truth which proceedeth from the Father;" and in 1 Cor. ii., 11, he is said to be in the heart of God, as the spirit of a man is in the heart of man. He is the friend that dwelt from eternity in the bosom of the Father and of the Son. But still it is as true that the Father has given the Spirit to Christ: "It hath pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." Jesus has obtained the gift of the Holy Spirit as a reward of his work. It is fitting that he that died for sinners should have the Spirit to dispense to whom he will; and so one of his last words to his disciples was: "I will send him unto you; and when he is come he will convince the world of sin."

1. *This teaches awakened souls where their convictions come from.* Do any of you feel that you have been awakened to concern about your souls? you have been pierced through with an

arrow of conviction. Look at the arrow; it came out of the bow of Christ. It was Christ that took it out of his quiver. Christ aimed it at your heart; Christ made it pierce your heart. The feather is marked with the blood of the pierced hand. That arrow came from the hand of love; from the hand that was nailed to the cross. Ah! then, take it as a proof that Christ wants to save you. He is beginning to deal with you. Ah! do not turn away: do not tear out the arrow; do not heal the wound slightly. Go to himself, and the same hand that pierced you will heal. Lord, if I may not have peace from thee, grant I may get it from nothing else.

2 *When you see others sorely wounded, you should acknowledge the hand of Christ.* I find that some acknowledge the hand of the minister, but not the hand of Christ. This is a sore dishonor to our glorious Immanuel! It was said of the Erskines, the fathers of the Secession, that God took away great part of the blessing from their labors, because the people could not see Christ over their heads. I find much of this amongst yourselves. The Lord teach you to look above the heads of ministers, to our glorious Redeemer, riding on his white horse; sending out his arrows of conviction!

3. *Pray to Christ to do this.* If he pours out the Spirit, then who can hinder? I have no doubt many of you have come up to day, who would have stayed away if you thought Christ would this day convert your soul. I fear there are some among you who have shut your eyes, and stopped your ears, and made your heart gross, lest ye should be converted, and Christ should heal you. You would not like to be made a weeping, praying, lowly believer in Jesus. But, oh! if Christ pours out the Spirit to-day, then even you will be melted; even you will be made to weep and to cry: "What must I do to be saved?"

In a time when Christ is not pouring the Spirit down, ministers speak and strive, but in vain; it is like speaking to the winds, or the wild waves of the sea. But when Christ rises from his throne and pours the Spirit down, then the weakest means are infinitely mighty. The Word does not come in word only. The jaw-bone of an ass was a very weak sword to kill men with; and yet in the hand of Samson it was mighty. He slew a thousand men with it. A sling and a stone was a very weak weapon to oppose an armed giant; and yet when David slung the stone, it sank into the forehead of the giant, and he fell upon his face to the earth. Oh! pray, dear believers, that the sling and the stone may this day be in the hand of our glorious David; that the Word may sink into the hard hearts of this people; that even giants in sin may be brought down to the very dust. Ah! I fear that many of you are armed to the teeth against the Word of God; you are armed *cap-a-pie*—armed to all points. You are mocking, perhaps, in your security; yet, look up, dear friends, to the arm of Immanuel;

he can bring down the proudest. Pray that he would pour down the Spirit. I believe that the lowly prayers of a single believer may obtain a deep and pure work of God in a town. If there were men among us like Noah, Job, and Daniel, we might expect showers of blessings.

II. *The Spirit who converts.*

1. *The Spirit of Grace.*—He is so called, because his coming to any soul, and all that he does in the soul, is of free grace. When the Spirit of God first visits a soul, he finds nothing to invite him to come or to stay; he finds the soul like the dry bones in the open valley—without any form or comeliness—without any desire for life. Every natural man has no more comeliness than a dry skeleton—no more desire for grace than a dead carcass. Nay, more, there is everything to drive the Spirit away. He is a holy Spirit; but he finds the heart a sink of corruptions, full of the most loathsome lusts and passions. He is a loving Spirit; but he finds the man's heart full of rebellion and horrid enmity against God. He is a jealous Spirit; but he finds the man's heart a chamber of imagery, full of abominable idols. Oh! I can imagine the Holy Spirit looking into some of your hearts, and saying: "Why should I come to such a soul? He does not want me to convert him. He wants to be let alone. He had rather serve his lusts: why should I disturb him? I will let him alone." Stay, stay, blessed Spirit of grace! Come, out of free grace. Come, not because he wants thee, but because thou art gracious. Come, and make even these dry bones to rise and call upon the name of Jesus.

Some of you know it was thus he came to you. He found you a rebel, and he has made you an obedient child. Oh, will you ever despair of any, since he turned your heart! There are some among you, dear friends, of whom man would despair—men and women who have lived long in sin—old formalists, to whom betraying the Lord at his table is an old trade. Oh, let us not despair of such! The Spirit is the Spirit of free grace. Invite him to come, poor dead soul.

2. *Of supplications.*—Because he teaches to pray. A natural man can hardly be said to pray. True, he has often a form—often a cry in the time of distress; but "will he always call upon God?" An anxious soul cannot pray with a form; for he says, None was ever like me. But a man prays in reality when the Spirit comes to his soul. He drove an ungodly Manasseh to his knees. Manasseh had often bowed the knee in youth at his godly father's knee; he had often prayed to his bloody idols; he had often prayed to the devil; but now, when the Spirit came, he began to pray indeed. He drove a blaspheming Paul to his knees. Often Paul had prayed at the feet of Gamaliel. In the synagogue, and at the corners of streets, he had made long pray-

ers, for pretence; but now, awakened by the Spirit of God, "*behold, he prayeth.*"

Have you been taught to pray by the Spirit of God? You once had a form, or you prayed for a pretence, or you prayed to idols; but have you been driven to pray by the Holy Spirit? Then, you may be sure he has begun a work in your heart. If any of you have not been driven to pray in secret, you may be quite sure that you are in the "gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity." A prayerless soul is an unawakened soul—very near to the burning. Some pieces of wood will burn much more easily than others; some pieces are green, and do not readily catch the blaze, but a dry piece of wood is easily kindled. Prayerless souls are dry pieces of wood—they are ready for the burning.

III. *Where the soul looks in conversion:*—"They shall look upon me whom they have pierced." When the Spirit of God is really working in the heart, he makes the man look to a pierced Christ. Wherever he goes, this is the prominent object in his eye—Christ whom he has pierced. Satan would make a man look anywhere rather than to Christ. There is such a thing as false conversion. Satan sometimes stirs people up to care about their souls. He makes them look to ministers, or books, or meetings, or duties—to feelings, enlargement in prayer, &c.; he will let them look to anything in the universe except to one object—"the cross of Christ." The only thing he hides is the Gospel—the glorious Gospel of Christ. When it is the Spirit of God, he will not let the soul look to anything else but to Christ—a pierced Christ.

What does an awakened soul see there?

1. *That he has pierced the Son of God by his sins.*—This gives him an awful sense of the infinite greatness of sin. A natural man thinks nothing of sin. An oath or a lie is as light as a feather on many of your consciences. You feel it no burden, even if there were a million of them lying upon your soul. You can sleep easily under all your sins. But if your eyes were opened to look at a pierced Christ, you would see that the load is infinite. Ah! see there—God did not spare Christ. Though he had no sin of his own—nothing but imputed sin—yet see what infinite wrath was poured upon him!—see what arrows pierced his holy soul! The nails pierced his spotless hands and feet; but all the arrows of God were drinking up his spirit. Will God spare you, then, if you die under your own sins, when these sins are your own act and deed?

Think again: Christ was God. That pale sufferer is the "mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace;" yet see how he sinks under the load; see, in Gethsemane, how he lies trembling, sweating great drops of blood; see him on Calvary, how his bones are out of joint—how his head is bowed in dying agony. You

are but a worm. Can you bear that wrath? "Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong in the day that I shall deal with thee?" Oh! look to Christ, sinners—look to a pierced Christ, and mourn. Nothing will break your heart but a sight of Christ pierced by your sins.

2. *That he has pierced the Son of God by unbelief.*—When the Spirit reveals Christ to the soul, this is generally the bitterest pang. An unawakened man thinks nothing of unbelief—he does not care that he has rejected Christ times without number. Ministers have preached till their breath is spent, beseeching him to turn and live; Christ hath stood all the day long with his hands stretched out; God hath waited upon that man, has delayed casting him into hell; still he is an unmelted rebel. Ah! when the Spirit awakes that man, what a sight he sees in a pierced Christ! Some of you are saying this day: I have despised that glorious One. He would often have gathered me, and I would not. God has been waiting on me for years. Jesus hath been knocking at my door, and I would never let him in; and now I fear he is gone for ever. Yea, some of you may feel that your heart is unwilling to take him, it is so hard and dead. All the more lovely he appears, the more your heart is pierced, because you have rejected him. Ah, there is no grief like that of looking to a pierced Christ!

(1.) *It is a bitter grief.*—Did you ever see parents mourning the loss of their only son, or of their first-born? It is an unspeakable sorrow. Such is the anguish of those who look to a pierced Christ. Indeed, some have deeper agony than others; but all who truly look to Christ are in bitterness.

(2.) *It is a lonely grief.*—Indeed it will not be restrained anywhere; and they are wrong who condemn rashly intense anxiety breaking forth even in public; but this grief seeks the shade—the stricken soul seeks to be alone with God, or with a few like-minded. David Brainerd mentions, that on one occasion, when he was preaching a pierced Christ to his Indians, the power of God came down among them like a mighty rushing wind: "Their concern was so great, each for himself, that none seemed to take any notice of those about him. They were, to their own apprehension, as much retired as if they had been alone in the thickest desert. Every one was praying apart, and yet altogether."

Oh! dear friends, if you would really look to a pierced Christ, you would be in anguish of soul to obtain an interest in him. Oh! see how you have slighted him in the days gone by. In youth—at the Sabbath school, as little children, how you have refused him! When you first came to the Lord's table, he stood a pierced Saviour before your eyes; yet you neglected him, and trampled him below your feet. And are you coming this day to pierce him over again—to drive the nails again into his hands—the spear into his side—the thorns into his brow? Oh, stop, sinner! you are piercing one who loves you, killing the Prince of

Life, neglecting the only Saviour. If you reject him to-day, you may never see him again till you see him in the clouds of heaven, and wail because of him.

Dear believers, remember how you pierced him; let bitter herbs sweeten your passover—let a bitter remembrance of past sin make Christ the more precious.

IV. *A fountain is seen in a pierced Christ.*

The first look to Christ makes the sinner mourn; the second look to Christ makes the sinner rejoice. When the soul looks first to Christ, he sees half of the truth, he sees the wrath of God against sin, that God is holy, and must avenge sin, that he can by no means clear the guilty, he sees that God's wrath is infinite. When he looks to Christ again, he sees the other half of the truth, the love of God to the lost, that God has provided a surety free to all. It is this that fills the soul with joy. Oh, it is strange, that the same object should break the heart and heal it! A look to Christ wounds, a look to Christ heals. Many, I fear, have only a half look at Christ, and this causes only grief. Many are slow of heart to believe all that is spoken concerning Jesus. They believe all except that he is free to them. They do not see this glorious truth, "That a crucified Jesus is free to every sinner in the world"—that Christ's all is free to all.

When the Spirit is teaching, he gives a full look at Christ, a look to him alone for righteousness. What does the sinner see? The wounds of Christ, a fountain for sin and for uncleanness. Oh, trembling sinners, come and get this look at Christ! come and see a fountain for sin and for uncleanness, opened on Calvary eighteen hundred years ago. "I cannot, for my sins are very great." Are you all sin and uncleanness, nothing but sin, a lump of sin? in your life, in your heart, are you one bundle of lusts? Here is a fountain opened for you; look to a pierced Christ, and weep; look to a pierced Christ, and be glad. "I cannot wash." To look is to wash. No sooner is the eye turned than the filthy garments fall.

The fountain is opened up in this house of God to-day. At the very entrance to the tables, Jesus stands and says, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Are you willing? do you look to him alone for righteousness? Then, come thus washed to the Lord's table, in the very garment you shall wear in glory. Sit with your eye upon the fountain. Oh, prize it highly! What do you not owe to him who saves you from being cast away!

Some would go past the fountain to the table. Take heed, ungodly man! Will you dare to sit there with unpardoned sin upon you? will you venture to touch the bread, and your soul unwashed? Ah, you will bitterly rue it one day! Some, I trust,

will remember this day in glory; some, I fear, will remember this day in hell.

St Peter's, April 19, 1840.—(Action Sermon.)

SERMON LIX.

I SLEEP, BUT MY HEART WAKETH.

"I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night," &c.—Song v., 2, to the end.

THE passage I have read forms one of the dramatical songs of which this wonderful book is composed. The subject of it is a conversation between a forsaken and desolate wife and the daughters of Jerusalem. First of all, she relates to them how, through slothfulness, she had turned away her lord from the door. He had been absent on a journey from home, and did not return till night. Instead of anxiously sitting up for her husband, she had barred the door, and slothfully retired to rest: "I slept, but my heart was waking." In this half-sleeping, half-waking frame, she heard the voice of her beloved husband: "Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled; for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night." But sloth prevailed with her, and she would not open, but answered him with foolish excuses: "I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?"

2. She next tells them her grief and anxiety to find her lord. He tried the bolt of the door, but it was fastened. This wakened her thoroughly. She ran to the door and opened, but her beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone. She listened, she sought about the door; she called, but he gave no answer. She followed him through the streets; but the watchmen found her, and smote her, and took away her veil; and now with the morning light she appears to the daughters of Jerusalem, and anxiously beseeches them to help her: "I charge you, if ye find him whom my soul loveth, that ye tell him that I am sick of love."

3. The daughters of Jerusalem, astonished at her extreme anxiety, ask: "What is thy beloved more than another beloved?" This gives opportunity to the desolate bride to enlarge on the perfections of her lord, which she does in a strain of the richest descriptiveness, the heart filling fuller and fuller as she proceeds, till she says: "This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O ye daughters of Jerusalem!" They seem to be entranced by the description, and are now as anxious as herself to join in the search

after this altogether lovely one. "Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? whither is thy beloved turned aside, that we may seek him with thee?"

Such is the simple narrative before us. But you will see at once that there is a deeper meaning beneath; that the narrative is only a beautiful transparent veil, through which every intelligent child of God may trace some of the most common experiences in the life of the believer. (1.) The desolate bride is the believing soul. (2.) The daughters of Jerusalem are fellow-believers. (3.) The watchmen are ministers. (4.) And the altogether lovely one is our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

I. *Believers often miss opportunities of communion with Christ through slothfulness.*

1. *Observe, Christ is seeking believers.*—It is true that Christ is seeking unconverted souls. He stretches out his hands all the day to a gainsaying and disobedient people; he is the Shepherd that seeks the lost sheep; but it is as true that he is seeking his own people also, that he may make his abode with them, that their joy may be full. Christ is not done with a soul when he has brought it to the forgiveness of sins. It is only then that he begins his regular visits to the soul. In the daily reading of the Word, Christ pays daily visits to sanctify the believing soul. In daily prayer, Christ reveals himself to his own in that other way than he doth to the world. In the house of God Christ comes in to his own, and says: "Peace be unto you!" And in the sacrament he makes himself known to them in the breaking of bread, and they cry out: "It is the Lord!" These are all trysting times, when the Saviour comes to visit his own.

2. *Observe, Christ also knocks at the door of believers.*—Even believers have got doors upon their hearts. You would think, perhaps, that when once Christ had found an entrance into a poor sinner's heart, he never would find difficulty in getting in any more. You would think that as Samson carried off the gates of Gaza, bar and all, so Christ would carry away all the gates and bars from believing hearts; but no, there is still a door on the heart, and Christ stands and knocks. He would fain be in. It is not his pleasure that we should sit lonely and desolate. He would fain come in to us, and sup with us, and we with him.

3. *Observe, Christ speaks:* "Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled." O what a meeting of tender words is here! all applied to a poor sinner who has believed in Christ. (1.) "My sister;" for you remember how Jesus stretched his hand towards his disciples, and said: "Behold my mother and my brethren;" for whosoever shall do the will of my Father, the same is my brother, and my sister, and my mother." (2.) "My love," for you know how he loved sinners, left heaven out of love, lived, died, rose again, out of love, for poor sinners; and when one

believes on him, he calls him "my love. (3.) "My dove;" for you know that when a sinner believes in Jesus, the holy dove-like Spirit is given him; so Jesus calls that soul "My dove." (4.) "My undefiled;" strangest name of all to give to a poor defiled sinner. But you remember how Jesus was holy, harmless, and undefiled. He was that in our stead; when a poor sinner believes in him, he is looked on as undefiled. Christ says: "My undefiled." Such are the winning words with which Christ desires to gain an entrance into the believer's heart. Oh, how strange that any heart could stand out against all this love!

4. *Observe, Christ waits:* "My head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night." Christ's patience with unconverted souls is very wonderful. Day after day he pleads with them: "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?" Never did beggar stand longer at a rich man's gate, than Jesus, the almighty Saviour, stands at the gate of sinful worms. But his patience with his own is still more wonderful; they know his preciousness, and yet will not let him in; their sin is all the greater, and yet he waits to be gracious.

5. *Believers are often slothful at these trysting times, and put the Saviour away with many vain excuses.* (1.) The hour of daily devotion is a trysting hour with Christ, in which he seeks, and knocks, and speaks, and waits; and yet, dear believers, how often you are slothful and make vain excuses! You have something else to attend to, or you are set upon some worldly comfort, and you do not let the Saviour in. (2.) The Lord's table is the most famous trysting-place with Christ. It is then that believers hear him knocking, saying: "Open to me." How often is this opportunity lost through slothfulness, through want of stirring up the gift that is in us; through want of attention; through thoughts about worldly things; through unwillingness to take trouble about it!

> "I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on?
> I have washed my feet; how shall I defile them?"

Doubtless, there are some children of God here, who did not find Christ last Sabbath-day at this table; who went away unrefreshed and uncomforted. See here the cause: it was your own slothfulness. Christ was knocking; but you would not let him in. Do not go about to blame God for it. Search your own heart, and you will find the true cause. Perhaps you came without deliberation, without self-examination and prayer, without duly stirring up faith. Perhaps you were thinking about your worldly gains and losses, and you missed the Saviour. Remember, then, the fault is yours, not Christ's. He was knocking; you would not let him in.

II. *Believers in darkness cannot rest without Christ.*

In the parable we find that, when the bride found her husband was gone, she did not return to her rest. Oh, no! her soul failed for his word. She listens, she seeks, she calls. She receives no answer. She asks the watchmen, but they wound her, and take away her veil; still she is not broken off from seeking. She sets the daughters of Jerusalem to seek along with her.

So is it with the believer. When the slothful believer is really awakened to feel that Christ has withdrawn himself, and is gone, he is slothful no longer. Believers remain at ease only so long as they flatter themselves that all is well; but if they are made sensible, by a fall into sin, or by a fresh discovery, of the wickedness of their heart, that Christ is away from them, they cannot rest. The world can rest quite well, even while they know that they are not in Christ. Satan lulls them into fatal repose. Not so the believer; he cannot rest. 1. He does all he can do himself. He listens, he seeks, he calls. The Bible is searched with fresh anxiety. The soul seeks and calls by prayer; yet often all in vain. He gets no answer, no sense of Christ's presence. 2. He comes to ministers—God's watchmen on the walls of Zion. They deal plainly and faithfully with the backslidden soul—take away the veil, and show him his sin. The soul is thus smitten and wounded, and without a covering; and yet it does not give over its search for Christ. A mere natural heart would fall away under this; not so the believer in darkness. 3. He applies to Christian friends and companions; bids them help him, and pray for him; "I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find him whom my soul loveth, tell him that I am sick of love."

Is there any of you, then, a believer in darkness, thus anxiously seeking Christ? You thought that you had really been a believer in Jesus; but you have fallen into sin and darkness, and all your evidences are overclouded. You are now anxiously seeking Christ. Your soul fails for his Word. You seek, you call, even though you get no answer. You do search the Bible, even though it is without comfort to you. You do pray, though you have no comfort in prayer, no confidence that you are heard. You ask counsel of his ministers, and when they deal plainly with you, you are not offended. They wound you, and take away the veil from you. They tell you not to rely on any past experiences, that they may have been delusive, they only increase your anxiety; still you follow hard after Christ. You seek the daughters of Jerusalem, them that are the people of Christ, and you tell them to pray for you.

Is this your case? As face answers to face, so do you see your own image here? Do you feel that you cannot rest out of Christ? then do not be too much cast down. This is no mark that you are not a believer, but the very reverse. Say:

> "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?
> Why art thou disquieted in me?

Still trust in God: for I shall yet praise him,
Who is the health of my countenance, and my God."

Is there any of you awakened since last Sabbath-day, by some fall into sin, to feel that Christ is away from you? Doubtless, there must be some who, within this little week, have found out that, though they ate bread with Christ, they have lifted up the heel against him. And are you sitting down contented—without anxiety? Have you fallen, and do you not get up and run, that if possible, you may find Christ again? Ah, then! I stand in doubt of you; or rather, there is no need of doubt; you never have known the Saviour—you are none of his.

III. *Believers in darkness are sick of love, and full of the commendation of Christ—more than ever.*

In the parable, the bride told the daughters of Jerusalem that she was sick of love. This was the message she bade them carry; and when they asked her about her beloved, she gave them a rich and glowing description of his perfect beauty, ending by saying: "He is altogether lovely."

So is it with the believer in time of darkness: "He is sick of love." When Christ is present to the soul, there is no feeling of sickness. Christ is the health of the countenance. When I have him full in my faith as a complete surety, a calm tranquillity is spread over the whole inner man; the pulse of the soul has a calm and easy flow; the heart rests in a present Saviour with a healthy, placid affection. The soul is contented with him; at rest in him: "Return unto thy rest, O my soul." There is no feeling of sickness. It is health to the bones; it is the very health of the soul to look upon him, and to love him. But when the object of affection is away, the heart turns sick. When the heart searches here and there, and cannot find the beloved object, it turns faint with longing: "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick." When the ring-dove has lost its mate, it sits lone and cheerless, and will not be comforted. When the bird that hath been robbed of its young, comes back again and again, and hovers with reluctant wing over the spot where her nest was built, she fills the grove with her plaintive melodies—she is "sick of love." These are the yearnings of nature. Such also are the yearnings of grace. When Jesus is away from the believing soul it will not be comforted. When the soul reads, and prays, and seeks, yet Jesus is not found, the heart yearns and sickens—he is "sick of love." "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick."

Did you ever feel this sickness? Did you ever feel that Christ was precious, but not present; that you could not lay hold on Christ as you used to do, and yet your soul yearned after him, and would not be comforted without him? If you have—1. Remember it is a happy sickness; it is a sickness not of nature at all, but of grace. All the struggles of nature would never make you "sick

of love." Never may you be cured of it, except it be in the revealing of Jesus! 2. Remember it is not best to be "sick of love;" it is better to be in health, to have Christ revealed to the soul, and to love him with a free, healthy love. In heaven, the inhabitants never say they are sick. Do not rest in this sickness; press near to Jesus to be healed. 3. Most, I fear, never felt this sickness; know nothing of what it means. Oh! dear souls, remember this one thing: If you never felt the sickness of grace, it is too likely you never felt the life of grace. If you were told of a man, that he never felt any pain or uneasiness of any kind all his days, you would conclude that he must have been dead—that he never had any life; so you, if you know nothing of the sick yearnings of the believer's heart, it is too plain that you are dead; that you never have had any life.

Last of all, the believer in darkness commends the Saviour. There is no more distinguishing mark of a true believer than this. To the unawakened there is no form nor comeliness in Christ; no beauty that they should desire him. Even awakened souls have no true sense of Christ's perfect comeliness. If they saw how Christ answers their need, they could not be anxious. But to believers in darkness there is all comeliness in Christ; he is fairer than ever he was before. And when the sneering world, or cold-hearted brethren, ask: "What is thy beloved more than another beloved?" he delights to enumerate his perfections, his person, his offices, his everything; he delights to tell that "he is the chiefest among ten thousand"—"his mouth is most sweet"—yea, "he is altogether lovely."

A word to believers in darkness.—There may be some who are walking in darkness, not having any light. Be persuaded to do as the bride did; not only to seek your beloved, but to commend him, by going over his perfections.

1. Because this is the best of all ways to find him. One of the chief reasons of your darkness is your want of considering Christ. Satan urges you to think of a hundred things before he will let you think about Christ. If the eye of your faith be fully turned upon a full Christ, your darkness will be gone in the instant. "Look unto me, and be ye saved." Now, nothing so much engages your eye to look at Christ as going over his perfections to others.

2. Because you will lead others to seek him with you. Oh! dear brethren, the great reason of our having so many dark Christians nowadays, is, that we have so many selfish Christians. Men live for themselves. If you would live for others, then your darkness would soon flee away. Commend Christ to others, and they will go with you. Parents, commend him to your children; children, commend him to your parents, and who knows but God may

bless the word, even of a believer walking in darkness, that they shall cry out:

"Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou fairest among women?
Whither is thy beloved turned aside, that we may seek him with thee?"

St. Peter's, 1837.

SERMON LX.

A THORN IN THE FLESH.

"And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."—2 Cor. xii., 7–10.

What is contained in this passage? I. *Paul's wonderful privilege;* caught up into the third heaven, and into paradise; got a day's foretaste of glory; saw and heard wonderful things. II. *Paul's humbling visitation;* a thorn in the flesh. He had been in the world of spirits, where is no sin; now he was made to feel that he had a body of sin—to cry, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" He had been among the inhabitants of heaven; now one from hell is allowed to buffet him. III. *His conduct under it;* fervent repeated prayer. "I besought (marking his earnestness) thrice;" no answer; still he prayed. Before, he was more engaged in praise, or thinking of telling others; now he is brought to cry for his own soul, lest he should be a 'castaway. *The answer:* "My grace is sufficient for thee." God does not pluck the thorn away; does not drive the devil back to hell; does not take him out of the body. No; but he opens his own breast, and says, Look here; here is grace enough for thee; here is strength that will hold up the weakest. IV. *Paul's resolution;* to go on his way glorifying in his infirmities. He is contented to have infirmities, to have a body of sin, in order that Christ may be glorified in holding up such a weak vessel: That the power of Christ may rest continually on my soul; that his mighty hand may have one to hold up to his own praise. I take pleasure in all humbling dispensations; for they teach me that I have no strength, and then I am strongest.

I. *Paul's wonderful privilege.*

He had gained a glorious foretaste of heaven given to him. It was a wonderful season to his soul. He was caught up to the third heaven, or to paradise. He was taken up to the Father's house with many mansions. He was taken up to be with Jesus and the saved thief in paradise. Much he could not tell. How it was, whether he was in the body or out of the body, he could not tell. The words he heard, the words of the Father, the words of Jesus, the songs of the redeemed, and of the holy angels, they were unspeakable. Still, he could never forget that day. Fourteen years had gone over his head, and yet it was fresh in his remembrance. The sights he saw, the words he heard, he never could forget. It was just a day of glory, a foretaste of heaven.

Dear believers, you also have wonderful privileges. You also have your foretastes of heaven. You may not have the miraculous visions of paradise which Paul here speaks of; yet you have tasted the very joy that is in heaven; drunk of the very river of God's pleasures. If you have known the Lord Jesus, you know him who is the pearl of heaven, the sun and centre of it. If you have the Father's smile, you have the very joy of heaven. Above all, if you have the Holy Spirit dwelling in you, you have the earnest of the inheritance. On such days as last communion Sabbath, are not the joys of a Christian unspeakable and full of glory? "Whom having not seen we love." Are not such days to be looked back upon? Even fourteen years after, when many will be gone to the table above, some will look back to last Sabbath as a day spent in his courts, better than a thousand. To those of you who get no joy on such occasions, what can we say, but that you would get no joy in heaven! If you are not made glad at the table below, you will never, I fear, be made glad at the table above.

II. *Paul's humbling visitation.*—Verse 7.

1. What was given him.

The thorn in the flesh here spoken of is variously understood by interpreters. (1.) Some understand it to have been a bodily disease; some sharp-shooting pains which were given him. Pain and disease are very humbling. They are often used by God to bring down the lofty spirit of man. (2.) Some understand by it some remarkable temptation to sin immediately from the hand of the devil. A messenger from Satan which was like a thorn in his soul. (3.) Some understand it to have been some besetting sin, some part of his body of sin of which he complains so sore (Rom. vii.)—some lust of his old man stirred up to activity by a messenger of Satan. It seems most probable that this was the thorn that made him groan.

Whatever it was, one thing is plain, it was a truly humbling visit. It brought Paul to the dust. A little before, he had been in the sinless world, he felt no body of sin, saw the pure spirits before the throne, and the spirits of just men made perfect; now,

he is brought down to feel that he has a body of sin and death, he has a thorn in the flesh. A little before, he was among holy angels, trampling hell and the grave below his feet; now, a messenger from hell is sent to buffet him. "O wretched man!"

Ques. *Why was this given him?* Ans. Lest he should be exalted above measure. This is twice stated. What a singular thing is pride! Who would have thought that taking Paul into paradise for a day would have made him proud? and yet God, who knew his heart, knew it would be so, and therefore brought him down to the dust. The pride of nature is wonderful. A natural man is proud of anything. Proud of his person, although he did not make it, yet he prides himself upon his looks. Proud of his dress, although a block of wood might have the same cause for pride, if you would put the clothes on it. Proud of riches, as if there were some merit in having more gold than others. Proud of rank, as if there were some merit in having noble blood. Alas! pride flows in the veins; yet, there is a pride more wonderful than that of nature—*pride of grace.* You would think a man never could be proud who had once seen himself lost; yet, alas! Scripture and experience show that a man may be proud of his measure of grace; proud of forgiveness: proud of humility; proud of knowing more of God than others It was this that was springing up in Paul's heart when God sent him the thorn in the flesh.

Dear friends, some of you last Lord's day were brought very near to God, and filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Some, I am persuaded, have since then had Paul's humbling experience. You thought that you were for ever away from sin, but a thorn in the flesh has brought you low. You have fallen into sin during the week; or something has brought you low indeed. "O wretched man!" Why do you thus fall after a communion season? 1. *To make you humble;* to teach you what a vile worm you are, when you can go to the Lord's table, and yet fall so low; this may well teach you that you are vile. You thought, perhaps, that sin was clean away, but here you see it is again. What constant need you have of Jesus' blood! 2. *To make you long for heaven.* There we shall sin no more for ever. Nothing but holiness there. No unclean thing can enter. Oh, press forward to it! Do not sit down by the way. Look forward to glory.

III. *Paul's remedy—prayer.*

Here is the difference between a natural man and a child of God. Both have the thorn in the flesh; but a natural man is contented with it. His lusts do not vex and trouble him. A child of God cannot rest under the power of temptation. He flies to his knees. The moment Paul felt the buffetings of Satan's messenger, he fell upon his knees, praying his Father to take it away from him. No answer came. Again he goes to the throne of grace. Again

no answer. A third time he falls on his knees, and will not let God go without the blessing. The answer comes: "My grace is sufficient for thee." Not the thing he asked. He asked: Take this thorn away. God does not pluck it out of his flesh, does not drive Satan's messenger back to hell. He could have done this, but he does not. He opens his own bosom, and says: *Look here.* It hath pleased the Father that in me should all fulness dwell; "My grace is sufficient for thee." Here is the Holy Spirit for every need of thy soul. Oh, what a supply did Paul then see in Christ! What unsearchable riches! He had seen much in the third heaven, but here was something more, an almighty Spirit waiting for the need of poor weak sinners.

Dear friends, have you found out this remedy of the tempted soul? 1. Have you been driven to your knees by temptation? I said, the week before the communion should be a week of prayer; but if you have had Paul's experience, the week after has been one of prayer also. 2. Oh, tempted soul! be importunate, take no denial. Men ought always to pray, and not to faint. Be like the importunate widow, the Canaanitish woman. If you lie down contented under sin, you may well fear that there is no grace in you. 3. Take Paul's answer. God may not pluck out the thorn. This is the world of thorns. But look into his breast. There is enough in Jesus to keep thy soul. The ocean is full of drops, but Christ's bosom is more full of grace. Oh! pray either that your lusts may be taken away, or that you may believe the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

IV. *Paul's determination.*—Verses 9. 10.

"Most gladly." When Paul was caught up into paradise he thought he would never again feel his body of sin; but when he was humbled and made to know himself better, and to know the grace that is in Christ, then his glory ever after was, that he had a weak body of sin and death, and that there was power enough in Christ to keep him from falling. From that day he gloried not that he had no sin in him, but that he had an almighty Saviour dwelling in him and upholding him. He took pleasure now in everything that made him feel his weakness; for this drove him to Jesus for strength.

Learn, dear brethren, the true glory of a Christian in this world. The world knows nothing of it. A true Christian has a body of sin. He has every lust and corruption that is in the heart of man or devil. He wants no tendency to sin. If the Lord has given you light, you know and feel this. What is the difference, then, between you and the world? Infinite! You are in the hand of Christ. His Spirit is within you. He is able to keep you from falling. "Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous; and shout for joy all ye that are upright in heart."

St. Peter's, April 26, 1840

SERMON LXI.

SECOND ADVENT.

"For the Son of Man is a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch."—Mark xiii., 34-37.

The Church on earth is Christ's house: "Who left his house." —Verse 34. This parable represents the Church on earth as Christ's house or dwelling.

1. *Because he is the foundation stone of it.* Just as every stone of a building rests on the foundation, so does every believer rest on Christ. He is the foundation rock upon which they rest. If it were not for the foundation, the whole house would fall into ruins—the floods and winds would sweep it away. If it were not for Christ, all believers would be swept away by God's anger; but they are rooted and built up in him, and so they form his house.

2. *Because he is the builder.* (1.) Every stone of the building has been placed there by the hands of Christ; Christ has taken every stone from the quarry. Look unto the rock whence ye were hewn, and the hole of the pit whence ye were digged. A natural person is embedded in the world just as firmly as rock in the quarry, the hands of the almighty Saviour alone can dig out the soul, and loosen it from its natural state. (2.) Christ has carried it, and laid it on the foundation. Even when a stone has been quarried, it cannot lift itself; it needs to be carried, and built upon the foundation. So when a natural soul has been wakened, he cannot build himself on Christ; he must be carried on the shoulder of the great master builder. Every stone of the building has been thus carried by Christ. What a wonderful building! Well may it be called Christ's house, when he builds every stone of it. See that ye be quarried out by Christ; see to it, that ye be carried by him, built on him; then you will be an habitation of God through the Spirit.

3. *Because his friends are here.* Wherever a man's friends are, that is his home; wherever a man's mother and sisters and brothers dwell, that is his home; this, then, must be Christ's home, for he stretched forth his hand towards his disciples, and said: "Behold my mother and my brethren; for whosoever shall do the will of my father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." As long as this world has a believer in it, Christ will look upon it as his house. He cannot forget, even in glory, the well of Samaria—the garden of Gethsemane—the hill

of Calvary. Happy for you who know Christ, and who do the will of his Father; wherever you dwell, Christ calls it his house. You may dwell in a poor place, and still be happy; for Christ dwells with you, and calls it his dwelling, he calls you "My brother, sister, mother."

II. *Christ is like a man who has gone a far journey.*—Verse 34. Although the Church on earth be his house, and although he has such affection for it, yet Christ is not here, he is risen—Christ is risen indeed.

1. *He has gone to take possession of heaven in our name.* When an elder brother of a family purchases a property for himself and his brothers, he goes a far journey, in order to take possession. So Christ is an elder brother. He lived and died in order to purchase forgiveness and acceptance for sinners. He has gone into heaven to take possession for us. Do you take Christ for your surety? Then you are already possessed of heaven.

Ques. How am I possessed of heaven, when I have never been there?

Ans. Christ your surety has taken possession in your name. If you will realize this, it will give you fulness of joy. A person may possess a property which he has never seen.

Look at your surety in the land that is very far off, calling it all his own, for the sake of his younger brethren: "These things have I spoken unto you, that your joy may be full."

2. *He has gone to intercede for us.* (1.) He has gone to intercede for unawakened, barren sinners: "Lord, let it alone this year also." Oh, sinner! why is it that you have not died a sudden death? Why have you not gone quite down into the pit? How often the Saviour has prayed for some of you! Shall it be all in vain? (2.) To intercede for his believing people, to procure all blessings for them. Often an elder brother of a family goes into a far country, and sends back rich presents to his younger brethren at home. This is what Christ has done; He has gone far above all heavens, there to appear in the presence of God for us, and to ask the very things we need, and to send us down all the treasures of heaven. Of his fulness have we all received, even grace for grace. "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter." Oh, Christians! believe in a praying Christ, if you would receive heavenly blessings. Believe just as if you saw him, and open the mouth wide to receive the blessings for which he is praying.

3. *He has gone to prepare a place for us.* When a family are going to emigrate to a foreign shore, often the elder brother goes before to prepare a place for his younger brethren. This is what Christ has done. He does not intend that we should live here always; he has gone a far journey in order to prepare a place for us: "I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a

place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." Oh, Christians! believe in Christ preparing a place for you. It will greatly take away the fear of dying. It is an awful thing to die, even for a forgiven and sanctified soul; to enter on a world unknown, unseen, untried. One thing takes away fear; Christ is preparing a place quite suitable for my soul; he knows all the wants and weaknesses of my frame: I know he will make it a pleasant home to me.

III. *All Christ's people are servants, and have their work assigned them.*—Verse 34.

1. *Ministers are servants, and have their work assigned them.* Two kinds are here mentioned. (1.) Stewards. These seem to be the servants to whom he gave authority. All ministers should be stewards; rightly dividing the Word of life: giving to every one of the family his portion of meat in due season. Oh! it is a blessed work, to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood; to give milk to babes, and strong meat to grown men; to give convenient food to every one. Pray for your ministers that they may be made stewards. There are few such. (2.) Porters. He commanded the porter to watch. It is the office of some ministers to stand at the door and invite every sinner, saying; "Enter ye in at the strait gate." Some ministers have not the gift of feeding the Church of God and watering it. Paul planted—Apollos watered. Some are only door-keepers in the house of my God. Learn not to despise any of the true servants of God. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? He has appointed some to stand at the door, and some to break the children's bread—despise neither.

2. *All Christians are servants, and have their work assigned them.* Some people think that ministers only have to work for Christ: but see here: "He gave to every man his work." In a great house, the steward and the porter are not the only servants; there are many more, and all have their work to do. Just so among the people of Christ. Ministers are not the only servants of Christ: all that believe on him are his servants.

(1.) Learn to be working Christians. "Be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own souls." It is very striking to see the uselessness of many Christians. Are there none of you who know what it is to be selfish in your Christianity? You have seen a selfish child go into a secret place to enjoy some delicious morsels undisturbed by his companions? So is it with some Christians. They feed upon Christ and forgiveness: but it is alone, and all for themselves. Are there not some of you who can enjoy being a Christian, while your dearest friend is not; and yet you will not speak to him? See, here you have got your work to do. When Christ found you, he said: "Go, work in my vineyard." What were you hired

for, if it was not to work? What were you saved for, if it was not to spread salvation? What blessed for? Oh, my Christian friends! how little you live as if you were servants of Christ!—how much idle time and idle talk you have! This is not like a good servant. How many things you have to do for yourself! how few for Christ and his people! This is not like a servant.

(2.) Learn to keep to your own work. In a great house every servant has his own peculiar work. One man is the porter to open the door; another is the steward to provide food for the family; a third has to clean the rooms; a fourth has to dress the food; a fifth has to wait upon the guests. Every one has his proper place, and no servant interferes with another. If all were to become porters, and open the door, then what would become of the stewardship? or, if all were to be stewards, who would clean the house? Just so is it with Christians. Every one has his peculiar work assigned him, and should not leave it. "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called." Obadiah had his work appointed him in the court of the wicked Ahab. God placed him as his servant there, saying: "Work here for me." Does any of you belong to a wicked family? Seek not to be removed—Christ has placed you there to be his servant—work for him. The Shunamite had her work. When the prophet asked: "Wilt thou be spoken for to the king?" she said: "I dwell among mine own people." Once a poor demoniac whom Jesus healed, besought Jesus that he might follow after him; howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him: "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and how he hath had compassion on thee." Learn, my dear friends, to keep to your own work. When the Lord has hung up a lamp in one corner, is there no presumption in removing it to another? Is not the Lord wiser than man? Every one of you has your work to do for Christ *where you are.* Are you on a sick bed? Still you have your work to do for Christ there as much as the highest servant of Christ in the world. The smallest twinkling star is as much a servant of God as the mid-day sun. Only live for Christ where you are.

IV. *Christ is coming back again, and we know not when:* "Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: lest, coming suddenly, he find you sleeping."—Verses 35, 36. Two things are here declared.

1. *That Christ is coming back again.* The whole Bible bears witness to this. The master of the house has been a long time away on his journey; but he will come back again. When Christ ascended from his disciples, and a cloud received him out of their sight, and they were looking steadfastly into heaven, the angels said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye

gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." He went up in a cloud, he shall come in the clouds.

2. *That Christ will come back suddenly.* The whole Bible bears witness to this. (1.) In one place it is compared to a snare which suddenly entraps the unwary wild beast: "As a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth." (2.) Again, to a thief: "The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." (3.) Again, to a bridegroom coming suddenly: "At midnight there was a cry made, Behold the bridegroom cometh." (4.) Again, to the waters of the flood. (5.) Again, to the fiery rain that fell on Sodom and Gomorrah. (6.) And here, to the sudden coming home of the master of the house: "Ye know not when the master of the house cometh." Now, my dear friends, I am far from discouraging those who, with humble prayerfulness, search into the records of prophecy to find out what God has said as to the second coming of the Son of Man. We are not like the first disciples of Jesus, if we do not often put the question: "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" But the truth which I wish to be written on your hearts is this, That the coming shall be sudden, sudden to the world, sudden to the children of God: "In such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh." "Ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at cock-crowing, or in the morning." Oh, my friends! your faith is incomplete, if you do not live in the daily faith of a coming Saviour.

V. *Watch:* "And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." —Verse 37.

1. *Ministers should watch.* This word is especially addressed to the porter: "Watch ye, therefore." Ah! how watchful we should be. Many things make us sleep. (1.) Want of faith. When a minister loses sight of Christ crucified, risen, coming again, then he cannot watch for souls. Pray that your ministers may have a watching eye always on Christ. (2.) Seeing so many careless souls. Ah! you little know how this staggers the ministers of Christ. A young believer comes with a glowing heart to tell of Christ, and pardon, and the new heart. He knows it is the truth of God, he states it simply, freely, with all his heart, he presses it on men, he hopes to see them melt like icicles before the sun; alas! they are as cold and dead as ever. They live on in their sins, they die in their sins. Ah! you little know how this makes him dull, and heavy, and heart-broken. My friends, pray that we may not sleep. Pray that your carelessness may only make us watch the more.

2. *Christians should watch.* Ah! if Christ is at hand, (1.)

Take heed lest you be found unforgiven. Many Christians seem to live without a realizing view of Christ. The eye should be fixed on Christ. Your eye is shut. Oh! if you would abide in Christ, then let him come to-night, at even, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or in the morning, he is welcome, thrice welcome! Even so, come Lord Jesus. (2.) Take heed lest you be found in any course of sin. Many Christians seem to walk, if I mistake not, in courses of sin. It is hard to account for it; but so it seems to be. Some Christians seem to be sleeping, in luxury, in covetousness, in evil company. Ah! think how would you like to be overtaken thus by the coming Saviour? Try your daily occupations, your daily state of feeling, your daily enjoyments, try them by this test: Am I doing as I would wish to do on the day of his coming?

3. Christless souls, how dreadful is your case? Death may be sudden—oh! how awfully sudden it sometimes is. You may have no time for repentance—no breath to pray! The coming of the Saviour shall be more sudden still. Ye know neither the day nor the hour. You know not God; you have not obeyed the Gospel. Oh! what will ye do in the day of the Lord's anger?

SERMON LXII.

LOT'S WIFE.

"But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt."—Gen. xix., 26.

THERE is not in the whole Bible a more instructive history than that of Lot and his family. His own history shows well how the righteous scarcely are saved. His sons-in-law show well the way that the Gospel is received by the easy, careless world. His wife is a type of those who are convinced, yet never converted—who flee from the wrath to come, yet perish after all; whilst the angels' laying hold on the lingering family, is a type of the gracious violence and sovereign mercy which God uses in delivering souls.

At present I mean to direct your thoughts to the case of Lot's wife, and to show the following

Doctrine.—Many souls who have been awakened to flee from wrath, look behind, and are lost.

I. *Many flee, under terrors of natural conscience; but when these subside, they look back, and are lost.*

So it was with Lot's wife. She was not like the men of Sodom,

intent upon the world and sin, quite unconcerned about their souls. She was not like her sons-in-law; she did not think her husband mocking; she was really alarmed, and really fled; and yet her terrors were like the morning cloud and the early dew, which quickly pass away. When the angels had brought them out of the gates of Sodom, they said: "Escape for thy life, look not behind thee; neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed." And as long as these dreadful words were ringing in her ears, doubtless she fled with anxious footstep. The dreadful scene of the past night; the darkness; the anxiety of her husband; the pressing urgency of the noble angels; all conspired to awaken her natural conscience, and to make her flee. But now the hellish roar of the wicked Sodomites had ceased; the sun was already gilding the horizon, promising a glorious dawn; the plain of Jordan began to smile, well watered everywhere as the garden of the Lord. Her sons-in-law, her friends, her house, her goods, her treasure, were still in Sodom; so her heart was there also. Her anxieties began to vanish with the darkness; she determined to take one look to see if it were really destroyed; she "looked back from behind him, and became a pillar of salt."

So is it with many among us. Many flee under terrors of natural conscience, but when these subside, they look back, and are lost.

Some people pass through the world without any terrors of conscience, without any awakening or anxiety about their souls. (1.) Some are like the men of Sodom, intent upon buying and selling, building and planting, marrying and giving in marriage. Or they are greedy upon their lusts, and they have no ears to hear the sounds of coming wrath. As a man working hard at the anvil hears no noise from without, because of the noise of his own hammer, so these men hear nothing of coming vengeance, they are so busy with the work of their hands. (2.) Some are like the sons-in-law of Lot. Yon shrewd, intelligent man of business thinks that ministers do but jest. We seem to them as one that mocks. They are so accustomed to see behind the scenes in other professions, that they think there must be deceit with us too. And when they can point to an insincere, ungodly minister, then their triumph is complete. These shrewd men think that ministers put serious words into their mouths, as other men put on suits of solemn black at funerals, just to look well, and to agree with the occasion. They think that ministers put frightful things into sermons just to frighten weak people, and to make the crowd wonder. Now these shrewd men are seldom, if ever, visited with terrors of conscience. They slip easily through the world into an undone eternity. (3.) Some, again, slumber all their days under a worldly ministry. When God, in judgment, takes away the pure preaching of the Word, and sends a famine of the bread and

water of life, their souls grow up quite hard and unawakened. They grow proud, and cannot bear to hear the preaching of Christ; they stop their ears and run; they hate, they detest it. These souls often pass through life without the least awakening and never know, till they are in hell, that they are lost souls. (4.) But many worldly people have a season of anxiety about their soul. A dangerous illness, or some awful bereavement, or some threatening cloud of Providence, stirs them up to flee from the wrath to come. They are quite in earnest: they lay by their sins, and avoid their sinful companions, and apply diligently to the Bible, and attempt to pray, and seem to be really fleeing out of Sodom; but they dure only for a while; their concern is like the morning cloud and the early dew—it quickly passes away. The sun of prosperity begins to rise; their fears begin to vanish; they look behind, and are lost.

Are there none here who can look back on such a course as this? You remember when some providence awakened you to deepest seriousness; some sickness, or the approach of the pestilence, or some fearful dealing of God with your family, or the approach of a sacrament, made you anxiously flee out of Sodom. O how different you were from the gay, laughing, unconcerned world! You did not think ministers were mocking then. You read your Bible, and went down on your knees to pray very earnestly. But the storm blew over; the sun began to rise, and everything around you began to smile. You began to think it hard to leave all your friends, your sins, your worldly enjoyments, and that perhaps the wrath of God would not come down. You looked back, and this day you are as hard and immovable as a pillar of salt. "Remember Lot's wife."

Learn two things:—

1. That an awakening by mere natural conscience is very different from an awakening by the Spirit of God. No man ever fled to Christ from mere natural terror. "No man can come to me," saith Christ, "except the Father which hath sent me draw him." Seek a divine work upon your heart.

2. Learn how far you are from the kingdom of God. You are quite lost. You are unmoved and unaffected by all we can say. You do not weep, you do not beat upon the breast, you do not flee, though we can prove to you that you are lying under the wrath of the great God that made you. Yet you do not stir one step to flee. Oh! how like you are to the pillar of salt; how likely it is that you will never be saved.

II. *Many flee when their friends are fleeing; but they look back and are lost.*

So it was with Lot's wife. Of all the things which helped to awaken that unfortunate woman, I doubt not the most powerful was the anxiety of her husband. If she had not been anxious, I

doubt not she would have been as stupid and unconcerned as her neighbors around her. But when she looked upon the anxious countenance of her beloved lord; when she saw how serious and earnest he was in pleading with their sons-in-law, then she could not but share in his anxiety. She had partaken of all his trials, of all his prosperities and of all his troubles, and she would not leave him now. She clave unto him, she laid hold on the skirt of his garment, determined to be saved, or to perish with her husband. So much for the amiable and interesting affections of nature; but nature is not grace; natural affection carried her out of Sodom, but it did not carry her into Zoar; for she looked behind him, and became a pillar of salt.

Now, there is reason to think that this is true of some in this congregation; that they flee when their friends are fleeing, but look back, and are lost.

Nothing is more powerful in awakening souls than the example of others awakened to flee. (1.) It was so in the case of Ruth, when she clave to Naomi, saying: "Where thou goest I will go." (2.) It was so in the case of the daughters of Jerusalem, when they saw the bride in anxious search of her beloved: "Whither is thy beloved gone, that we may seek him with thee?" (3.) It is foretold that it shall be so in the latter day, when "ten men shall hold on the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying; We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you." (4.) It was so in the time of John the Baptist, when many of the Pharisees and Sadducees came to be baptized, and John said: "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

There is something very moving in the sight of some beloved one going to join the peculiar people of God. When he begins to flee from his old haunts of pleasure, no longer to laugh at wicked jests, no longer to delight in sinful company, when he becomes a reader of the Bible, and prays with earnestness, and waits with anxiety on the preached Word, it is a very moving sight to all his friends. No doubt, some are made bitter against him; for Christ came to set the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; but some are awakened to flee along with him.

Are there none here who were moved to flee because some dear friend was fleeing? (1.) Is there no wife that was awakened to flee with her husband, but grew weary and looked back, and is now become like Lot's wife? (2.) Is there none here that was made truly anxious by seeing some companions anxious about their soul? They wept, and you could not but weep; they felt themselves lost; and you, for the time, felt along with them. They were very eager in their inquiries after a Saviour, and you joined them in their eagerness. And where is all your anxiety now? It is gone, like the morning cloud and the early dew. You looked behind, and are now unmoved as a pillar of salt.

It was quite right to flee with them, it was right to cleave to them; for if not, you would certainly be hardened; if you stand out such moving invitations, nothing else will persuade you. If it was right to flee, it is right to flee still. Why should you look back? They are going to be blessed, and will you not go with them? They are fleeing from wrath, and will you not flee with them? "Remember Lot's wife." Have you made up your mind to separate eternally? If not, why then have you let them go? Why have you given up the first good movement in your breast? Flee still, cleave to them, and say: "We will go with you."

III. *Some are laid hold of by God, and made to flee, who yet look back, and are lost.*

So it was with Lot's wife. Not only were natural means made use of to make her flee, but supernatural means also. Not only was she moved by sudden terror, and by the example of her husband, but she was drawn out by the angels: "And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the Lord being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city."—Verse 16. She shared in the same divine help as her husband, God was merciful to her as he was to her husband. The same mighty hand was put forth to save her, and actually plucked her as a brand out of the burning; but, observe, the same hand did not pull her into Zoar, nor lift her away to the cave of the mountain. Grace did something for her, but did not do everything. She looked back, and became a pillar of salt.

So is it, we fear, with some among us. Some seem to be laid hold of by God, and made to flee, who yet look back, and are lost. Now, there are a great many among us of whom we have no right to say or to think that they have ever been laid hold of by God.

1. There are many among us who seem to live in utter ignorance of their lost condition, who plead the innocence of their lives even when Death is laying his cold hand upon them. There are some poor souls who seem to die willing to be judged by the law. I have lived a decent life, they will say; I have been a harmless, quiet-living man; and I can see no reason why the wrath of the great God should ever come upon me. Oh! brethren, if this is your case, it is very plain that you have never had a divine awakening. The power of God alone could awaken you to flee.

2. There are many among us who live in the daily practice of sins, some who carry on small dishonesties, or occasionally use small minced oaths, who walk in the counsel of the ungodly. O brethren! if this be your case, it is quite plain that you have never had a divine awakening. When a man is made anxious about his soul, he always puts away his open sins.

3. There are many among us who live much in the neglect of the means of grace; some who very seldom read the Bible when

alone, or never but on Sabbath-days; some who do not pray regularly, nor with any earnestness; some who are very careless about the house of God, contented if they attend it only once on the Sabbath-day; who make no conscience of being up betimes, and ready for the house of God in the morning; who allow the silliest excuses to keep them away; who loiter about on the Sabbath-day; who devote it to most unhallowed visiting, or walking in the fields; making it the most unholy day in the week. Oh! dear souls, if this be your case, then it is quite plain you have never been laid hold on by God. You are as dead and unawakened as the stones you walk upon. You are living in the very heart of Sodom, and the wrath of God abideth on you.

But there are some among us of whom we think that they have been laid hold on by God, and made to flee. There are some who show evident marks that God has been making them flee out of Sodom. The marks are these:

1. They have a deep sense of their lost condition; they have an abiding conviction that the time past of their lives has been spent under the wrath of the great God that made them; their concern goes with them wherever they go; and anxiety is painted on their very countenance. Is this your condition? Then you have indeed been awakened by God.

2. They dare not go back to their open sins; they break off quite suddenly from their little dishonesties, their swearing, or evil-speaking; they separate from their wicked companions and filthy conversation; they feel that death is in the cup, and they dare not drink it any longer. Is this your case? Then there is reason to think you have been awakened by God.

3. They are anxious users of the means of grace. They search the Scriptures night and day; they pray with earnestness; they are unwearied in waiting on ordinances; suffer no trifle to keep them away from the house of God; they seek for the Saviour as for hid treasure; listen for his name, as the criminal for the sound of pardon. Is this your case? Then it seems likely that God has been merciful to your soul; that God has been making you flee out of Sodom, and escape for your life.

But the text shows me that many who have been thus awakened look back, and are lost. "Remember Lot's wife." She was brought quite out of Sodom, and yet she looked back, and became a pillar of salt. She was awakened, yet never saved. Now, there is reason to fear this may be the case with some amongst us. (1.) Some awakened souls begin to despair of ever finding Christ. They begin to blame God for not having brought them into peace before now; and so they give up striving to enter in at the strait gate—they look behind, and are lost. (2.) Some awakened souls begin to think themselves saved already. They have put away many outward sins, and prayed with much earnestness. Their friends observe the change, and they think they

are surely safe now, that there is no need of fleeing any further; so they look behind, and become a pillar of salt. (3.) Some awakened souls begin to tire of the pains of seeking Christ. They remember their former ease and pleasures, their companions, their walks, their merry-makings; so they look behind and perish.

Speak a word to awakened souls.—Some now hearing me may be at present under the awakening hand of God. You have deep convictions of your lost condition, you have put away outward sins, and wait earnestly on every means of grace; there is every reason to think that God has been merciful to you, and has laid hold upon you. "Remember Lot's wife."

Learn from her, (1.) That you are not saved yet. Lot's wife fled out of Sodom, led by the angels' hand, and yet she was lost. An awakened soul is not a saved soul. You are not saved till God shut you into Christ. It is not enough that you flee—you must flee into Christ. Oh! do not lie down and slumber. Oh! do not look behind you. "Remember Lot's wife." (2.) That God is no ways obliged to bring you into Christ. God has made but one covenant; that is, with Christ and all in him; but he has nowhere bound himself to men that are out of Christ. He may never bring you to Christ, and yet be a just and righteous God. Do not demand it of God, then, as if he were obliged to save you, but lie helpless at his feet as a sovereign God.

Speak a word to those who are beginning to look back.—There is reason to think that some who were once awakened by God have begun to look back. (1.) Some of you have begun to lose a sense of your wretched and lost condition. Some of you have quite another view of your state from what you had. (2.) Some of you have gone back to old sins, to old habits, especially of keeping company with the ungodly; and some, there is reason to think, are trying to laugh at their former fears. (3.) Some of you have turned more careless of the Bible, and of prayer, and of the ordinances. At last sacrament there were many very eager to hear of Christ; and where are they now? There is reason to fear that much of that concern is gone, that many have lost their anxiety, that some are looking back.

Now, "remember Lot's wife." (1.) It will not save you, that you were once anxious; nay, that you were made anxious by God. So was Lot's wife, and yet she was lost. (2.) If you really look back, it is probable you never will be awakened again. Consider that monument of vengeance on the Plain of Jordan; speak to her, she does not hear; cry, she does not regard you; urge her to flee again from wrath, she does not move; she is dead. So will it be with you. If you really turn back now, we may speak, but you will not hear; we may cry, but you will not regard; we may urge you again to flee, but you will not move. "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." "No man,

having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

St. Peter's, 1837.

SERMON LXIII.

HAPPY ART THOU, O ISRAEL!

"Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency? and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places."—Deut. xxxiii., 29.

These are the last words of Moses, the man of God. He was now an hundred and twenty years old; his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated. For forty years he had led the people through the wilderness; he had cared for them, and prayed for them, and led them as a shepherd leads his flock; and now, when God had told him that he must part from them, he determined to part from them blessing them. And in this respect, as in many others, did he foreshadow the Saviour, of whom it is written, that "he led his disciples out as far as Bethany, and he lifted up his hands and blessed them; and it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven."

First of all, we may understand these words literally as the blessing of Moses upon the people of Israel. He looked back over the wilderness through which he had led them, and it was all brilliantly studded with the wondrous things which God had wrought for them. He remembered the high hand and outstretched arm with which he had brought them out of Egypt; he remembered how he clave a path for them through the Red Sea, when their enemies sank like lead in the mighty waters; he remembered how he went before them in a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night; he remembered how he had sweetened the waters of Marah, for they were bitter; he remembered how he had fed them with manna from on high: man did eat angels' food. He remembered how he had smitten the rock at Rephidim, and waters gushed forth; how he had held up his hands to the going down of the sun, and Israel prevailed over Amalek; how he had received the law from the very hand of God for them. He remembered how he had again brought water from the flinty rock at Meribah; how he had lifted up the brazen serpent in the wilderness; and, looking back over all this track of forty years' wonders, during which their garments had not waxed old, neither had the sole of their foot swelled, how could he but put a bless-

ing upon them? He felt as Balaam did: "Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee." And accordingly, when he had gone over each of the tribes separately, leaving each his prophetic blessing, he sums up the whole in these glorious words: "Who is like unto the God of Jeshurun?"

But, secondly, these words may be understood typically as the blessing of Moses upon God's people to the end of time. No man can read the Old Testament intelligently without seeing that the people of Israel were a typical people; that the choosing of them out of Egypt, the bringing them through the Red Sea, and through the wilderness and into the land of promise, were all typical of the way in which God brings his chosen ones out of their sins, through this world of sin and misery, into the heavenly Canaan—the rest that remaineth for the people of God. If, then, the bondage, the deliverance, the unbelief, the enemies, the journeyings, the guidance, and the rest of the Israelites, were all typical of God's dealings with his own people to the end of time, we are quite justified in understanding these words as the blessing of Moses, the man of God, upon all the true children of God.

"Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places." From these words I draw the following

Doctrine.—That the people of God are a happy people, because they are saved by the Lord.

I. *Israel is a happy people, because chosen by the Lord.*

1. *This was true of ancient Israel.*—Moses tells them plainly: "The Lord did not set his love upon you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: but because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers."—Deut. vii., 7. Here is a strange thing which the world cannot understand. He loved them because he loved them, not because they were better, or greater, or worthier than any other nation, but because he loved them. Strange, sovereign, unaccountable love! He gives no account of his matters; so, then, "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy."

2. *This is true of all God's people to this day.*—David says, "Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee." Christ says, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." And Paul says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." Ah! yes, my friends, our God is a sovereign God: "Therefore hath he

mercy on whom he will have mercy; and whom he will he hardeneth." Every believer is a witness of this. Is there any believer here? Well, I take you to bear witness. You were once dead and careless about your soul, you could be happy with the world, though unforgiven and unsanctified. How was it that you were brought to flee from the wrath to come? Do you waken yourself out of sleep? Ah! no; you know well that if God had let you lie, you would willingly have slept on. Like the sluggard, you would have said, "A little more sleep, a little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands to sleep;" but he awoke you by his Word, by his ministers, or by his providence; and he would not let you go till you cried, "What must I do to be saved?" Again: you were brought from conviction of sin to conviction of righteousness; from a troubled conscience to a heart at peace in believing. How was this? Did you come yourself to Jesus, or were you drawn of the Father? Ah! you know well you received it not of man, neither by man—that God brought you within sight of Jesus. He that at first brought light out of darkness shined into your hearts, and stirred you up to act faith on Jesus; and thus you were saved; for "no man can come to Jesus except the Father draw him." From beginning to end, then, the work is God's. By grace ye are saved; and blessed, indeed, is "the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee."

Objection.—But some one may object that this doctrine ministers to pride; that to make a man believe himself the chosen favorite of God, puffs up that man with pride. To this I answer, that this is the very truth which cuts up pride by the roots. As it is written, "Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now, if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?" —1 Cor. iv., 7. If there be one believer among you (1.) I bid him look round upon those of his own family still without Christ and without God in the world. Perhaps you are the only one in your house that knows and loves the Saviour. Now, I ask you, Who made you to differ? Are you by nature any better than your kindred, that you are chosen and they left? How, then, can you be proud? (2.) Or, look round on your neighborhood, you will see drunkenness and pollution, you will hear oaths and profaneness. Now, I ask, Who made you to differ? or, what better were you than they? Can you, then be proud? (3.) Or, look round on the Popish and Heathen world sunk in darkest ignorance —without any to tell them the plain way of salvation by Jesus. Look upon nine-tenths of the world that want the pure light of the Gospel, and tell me, Who made you to differ? and how can you be proud? (4.) Or, look beyond this world's horizon, look down to the realms of darkness and of death eternal, and see the angels that fell—

> " Far other once beheld in bliss—
> Millions of spirits for *one* fault amerced
> Of heaven, and from eternal splendors flung
> For their revolt."—

Look upon these majestic intelligences, " reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day," and tell me, Who made you to differ? what better are you by nature than devils? Unconverted men are children of the devil. There is no lust in the heart of the devil that is not in every natural heart: and yet God hath passed them by, and come to save you. God came and wakened you when you were in a natural condition, and no better than devils; yea, he hath passed by the Heathen—he hath left your neighbors in their sins—your own children unawakened; but he hath awakened you.

Oh! most mysterious electing love! Well may you cry out with Paul: " 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!" And does this make you proud? does it not rather make you bury your head in the dust, and never lift up your eyes any more? And does it not make you happy? " O happy Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord!"

Does it give you no joy to feel that God thought upon you in love before the foundation of the world?—that when he was alone from all eternity he gave you to the Son to be redeemed? " Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee." Does it give you no joy to think that the Son of God thought on you with love before the world was: " My delights were with the children of men,"—that he came into the world bearing your name upon his heart—that he prayed for you on the night of his agony: " Neither pray I for these alone, but for all those that shall believe on me through their word?" Does it give you no joy that he thought upon you in his bloody sweat; that he thought of you upon the cross, and intended these sufferings to be in your stead? Oh, little children, how it would lift your hearts in holy rapture above the world; above its vexing cares; its petty quarrels; its polluting pleasures; if you would keep this holy joy within; taking up the very word of your Lord: " Father, thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world"

O unbelieving world! ye know nothing of this joy. It is all frantic presumption in your eyes; and this is just what the Bible says: A stranger intermeddles not with the believer's joy. This is just what Christ said: " Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep." Carry this one thing away with you: " We were once just what you now are (every believer will tell you)—we were just as senseless and unbelieving as you are. We once despised and laughed at the very persons with whom we are now

one in the Lord; but we were awakened by God, and fled to Christ, and are redeemed and happy"—"knowing our election of God." Oh! may this be your history, and then you will know the meaning of these words: "O, happy Israel!"

II. *Israel is a happy people, because they are justified by the Lord:* "The eternal God is thy refuge."—Verse 27. "He is the shield of thy help."—Verse 29.

First of all, this is true because Christ is our refuge and shield, and Christ is God. (1.) It is said of him: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."—John i., 1. (2.) Again, it is said of him: "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom."—Heb. i., 8. (3.) Again, it is said of him: "By him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist."—Col. i., 16, 17. (4.) Again, it is said of him, that "he is over all, God blessed for ever."—Rom. ix., 5. (5.) Again, Thomas saith unto him: "My Lord, and my God." (6.) And he is called "God manifest in the flesh."—1 Tim. iii., 16. So, then, he is indeed "Immanuel, God with us." He is the maker of the world; the God of providence; the God of angels. And this is the being who came to be the Saviour of sinners, even the chief!

Now, brethren, I wish you to see the use of the Saviour being God, and how the whole comfort and joy of the believer is founded on it. Everything that God does is infinitely perfect: he never fails in anything he undertakes. Everything, therefore, which the Saviour did was infinitely perfect. He did not, and could not, fail in anything which he undertook. (1.) He undertook to bear the wrath of God in the stead of sinners. His heart was set upon it from all eternity; for, before the world was made, he tells us: "My delights were with the sons of men." For this end he took on him our nature; became a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. From his cradle in the manger to the cross, the dark cloud of God's anger was over him; and especially towards the close of his life, the cloud came to be at the darkest—yet he cheerfully suffered all. "How am I straitened till it be accomplished!" The cup of God's anger was given him without mixture: yet he said: "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" Now, we may be quite sure, that since he was the Son of God, he hath suffered all that sinners should have suffered. If he had been an angel, he might have left some part unfinished; but since he was God, his work must be perfect. He himself said: "It is finished;" and since he was the God that cannot lie, we are quite sure that all suffering is finished—that neither he nor his body can suffer any more to all eternity. (2.)

But, again, he undertook to obey the law in the stead of sinners. Man had not only broken the law of God, but he had failed to obey it. Now, as the Lord Jesus came to be a complete Saviour, he not only suffered the curse of the broken law, but he obeyed the law in the stead of sinners. Through his whole life, he made it his meat and drink to do the will of God. Now, we may be quite sure that since he was the Son of God, he hath done all that sinners ought to have done. His righteousness is the righteousness of God; so that we may be quite sure, that every sinner who puts on that righteousness is more righteous than if man had never fallen; more righteous than angels; as righteous as God. "Who shall condemn whom God hath justified?"

O careless sinners! this is the Saviour whom we have always been preaching to you; this is the divine Redeemer whom you have always trodden under foot. You would think it a great thing if the king left his throne, and knocked at your door, and besought you to accept a little gold; but, oh! how much greater a thing is here. The King of kings has left his throne, and died the just for the unjust, and now knocks at your door. Careless sinner, can you still resist?

Awakened, anxious souls! this is the Saviour we have always offered you; this is the refuge, the rock which has followed you. You are anxious for your soul; and why, then, will you not hide here? Do you think that you honor Christ by doubting if his blood and righteousness be enough to cover you? Do you think you honor God by making him a liar, and refusing to believe the record which he hath given of his Son? Oh! doubt him no longer. Another day, and it may be too late. Flee like men who have an eternal hell behind them, and an eternal refuge before them. Take heaven by violence. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."

And you who have fled for refuge to the Saviour: "O happy Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord!" The eternal God is thy refuge; and of whom can you be afraid? Remember, abide in him. In the dark hours of sin and temptation, Satan always tries to drive you from this refuge. He will try to make you doubt if Christ be God; if his work be a finished work; if sinners may hide in him; if a backslider may hide in him; but cast not away your confidence. Cleave fast to Christ; and then the eternal God is thy refuge. In the hour of death, you may have a dark valley to pass through; you may lose sight of all your evidences; you may feel all your graces departed, and cry: "All these things are against me." Still, as a helpless sinner, flee to the Saviour God. Throw away the question whether you ever believed or no; and say, I will believe now; and thus at evening time it shall be light, and you will die with the eternal God as

your refuge. Your eyes will close on this world only to open on the world where there is no doubt, and no fear, and no death.

III. *Israel is a happy people, because sanctified by the Lord:* "Underneath are the everlasting arms;" and, "Who is the sword of thy excellency."

In the chapter before (xxxii., 11), God compares his carrying of Israel to an eagle and her young: "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him." Again, in Isaiah, it is said: "In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them and carried them all the days of old." Again, in the story of the lost sheep, we find that the Saviour not only finds the lost sheep, but "when he hath found it, he lays it upon his shoulders rejoicing." This is the very same meaning as the text: "Underneath are the everlasting arms;" and again: "He is the sword of thine excellency."

When a young believer has come to peace in Jesus, he then comes to anxiety about walking holily. No sooner has he found the sweet calm of a forgiven soul, than he begins to know the bitter anxiety of a soul that fears to sin. True, I have come to Christ, and should have peace; but now I begin to fear I shall not be able to confess Christ before men. Now I begin to see that the whole world are against me; that all things are tempting me to sin; and I fear I shall go back to the world. I fear I shall be ensnared again. My companions, how can I resist them? and Satan, how can I fight against him?

This is the time when the young believer begins to make a great many resolutions in his own strength. If he could only keep out of the way of temptation, and separate from the world, he thinks he could keep himself holy; but God soon teaches him the insufficiency of his own strength. His resolutions are all broken through; his habits of walking strictly vanish like smoke before the breath of temptation; and the young child of God sits down to weep over the plague of his own heart, and to cry: "O wretched man, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

If there are be any such hearing me, suffer me, I beseech you, to recommend a new plan—a far more excellent way. Give yourself into the everlasting arms. When sin arises; when the world sets in like a flood; when temptation comes suddenly upon you; lean back upon the almighty Spirit, and you are safe. How does the little child do that has been set down upon the ground to walk, when it finds that its little limbs bend under it—that the first breath of wind will overthrow it? Does it not yield itself up into the mother's arms? When it cannot go, it consents to be

carried; and so do you, feeble child of God. God hath given you *cleaving faith*, to cleave to Christ alone for righteousness; and that gave you the peace of the justified. Pray now that God would give you resigning faith, that you may trust him alone for strength—that you may yield yourself into the everlasting arms. Go you and learn what this meaneth: Jehovah our Righteousness is the same as Jehovah my Banner. Then, but not till then, will you fully know the meaning of the blessing: "O happy Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord!"

Objection. I do not see the Spirit, nor hear the Spirit, nor feel the Spirit; and how can I yield myself into his arms? *Ans.* This is the very Bible description of the Spirit's work: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." You do not see the wind, nor do you understand the machinery by which it blows, and yet you spread the sail to catch the breeze; and thus the tall vessel is borne over many a rough sea to the haven of rest. Just so lean upon the Spirit, though you understand not his working. Though now you see him not, yet believe in him, and you shall rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory; you shall be borne over the rough waves of this world to the haven of rest. Again: you do not know how the well springs up; you do not understand the machinery by which the water springs unfailingly; and yet you carry the pitcher to the well, and never come back with it empty. So depend on the unseen supply of the Spirit; get a daily supply for daily wants; go confidently to the wells of salvation, and ye shall draw water with joy. "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." "O happy Israel: who is like unto thee!" Be of good cheer. We are confident that He which hath begun a good work in you will carry it on to the day of Christ Jesus.

But, ah! poor Christless souls, there is no promise of the Spirit to you. All the promises are yea and amen in Christ. Out of Christ there is no promise; nothing but wrath. You have no everlasting arms underneath you. You are sensual, not having the Spirit. There is no sin into which you may not fall. The sins that make men shudder and turn pale, you may commit. God has nowhere promised to keep you from them. You have not the Spirit; you cannot love God, or do any good work; you can only sin. O poor souls! that are growing still on the stock of old Adam, you cannot but bear evil fruit; and the end will be death. Oh! that you would go away and weep over your miserable estate, and cry to God to bring you among his happy Israel, who are chosen, justified, sanctified, saved by the Lord!

St. Peter's, Jan. 29, 1837.

SERMON LXIV.

ENTREAT ME NOT TO LEAVE THEE.

"And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge. thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."—Ruth i., 16.

In these two women of Moab you see the difference between nature and grace.

1. Orpah appears to have been of a most gentle, affectionate disposition. She had been a kind and loving wife for ten years to her now buried husband. She had been a kind daughter-in-law to Naomi: "The Lord deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me."—Verse 8. She could not bear to part with Naomi. She first determined to go with her.—Verse 6. When Naomi bade them go back, she said: "Surely we will go with thee." When Naomi again bade them return, she lifted up her voice and wept. And she kissed her mother-in-law most affectionately, and went back to her people and her gods. O how much of loveliness there is in the gentle affections of nature! Who would believe that they cover a heart as black as hell?

2. Ruth also appears to have been of a kindly, gentle disposition; but her heart was touched by the Spirit of God also. Naomi had not only been her mother-in-law, but the mother of her soul. She had taught her the way of salvation by the blood of the Lamb; and therefore, when the day of trial came, that she must part from her people and her gods, or part from her spiritual instructor, Ruth clave to Naomi: "And Naomi said, Behold thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister-in-law. And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."—Verses 15, 16.

From these words I draw the following lessons: *That we should cleave to our converted friends.*

When God sent me away from you, about eighteen months ago, I think I could then number, in my own mind, more than sixty souls who, I trust, had visibly passed from death unto life during the time I had been among you. Now, I do think I could number many more, aye, twice as many more, of you who have come, by the wonderful grace of God, to choose Israel for your people, and Israel's God for your God. I trust that there is hardly a family in this church who have not some friend or relative really born again. Oh, that God would this day put Ruth's resolution into your heart, to cleave to your converted friends, and to say, "Where thou goest, I will go"—"Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God!"

I. *Their God is a precious God.*

1. A sin-pardoning God: "Who is a God like unto thee, who pardoneth iniquity?" Unconverted souls have no God: "Without God, and without hope in the world;" or, like Orpah, they have false gods. Whatever they like best is their god. Their belly is their god, money is their god, or the god of this world is their god. But, ah! he is not sin-pardoning. Your converted friends have found a sin-pardoning God—one that washes out their sins in blood, though red as scarlet—the God and Father of Jesus—one that forgets sins: "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions, for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins"—"Thou hast put all my sins behind thy back"—one that is the prodigal's Father: "When he was yet a great way off, his Father saw him." Should you not cleave to them? They had the same sins as you—perhaps they have sinned along with you. Why should you despair, if they have found mercy? Cleave to the skirt of their garment; for God is with them.

2. Their God is a faithful God—faithful to them in enabling them to persevere: "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee"—"He who hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ"—"Even to old age I am he."—Isa. xlvi., 4. When once he takes a brand out of the fire, he never lets it fall in again. He will let heaven and earth fall sooner than one of his own. He keeps them night and day. The souls whom God chose four years ago in this place, he has kept to this day. Often they have been ready to die: "Then the Lord sent from above; he took me, he drew me out of many waters"—"When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them: I the God of Israel will not forsake them."

Faithful in temptations: "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." Look back, believers, on your temptations. They have been very dreadful. You have been on the brink of ruin. The Lord has delivered you.

Faithful in afflictions: "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee." Do you not see they have a refuge in the storm? Believers in this place have passed through many sore trials within these four years; yet God has been their refuge. He is a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress. Do you not see in the hour of trial what a rest they found in God, in the Saviour? how they poured out their sorrows into the ear of their High Priest? Cleave you to them.

II. *Their people are a happy people.*

Naomi was one of the peculiar people of Israel. It was this

people that Ruth was going to join. But converted persons amongst us have joined the true Israel, a still more peculiar people. They have been added to the Church, such as have been saved.

1. They are a pardoned people: "Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven." They have all this blessedness. Sin is the greatest curse and burden in this world. Sin makes the world groan, makes damned souls shrink, and makes hell blaze. But this people have no unpardoned sin lying upon them. They are washed whiter than snow. They are all fair, without so much as a spot on them. They are as clean in God's pure eye as Christ is. Christ carried all their sins, they carry all his righteousness. Christ has suffered all their hell. They are in the love of God. God delights in them. Are they not a happy people? Are they not happier than you, who have as much sin as would sink a world?

2. A holy people, all born again, all have received the Holy Spirit. He dwells in them, and will never leave them. They have an old heart; still the Spirit reigns in them. They walk after the Spirit, they love in the Spirit, they pray in the Holy Ghost. Of themselves they cannot pray; but the Spirit teaches them. Heaven is begun in their hearts. They have a little of heaven now. Do you not see that they have left off your carnal pleasures? "I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than dwell in the tents of wickedness." Do you see no difference in their tempers, habits, lives? Are they not calmer, happier, heavenlier, than they were before? Seek what they have found.

3. All things work together for their good. Perhaps you will say they are an afflicted people. Some in poverty, some bereaved, some groaning on sick-beds. True, God dealeth with them as with sons. Often they cry, These things are against me. All *for* them. If we could see the end as God does, we would see that every event is *for* the believer. When we get to the haven, we will see that every wind was wafting us to glory.

4. In death. Even wicked Balaam said: "Let me die the death of the righteous." "Mark the perfect, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace." God calls upon you to mark the death-bed of his children. Sometimes it is triumphant, like Stephen: "Behold I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God. Lord Jesus, receive my Spirit." Almost always peaceful. Or, if it be that the sun goes down in a cloud, O how sweet the surprise, when the believer finds himself on the other side of Jordan! at the pearly gate of the New Jerusalem! in the arms of the angels! in the smile of Jesus! "There is a rest remaining for the people of God." Will you not cleave to your godly child, parent, brother, sister, friend? You have sported together, you have sinned

together, will you not be blessed together? "Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."

III. *They want you to go with them.*

It is plain that Naomi wanted Ruth to go with her; only she wanted her to go not out of mere natural affection, but out of love to Israel's God. Moses wanted Hobab, his brother-in-law, to go with him. Moses knew the value of the soul: "We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you. Come thou with us, and we will do thee good." Jeremiah wanted the Jews of his day to go with him: "Give glory to the Lord your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and, while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness. But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride."—Jer. xiii., 16, 17. Your converted friends want you to go with them. They may not have boldness to tell you so. It is easier to speak to a stranger than to a friend. Do you not see their anxiety in their eyes? Do you not see how anxious they are that you would come to the house of prayer? They pray for you in secret. Often when you are sleeping they are praying for you. They weep for you "in secret places, for your pride." Well, if you will not go, you will be left behind. Still weep and pray, dear friends. This earth would be too like heaven if all we love were saved. Oh, what a sad company will be left!

IV. *Eternal separation.*

When Orpah turned back from Naomi and Ruth, she little knew she was parting for ever. They had lived together perhaps from infancy. They had played around the same palm tree; sat before the same cottage door; wandered over the same hills of Moab; now, they parted for eternity. So it is amongst us. There are, no doubt, many of us about to be separated for eternity. How strange, that two trees should grow so near—one to flower in paradise, the other to be a firebrand in hell!

Dear friends, do you not see some whom you love much, really converted and saved? Do you not see they have a peace that passeth understanding, while you are still loaded with guilt? They are growing holier, more fond of prayer, walking more humbly, riper for glory; you riper for hell, your sins getting faster hold. Oh, this separation will be for eternity! You may love them much, but you will go back to your gods. 1. You will be separated at death; they will pass into glory, into perfect day: you will lift up your eyes in hell. Besides all this, 2. You will be separated at judgment. When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, he shall separate the sheep from the goats; those on the right hand shall be solemnly acquitted, rewarded for all the good works you see them daily performing. All their prayers and

tears for you will then be recompensed. You, on the left hand, shall go away into everlasting punishment. You shall look on that Saviour, whom you now despise, and "wail because of him." When your eye catches your godly friends, how you will weep and wail! You will then remember all their love, and all your madness. Parents, do you love your converted children? Can you bear to be parted eternally? Will you cleave to Naomi, or go back to your people and your gods? How will you bear to see the fruit of your body on the throne with Christ, and yourself a brand in an eternal hell?

St. Peter's, 1840.

SERMON LXV.

THE VISION OF DRY BONES.

"The hand of the Lord was upon me," &c.—Ezek. xxxvii., 1-14.

In early life the Prophet Ezekiel had been witness of sieges and battle-fields; he had himself experienced many of the horrors and calamities of war; and this seems to have tinged his natural character in such a way that his prophecies, more than any other, are full of terrific images and visions of dreadful things. In these words we have the description of a vision which, for grandeur and terrible sublimity, is perhaps unequalled in any other part of the Bible.

He describes himself as set down by God in the midst of a valley that was full of bones. It seemed as if he were set down in the midst of some spacious battle-field, where thousands and tens of thousands had been slain, and none left behind to bury them. The eagles had many a time gathered over the carcasses, and none frayed them away; and the wolves of the mountains had eaten the flesh of these mighty men, and drunk the blood of princes. The rains of heaven had bleached them, and the winds that sighed over the open valley had made them bare; and many a summer sun had whitened and dried the bones. And as the prophet went round and round to view the dismal scene, these two thoughts arose in his mind: "Behold, they be very many; and, lo, they are very dry."

If the place had not been an open valley, it might have seemed to his wondering gaze some vast charnel-house, as if the tombs of all the Pharaohs had been laid bare by some shock of nature to the wild winds of heaven; as if the wanton hand of violence had rifled the vast cemeteries of Egypt, and cast forth the mummied bones of other ages to bleach and whiten in the light of heaven.

How expressive are the brief words of the seer: "Behold, they are very many; and, lo, they are very dry!"

No doubt there was an awful silence spread over this scene of desolateness and death; but the voice of his heavenly guide breaks in upon his ear: "*Son of man, can these bones live?*"

How strange a question was this to put concerning dry, whitened bones! When Jesus said of the damsel: "She is not dead, but sleepeth," they laughed him to scorn; but here were not bodies newly dead, but bones, bare, whitened bones; nay, they were not even skeletons, for bone was separated from its bone; and yet God asks: "Can these bones live?" Had he asked this question of the world, they would have laughed a louder laugh of scorn; but he asked it of one who, though once dead, had been made alive by God; and he answered: "O Lord God, thou knowest." They cannot live of themselves, for they are dead and dry; but if thou wilt put thy living Spirit into them, they shall live. So, then, thou only knowest.

Receiving this answer of faith from the prophet, God bids him 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." Had the prophet walked by sight, and not by faith, he would have staggered at the promise, through unbelief. Had he been a worshipper of reason, he would have argued: These bones have no ears to hear, why should I preach to them, "Hear the word of the Lord?" But no, he believed God rather than himself. He had been taught "the exceeding greatness of his mighty power;" and therefore he obeyed: "*So I prophesied as I was commanded.*"

If the scene which Ezekiel first beheld was dismal and desolate, the scene which now opened on his eyes was more dismal, more awfully revolting still: "And as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking; and the bones came together, bone to his bone; and when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above; but there was no breath in them." If it were a hideous sight before, to see the valley full of bones, all cleansed by the rains and winds, and whitened in the summer suns, how much more hideous now, to see these slain, bone joined to his bone, sinews, and flesh, and skin upon them; but no breath in them! Here was a battle-field indeed, with its thousands of unburied dead, masses of unbreathing flesh, cold and immovable, ready only to putrify, every hand stiff and motionless, every bosom without a heave, every eye glazed and lifeless, every tongue cold and silent as the grave.

But the voice of God again breaks the silence: "Prophesy unto the wind (or Spirit), prophesy, son of man, and say to the Spirit,

Thus saith the Lord God, Come from the four winds, O Spirit, and breathe upon these slain that they may live."

Before, Ezekiel had bent over the dead, dry bones, and preached unto them, a vast but lifeless congregation, but now he lifts his head and raises his eye; for his word is to the living Spirit of God. Unbelief might have whispered to him, To whom are you going to prophesy now? Reason might have argued, What sense is there in speaking to the viewless wind, to one whom you see not; for it is written: "The world cannot receive the Spirit of God, because it seeth him not?" But he staggered not at the word through unbelief: "*So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them*, and they lived and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army."

The first application made of this vision is to the restoration of the Jews. 1. It teaches that at present they are like dry bones in the open valley, scattered over all lands, very many, and very dry, without any life to God. 2. It teaches that the preaching of Jesus, though foolishness to the world, is to be the means of their awakening, and that prayer to the all-quickening Spirit is to be the means of their new life. 3. It teaches that when these means are used with them, God's ancient people shall yet stand up, and be an exceeding great army, shall be as they used to be when they marched through the wilderness, when God went before them in the pillar of cloud; that they shall then be led back to their own land, and planted in their own land, and not plucked up any more. But another, and to us a more important, application of this vision, is to the unconverted souls in the midst of us. Let us go over it with this view.

I. *Unconverted souls are like dry bones—very many, and very dry.*

1. *They are very many.*—When a soul is first brought to Christ, he enjoys a peace in believing which he never knew before; and not only so, but he is quickened from the death of trespasses and sins into a life which he never knew before; he knows the blessedness of living to God. But even with all this joy, there is an awful feeling of loneliness; for when he looks round upon the world, he feels just like Ezekiel, set down in the midst of a valley full of dry bones. He is alive himself, but this world, once all his joy, looks now like some ancient battle-field, where the remains of the dead are all lying exposed on the open field; and he feels a solitary thing in a world of dead. This world appears now like one vast charnel-house, where whole generations of dead meet, and are jumbled together—all alike fit only for the burning; and he feels himself a solitary living thing, moving over heaps of slain. He feels like Elijah on the mount of God, when he complained: "Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars, and I, even I, am left alone." He feels like

our blessed Lord, who was a light shining in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not. He feels as if he were a feeble "light in the world, holding forth the word of life"—a lamp suspended in the densest darkness, whose oil is all supplied by grace from on high, and whose rays seem only to make the darkness more visible. He feels like Paul at Athens; for his spirit is moved in him, to see the whole world given over to idolatry. He feels like Paul at Rome, when he complained: "I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care for your state; for all seek their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ's." He feels like John, when he said so sweetly, yet so sadly: "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness." To the eye of Sense, O what a happy living world this is, with its shops and markets; its compliments and companies; its visits of ceremony and visits of kindness; its mirth and its melody! how living and life-like is the whole world, from morning's dawn till midnight. But to the eye of Faith, what a lonely wilderness is this world! for "the whole world lieth in wickedness." Is it not so, believing brethren? Is it not like Egypt in that dreadful night when there was a cry heard from every dwelling; for there was not a house where there was not one dead? Oh! it is more dismal far; for in every house there are many dead souls, and yet there is no cry. Look into your own family; look among the families of your neighbors; look into your native town; are not the many all dead, dead souls? The most are dead, dry bones. Nay, look into the Christian Church; look among our Sabbath keepers, and those who sit down at sacraments; O, brethren! is it not true that, like Sardis, most have a name to live, and are dead? Do not the most of you live lives of pleasure? and is it not written: "She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth?" Do not most of you show no love for the brethren? and is it not written: "He that loveth not his brother, abideth in death?" O yes, the most are dry bones! Truly, then, "they are very many."

2. *They are very dry.*—Dry bones are the furthest of all from the possibility of living. (1.) They are without any flesh or comeliness. (2.) They are without any marrow or spirit. (3.) They are without any activity or power of moving. And, oh! is not this the very picture of poor, unconverted souls—"They are very dry?"

(1.) *They are without any comeliness.*—They see no beauty in Christ, and Christ sees no beauty in them; their souls are lean and ill-favored. Man was made perfect in beauty at the first; for he was made in the image of Him who is perfect loveliness; but a fallen, unconverted soul has no beauty; it is like a beautiful building scattered in ruins; it is like a beautiful statue all defaced, not one feature remaining; it is like a beautiful body smitten by death, corrupting in the grave.

(2.) *They are without any marrow or spirit.*—Man was made to

be a habitation of God through the Spirit; and it is only when we are led by the Spirit that we are alive unto God. But the unconverted soul is "sensual, not having the Spirit." The Bible says: "The world cannot receive the Spirit, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him." They have no work of the Spirit in their hearts; no awakening work; no convincing of righteousness; no sanctifying work; no sealing of the soul; no walking in the Spirit; no love in the Spirit; no praying in the Holy Ghost.

(3.) *They have no activity or motion God-ward.*—If we preach the Word of the Lord unto them, they have no heart to attend to the things which are spoken; dry bones have no ears. If we tell them of the wrath of God that is coming upon them, they are not moved to flee; dry bones cannot run. If we tell them of the loveliness of the Lord Jesus, how he offers himself to be the complete Saviour, still they are not moved to embrace him; for dry bones cannot stretch out their arms. Ah! these dry bones are very dry.

Brethren, is it not possible to make you anxious about your souls? Can you sit still and hear how dead and dry they are, and yet go away and forget it all? Can you bear to carry about with you a dead stone in your bosom instead of a heart? Can you bear to have such a cold, icy, wicked heart, as sees no desirableness in the lovely Saviour; no beauty in him who is stretching out his hands to you all the day—"the chief among ten thousand," the "altogether lovely?" Oh, brethren! if you will go away unmoved; and, doubtless, hundreds of you may; what need have we of witnesses? Ye yourselves are the only evidence we need that unconverted souls are "very many, and, lo, they are very dry."

II. *The second lesson we learn from this vision is, that preaching is God's instrument for awakening the unconverted.*

Every intelligent man among you has been puzzled at one time or another by a seeming contradiction which runs through the whole of the Bible. It is written in one place: "No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him;" and yet the whole Bible through bids every one of you come to Jesus. Again it is written: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them;" and yet what are we continually urging upon you, but to receive the things of the Spirit of God? Again, God opened the heart of Lydia to attend to the things which were spoken of Paul—which makes it plain that no natural heart can attend; and yet we do nothing but press these things on your attention. By nature your hearts are as hard as adamant, and even demonstration will not make you flee from hell; yet, "knowing the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men." By nature you cannot so much as comprehend the beauty and loveliness of the Lord

Jesus; and yet we are determined to know nothing among you but "Christ and him crucified." Oh! what a mass of contradiction there is here; and yet how easily it is solved! These bones were dead, dry, spiritless, lifeless, without flesh, without ears to hear; and yet God says: "*Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.*" And while he prophesied there was a noise, and "behold a shaking; and the bones came together, bone to his bone; and when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above." Just so, my unconverted friends, your souls are like these dry bones—dead, dry, spiritless, lifeless, without ears to hear, without hearts to attend to the things which are spoken. You have such blunted consciences, that no words of mine can move you to flee from the wrath to come; you have such hard, wicked hearts, that no words of mine can persuade you to embrace the beseeching Saviour; and yet it is by the foolishness of preaching that it pleases God to save them that believe; and though our words have no power, yet God can work almightily through them; and this is his message unto you: "*O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord.*"

I earnestly beseech those of you who care little for the preaching of the Word to attend to this. You may say, and say truly, that preaching seems a weak and foolish instrument for such a work —God himself has called it "the foolishness of preaching." You may say, and say truly, that ministers are but earthen vessels—that they are men of like passions with yourselves—God himself has called them so before you. But you cannot say that it is not God's way of converting souls; and it is at the peril of your own souls if ye despise it. Keep away from the house of God and lock up your Bible, and you put away from you the only instruments by which God can reach your dying souls.

III. *The third and last lesson we learn from this vision is, that prayer must be added to preaching, else preaching is in vain.*

The effects produced by the prophesying of Ezekiel to the dry bones were very remarkable. The bones came together, bone to his bone; the flesh, the sinews, the skin came up upon them, and covered them; but still there was no breath in them—they were as dead as ever. And, oh! how like this is to the effects which often follow on the preaching of the Word. How often is a people outwardly reformed! Instead of Sabbath breaking there is Sabbath observance; instead of drunkenness, sobriety; the form of godliness, but none of the power; the bones, and sinews, and flesh, and skin of godliness, but none of the living breath of godliness. Ah! my friends, is not this just the way with our congregations at this day; abundance of head knowledge, but, ah! where is the lowly heart that loves the Saviour? Abundance of orthodoxy and argument, but, ah! where is the simple faith in the Lord Jesus,

and love to all the saints? Does not the Saviour say when he looks down on our Churches; "There is no breath in them?" Oh! then, brethren, let us one and all give heed to the second command to the prophet: "Prophesy unto the Spirit, son of man; say, Come from the four winds, O Spirit, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army."

Learn two lessons from this.

1*st*, Unconverted friends, what dead hearts you must have; all the preaching in the world cannot put life into them. What hard hearts yours must be; the heaviest hammer we can lift cannot break them. We speak the weightiest arguments into your ear, yet all will not move you. We must lift up our voice, and prophesy to the Spirit; we must bring down the Almighty Spirit before we can touch your heart. We try to convince you of sin; we show you how you have broken the law, and that "cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them;" that you must be under that curse, that you will not be able to bear that curse, that it crushed a Saviour to the earth, and will crush you to the lowest hell. You are somewhat impressed, and we hope that your heart is touched; but your impressions are like impressions on the sand when the tide is out, and the very next tide of the world effaces all. We try to convince you of righteousness. We tell you of the love of the Saviour, how it passeth knowledge; how there was an ocean of love in that bosom, which no line could fathom—love to lost sinners like you; how he served in the stead of sinners, obeying the law for us; how he suffered in the stead of sinners, bearing the curse for us. We tell you to believe in him, and be saved; you are melted, and the tear stands on your cheek; but, ah! it is like "the morning cloud and early dew—it quickly passes away."

Ah! brethren, what hard, iron hearts you must have, when all that man can do will not melt them. Your hearts are too hard for us; and we have to go back weeping to our Lord, saying: "Who hath believed our report?" In all other things we could persuade you by arguments. If your bodies were sick, we could persuade you to send for the physician; if your estate were entangled, we could persuade you to be diligent for your family—oh! how readily you would obey us; but when we demonstrate that you are the heirs, soul and body, of an eternal hell, you will not awake for it all. Even if we could show you the Lord Jesus Christ himself—the bleeding, beseeching Saviour—your wicked hearts would not cleave to him. You need Him that made your hearts, to break and bend your hearts. Will you not, each of you, go away, then, beating on the breast, and saying: "God, be merciful to me, a sinner?"

Learn, 2*dly*, Believing brethren, what need you have to pray

When God, in the chapter before (xxxvi.), promises to give a new heart and a new spirit to Israel, "to take away the stony heart out of their flesh, and to give them a heart of flesh," he adds, at verse 37: "I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them." And when God promises to give to Christ the heathen for his heritage, he only promises it in answer to prayer: "Ask of me, and I will give thee." And just so here; when he wishes to give life to these dead carcasses that are lying in the open valley, his word is: "Prophesy, O son of man, unto the Spirit."

O believing brethren! what an instrument is this which God hath put into your hands! Prayer moves Him that moves the universe. O men of faith and prayer!—Israels, who wrestle with God, and prevail!—righteous, justified men, whose prayers avail much!—you may be a little flock, but be you entreated to give the Lord no rest. O pray for the Spirit to "breathe upon these slain, that they may live!" And you, selfish Christians, if such a contradiction can exist; you, who approach the throne of God only for yourselves; you, whose petitions begin and end only for yourselves; who ask no gifts but only for your own peace and joy, go you and learn what this meaneth: "It is more blessed to give than to receive"—"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."

Dundee, Dec. 25, 1836.

SERMON LXVI.

CHRIST THE ONLY REFUGE.

"Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast."—Isa. xxvi., 20.

This passage is a word in season to God's people in every time of impending calamity. The form of expression is evidently taken from that dreadful night when God passed through the land of Egypt to smite all the first-born of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat upon the throne to the first-born of the captive that sat in the dungeon. And Pharaoh arose in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead. But God had commanded his own Israel to kill the paschal lamb, the type of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, and to take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood, and to strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood: "And none

of you (said he) shall go out at the door of his house until the morning." As if he had said, "Come, my people, enter into thy chambers, and shut thy blood-sprinkled doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast."

It may be difficult to determine what time of indignation the prophet here refers to. The propheey was given in the beginning of Hezekiah's reign, when many a destruction was yet to come upon the land of Israel. The invasion by Sennacherib the Assyrian was just at hand, and may be primarily referred to. The invasion by Nebuchadnezzar, and seventy years' captivity, was also coming; and this also may be referred to. And the invasion by the Romans, in which Jerusalem was destroyed, and the Jews finally dispersed over the world, may also be referred to. And in all these coming indignations, God's word to his people was, to hide in their chambers, in the refuge which he had appointed them, till the indignation should be overpast. But most of all does this propheey refer to the great storm of indignation which God is yet going to bring upon the world, before the end come; when the Lord Jesus shall come a second time, without sin unto salvation; when he shall come again, no more a poor man, clothed in a seamless garment, but glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength; "when he shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe." In that day of awful tribulation—which, except it were shortened, no flesh should be saved—God will gather his own as it were into chambers, and keep them hid till the storm passes over. As in the flood he brought his little flock into the ark, and it is written, "God shut them in;" he shut the doors about them, till the deluge of his wrath was past; as in the destruction of Jericho, the family of Rahab were gathered all within doors, and saved from the wrath that came on all besides; as in the destruction of the first-born in Egypt, God kept his own Israel safely hid in their dwellings; so, in the last storm that shall fall on this poor perishing world, God will gather his elect safe under the hollow of his hand, saying, "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast."

The doctrine to be learned from this passage is a very plain one, namely, that in every time of calamity God bids us and our families find refuge in Christ. There is no safety anywhere else.

Christ is a complete refuge in every storm.

In other parts of the Bible Christ is compared to "a hiding-place from the wind, a covert from the storm, and the shadow of a great rock in a weary land;" he is compared to "a fortress, or

high tower, into which we may flee and be safe;" he is compared to "an apple tree amid the trees of the wood, under whose shadow we may sit down, and his fruit be sweet to our taste;" but the comparison here is quite different; he is here compared to our own chamber with the door shut: "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee."

Now Christ is like our own chamber with the door shut, in many respects:—1. Because there is safety in him. There is no place in all the world to which we look oftener in an hour of danger, as a refuge and place of safety, than our own home, the inner chamber, with the door made fast. Brethren, just such is Christ. There is safety in him: "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." 2. Because there is quietness and rest in him. In the world we look for the bustle and harassment of business; but when we enter into our chamber and shut the door behind us, we shut out the bustling, noisy world; all is tranquillity and peace. Brethren, just such is Christ. In him the "weary are at rest." We are "without carefulness"—we have "quietness and assurance for ever." 3. Because our home is a ready-made retreat, near and easy of access. When we seek our home, we have not to soar with the eagle to the top of the rugged rocks: nor like the dove that makes its nest in the hole's mouth; neither have we to dig into the earth, that we may hide our head there. Our home is near unto us. Brethren, just such is Christ. He is a ready-made Saviour, at hand, and not afar off. We have not to ascend, to bring Christ down from above; neither have we to descend into the deep, to bring Christ again from the dead. But the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart. Oh! he is a near Saviour; he is not far from any one of us. Now, this is the refuge which God bids his people flee into in every storm: "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thee as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast." And oh! it is an all-sufficient refuge in every storm.

1. *Christ is a complete refuge in a storm of conscience.*—The great mass of unconverted men are living quite securely in their sins; going about from day to day without the least anxiety, though they are abiding under wrath. The reason is, that the vials of wrath are held over their heads, but not yet poured out; the flames of hell are burning up to their very feet, but they are not yet suffered to touch them. God is long-suffering, not willing that any should perish. But when God awakens a soul to know his true condition, then there arises a storm of conscience within. O brethren! there is no more security to that soul. He does not feel the loathsomeness of sin as a child of God does; but he feels the terribleness of wrath. The Spirit has convinced him of sin. Every sin of his past life rises up behind him, and seems to cry for instant vengeance; all the sins of his hands—his taking things

that were not his own, his handling unlawful things, and writing abominable and foolish things ; the sins of his feet—swift to shed blood, swift to carry him to the haunts of sin ; the sins of his eyes—full of adultery, and that could not cease from sin ; the sins of his tongue—loving and making a lie, putting forth words of clamor and evil-speaking, backbiting and bitterness, speaking shameful words in the dark, things of which it is a shame so much as to speak ; the sins of his heart—that it should always have been like a fountain, pouring out abominable desires and loathsome affections toward the creature, whilst the Creator was unloved, though the loveliest of all. Oh, brethren ! when a man really feels that the wrath of God is lying on him for a whole lifetime of sin, who can bear that storm ? and, worst of all, when the Spirit convinces of sin, "because he believes not in Jesus?" When the sinner feels that Jesus hath been stretching out his hands all the day, and he hath not regarded ; that the gentle Saviour has called, and he has refused ; that he has trodden the offers of mercy under his feet, and done despite to the Spirit of grace ; oh ! then does the storm of conscience rise into a whirlwind. The fears of wrath lie hard upon that soul ; they are like waves and billows going over him. His wife and children cannot cheer him now. His sinful comrades cannot laugh him from his fears now. O brethren ! if ever you have seen the sad, dejected countenance of a sinner convinced by God, you will not soon forget it. He is not sure but his next step may be into hell. When he falls asleep, he does not know but he may wake up in hell.

Oh ! if there be one soul here thus awakened, afflicted, tempest-tost, and not comforted, hear this word : "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee ; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast." True, this is a word chiefly to God's people, who have already hidden in Christ ; but Christ is as free to you as to them. In him there is perfect safety. In him is quietness and rest. He is a near Saviour. His arms are as open to receive you as is your own home. Come, poor sinners, enter into this chamber. Every one that is now in Christ was once as much tempest-tost as you are. When a man is overtaken by nightfall on a bleak moor, when the frosty wind blows bitterly upon him, and the wreathing snow retards his every footstep, where is it that he longs to be ? what spot in all the world comes oftenest across his wishful fancy ? It is his home—his inner chamber, with the door made fast. Oh ! if he were only there, he would be safe. Oh ! poor soul, just such are you, and just such a home is Christ—not afar off, but near. Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved. Hide in him, for he is a hiding-place from the wind.

2. *Christ is a complete refuge in a storm of providence.*

When providences are all favorable, it is amazing to see how careless unconverted men grow of God and the things of eternity.

When the glow of health has been long upon their cheek, they begin to live as if they were to live for ever, as if there were no death and no hell. When their business goes on prosperously from week to week, they begin to feel like lords of the universe; as if this world were their own; as if their houses and lands, and money, were all their own, and they could never part company. And oh! it is still more amazing to see how careless even the children of God will grow in such times of long continued prosperity; how death and eternity, and to be with Christ, and to be like Christ, become less desirable things than once they were; how like they become to the world, in supposing that gain is godliness; how the poor, pitiful possessions of this world seem for a time to come between and intercept the view of the inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away; how the glare and the glitter of this present evil world dazzle their eyes, and dim their sight for beholding the King in his beauty, and the land that is very far off.

Now, it is deeply interesting and deeply instructive to mark the panic which comes upon the face of society, when God makes a sudden change of providences; when all of a sudden the sky is overcast, the distant thunder begins to roll, and the storm of providence comes on. When those sudden crashes take place in the commercial world, when, like the avalanche of the snowy mountains, that comes down upon some hapless village, smothering whole families in the midst of their unthinking gaiety; when those overwhelming catastrophes come down, involving whole families in ruin and penury: oh! it is strange to see how the world stand amazed; their wisdom is all dashed and confounded. Or, when God sends a time of wide-spread sickness and death; when he seems to poison the very atmosphere; when we are visited by the pestilence that walketh in darkness, and the destruction that wasteth at noonday; when a thousand fall at our side, and ten thousand at our right hand, oh! it is strange to see what a panic comes upon men, and paleness upon all faces. It is like when a set of fishing boats have set out upon an excursion when the wind was fair, and the sun shone happily, and the blue waves curled gently on every side, and all is joy and carelessness in every boat; when suddenly the sky is overcast, the whistling wind rises, a dreadful squall is at hand, and death stares every man in the face. Ah! then what panic seizes upon every boat's crew? what reefing of the sails! what grasping at the helm! how one seeks to run into the shore, another into the deep! Such is the panic that comes over unconverted men in a time of wide-spread calamity. And oh! how religious they now become! how they look grave, and forsake their jests and loose talking, and think that is religion! They are just like Israel of old: "When he slew them, then they sought him, and they returned and inquired early after God. And they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their

redeemer. Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues. For their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant."

Now, brethren, in such a storm of providence Christ is a complete refuge; and though the children of God, in such times, even they, seem to be in doubt and jeopardy, they know not what to think, they know not where to flee, yet they may hear the word of God above the storm: "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast." Just as our own chamber, with the doors shut about us, is the place where we have quietness and rest; and the storm may rage without, but we shall not feel it; and the world may be crying aloud, yet we shall not hear it; so the Lord Jesus is a perfect refuge to the believer from all the storms of providence.

Men are apt to think that the only good of hiding in Christ is to save our souls; that when an awakened sinner hides in the Lord Jesus, he finds pardon of all sin, and peace with God, but nothing more. But the whole Bible shows that there is much more in Christ; that when we hide in him, we are saved from *all* our distresses; from our troubles about health, about money, about the world. In the 34th Psalm, it is mentioned four times over, that when we come to Christ, we are saved, not out of one trouble, but out of *all* our troubles: "I sought the Lord; he heard, and delivered me from all my fears." Verse 4. This poor man cried, and the Lord heard, and saved him out of all his troubles." Verse 6. "The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles." Verse 17. "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, yet the Lord delivereth them out of them all." Verse 19. And the reason is plain; when we hide in Jesus, the God of providence becomes our God and Father, and we know he will make all things work together for our good. The Lord is our shepherd, we shall not want. Whatever temporal good may be taken away, we know that our eternal good is secure: "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." 2 Tim. i., 12.

Oh! my believing friends, why should you be discouraged in this time of wide-spread sickness and calamity? why should you be cast down, as if God were covering you with a cloud in his anger? These clouds may be a few drops of God's coming wrath upon the world, they may be like the first of the thunder-shower; but to you they speak in the language of love. God wishes you deeper hid in Christ, he wishes you more separate from the world: "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee."

We never would know the blessing of a home, if there were no winter snows and winter winds to make us crowd round the happy

hearth. Just so, believer, you would not know the blessing of such a chamber as Christ is, if there were no sicknesses, and dark impending providences to make you live more in him. Come then, believer, let every drop of wrath that falls around you speak with new power to your soul, give new light to that faith by which you cleave to Jesus. Let every sigh you hear, be as it were a voice from God, saying: "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers."

And you, poor Christless souls, ah! where shall you run, poor sheep that have no shepherd, defenceless and lost in this world's wilderness? You have no home. Enter into your securest room, and shut your door; still vengeance can reach you there. God is against you, his wrath is abiding on you. Oh! the day of the Lord is darkness, and not light to you. Wherever you go, you are a lost soul: "As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him." Oh, brethren! ye are men, ye have reason, will ye not flee from the wrath to come? Will these wasting sicknesses not convince you that God is stronger than you, that you will be nothing in the hands of an angry God? Even to you, then, Christ, the door of salvation, is still open, wide open. Come, poor sinners, enter into this chamber, and shut thy doors about thee. "Hide thyself as it were for a little moment. until the indignation be overpast."

There are just two remarks I would make in conclusion:

1. That this passage bids us hide in Christ, not singly, but in families. In that deliverance which God wrought for Israel in Egypt he taught this very remarkably; for he did not gather Israel into some great tower where they might be safe, but bade each family remain within their own house, only sprinkling the doors with blood; and so, in saving Noah, God saved not single souls, but a whole family; and so in saving Lot, God saved Lot, and all that were his; and so, in saving Rahab, she and all her household were gathered in and saved. My friends, God is still the God of families, and still does he wish whole families of you to be saved; and he says as much in the words before me: "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers." Alas! my friends, we live in days when family religion is fallen to the ground. Men are too proud now to be like Abraham, and to command their children and their servants after them. Men nowadays take up the words of Cain, and say: "Am I my brother's keeper?" Ah! where are our Andrews now? "Andrew first findeth his own brother, Peter, and saith unto him, We have found the Christ; and he brought him to Jesus."

What! is there one of you who thinks himself a child of God, who is yet ashamed to kneel down in the midst of his family, and pray? Alas! my friend, you may dream that you are a child of Abraham, but remember you do not the works of Abraham. Ah!

brethren, whole families must be saved; for whole families are in danger of hell.

Oh! then, you that know the Lord, do not your bowels yearn over your perishing kindred? Can you not fall on some contriv ance, think you, to win them to Christ? Will you not strengthen our hands, at least, by your words and prayers, and by opening the way for the minister of Christ into the bosom of your unconverted families? Ah! in this time of trouble, will you not lay hands on them, as the angels did on Lot? Hark! the Lord invites you: "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast."

2. I observe that the dangers to which the believer is exposed are but for a time. God says: "Hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast." It was so in that night when God smote the first-born in Egypt. It was but a night that they were to hide in their houses: "None of you shall go out of his house until the morning." It was so in the destruction of Jericho—Rahab and her kindred hid themselves seven days, till the danger was overpast. And just so the troubles of believers now are for a very short time: "These light afflictions are but for a moment." And also the indignation which is coming on the world will be but for a little moment—it will soon be overpast.

(1.) Temporal troubles are but for a moment; these sad sicknesses and wasting calamities will not last for ever—a short while, and this body will be past the power of pain to grieve it. I know that if any of you have tasted the sweetness of being in Christ, you could be content to hide in him for an eternity. Welcome an eternity of outward troubles, if I have such a hiding-place. But you are not asked to do this: "Hide thyself as it were for a little moment." Live but a few years more in faith, and thou shalt live the rest in glory: "If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him."

(2.) The indignation of the latter day will be but for a moment. Days of wrath are coming, my friends; it is vain to conceal it—such as the world has never known before. And if these days were not shortened, no flesh could be saved; but for the elect's sake they shall be shortened—they shall be made as a little moment. Whether these days of trouble shall be in our day, I do not know; for we know neither the day nor the hour when the Son of Man cometh. But this I do know, that there is no safety, no, not for another night, for any soul that is not hiding in the Saviour. I repeat it, my friends, if you lie down in your bed this night out of Christ, the Son of Man may be come before the morning, and you be cut in sunder, and have your portion with the hypocrites, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

But, O believer! hidden in the cleft Rock, abide in him. As

the sky darkens around you, hide deeper in him. It is only for a short time—one dark, dark cloud, and eternal sunshine beyond—one wild wave of vengeance, and an unbounded ocean of glory.

Little children, abide in him, that when he shall appear ye may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming: "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast."

Dundee, Jan. 15, 1837.

SERMON LXVII.

WILL YE ALSO GO AWAY?

"From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."—John vi., 66-68.

I. Lesson. *Many who seem to be disciples of Christ, go back, and walk no more with Jesus.*

This is a very solemn truth, and may probably answer the case of some who are this day hearing me. Observe, it is said twice over that there were many who went back. If there were many then, it is likely there will be many now.

1. *Many follow Christ for a time, but are stumbled when they hear they must come to personal union with Christ.*

(1.) So it was here. A great many were now following Christ in addition to the twelve apostles. They were evidently much taken with Christ; they called him a prophet; they wanted to make him a king; they followed him across the sea; and yet, when he told them that he was the bread of heaven, they murmured; when he told them that they must eat his flesh and drink his blood to have eternal life, they said: "This is an hard saying;" and it was for this reason they turned back, and walked no more with Jesus.

(2.) So it is now. A great many persons are much taken with Christ; they have some anxiety about their souls; they follow anxiously after the preaching of the Word; but when we show them that Christ is the bread of heaven—that they must have a personal closing with Christ, as much as if they were to eat his flesh and drink his blood—these souls say: "It is a hard saying, who can bear it?" By and by, they are offended; they believe not; they go back, and walk no more with Jesus. Is any hearing me in this condition? Oh! think again, I beseech you, before you

go back. Oh! seek the teaching of God, and he will show you that none of Christ's sayings are hard sayings, but that they are all sweet and easy. When the heart of a poor Indian was brought under the teaching of God, he said: "Some people complain that the Bible is a hard book; but I have not read so far as to find it a hard book. To me it is all sweet and easy."

2. *Many follow Christ for a time, but when they are told that Christ must dwell in them, they go back, and walk no more with Jesus.*

(1.) So here the multitude that followed Christ were pleased with a great many things in him. When he fed them with the five barley loaves and the two fishes, they said: "Lord, it is good for us to be here"—"This is in truth that prophet that should come into the world." And, again, when Jesus told them of bread from heaven that would give life, they said most devoutly: "Lord, evermore give us this bread." But when Christ said: "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him," by and by they were offended. When he told them that he would be their life, and would dwell in them, they said: "It is a hard saying, who can bear it?" They believed not; they went back, and walked no more with Jesus.

(2.) So in some instances with Nicodemus. When he regarded Christ as a worker of miracles, this drew the heart of the Jewish ruler, and he said to him: "Rabbi, we know thou art a teacher come from God." But when Jesus told that he must be born again; must be dwelt in by the unseen Spirit of God; Nicodemus found it a hard saying: "How can a man be born when he is old?" And, again: "How can these things be?"

(3.) So now, many persons are much taken with Christ. They are anxious about their souls for a time; and they see some glimpses of Christ as a Saviour. They love to hear the Word; "it is like a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument;" but when Christ says: "Ye must be born again"—"He that eateth me, even he shall live by me"—they say: "This is a hard saying, who can bear it?" 1*st*, They never saw the Spirit, and they say: "How can these things be?" This is one of your mysteries. Therefore, they go back, and walk no more with Jesus. Is any hearing me in this condition? Oh! think a moment before you go back: "Oh! fools, and slow of heart, to believe all that is written concerning Jesus." Why should ye stumble at the blessed word: "He that eateth me shall live by me?" True, you never saw the Spirit; yet trust the word of Him that cannot lie. You never saw the wind, and yet you spread the sail; so trust to that Spirit, though you never saw him. 2*d*, Some of you may fear that if it be true, then you would be deprived of some of your darling pleasures—your heart would be changed, and you would no more have a relish for your present enjoyments: therefore you go back, and

walk no more with Jesus. Oh! how the devil blinds your understanding. Do you not see, that if you lose your relish for your present joys, it will be because you have got a taste for higher and sweeter? You might as wisely refuse to drink better wine, because you would thereby lose your relish for the worse. Oh! the joys of the Holy Ghost are sweeter than all the pleasures of sin. It is wine on the lees, well refined. "Woe unto thee, O Jerusalem! wilt thou not be made clean? When shall it once be?"

3. *Many are awakened to follow Christ, but when they find that they must be drawn to Christ—that all is of free grace—by and by they are offended.*

(1.) So here, the persons that had followed Christ had been laborious and painstaking in following him; they had crossed the sea, and listened to his words for many days together; and doubtless they began to think they had done well, and that they were worthy to be saved for the pains they had taken. But when Jesus told them that salvation was of mere grace; that they were helpless sinners, and needed still to be drawn to Christ by the mere good pleasure of the Father, this offended them to the quick; they turned back, and walked no more with Jesus.

(2.) So, now, many persons set out in religion, thinking that they shall soon bring themselves into a converted state. They take great pains in religion; they confess the sins of their past life, and stir up grief in their hearts because of them; they wait patiently on ordinances, and take much pains to work the works of God: but when they find out that they are not a whit nearer being saved than when they began; when they are told they must be drawn to Christ; that God is not obliged to save them; that they deserve nothing at his hand but a place in hell; that if ever they are saved, it is of mere free grace; then they are offended. They cannot bear this kind of preaching; they go back, and walk no more with Jesus. Is any hearing me, in this condition? Alas! proud sinner, stop one moment before you leave the divine Saviour. Is it a hard saying, that an infinitely hateful rebel and worm should be unable to buy Christ with so many tears and prayers?

1*st Warning.* Many go so far with Christ, who do not go the whole way. Many hear Christ's words for a time with joy and eagerness, who yet are offended by them at last. This is a solemn warning. Do not think you are a Christian because you sit and listen to the words of Christ. Do not think you are a Christian because you have some pleasure in the words of Christ. Many are called; few are chosen. Many went back, and only twelve remained. So doubtless it will be found among you. Those only are Christians who feed upon Christ, and live by him.

2*d Warning.* Those that go back, generally walk no more with Jesus. Perhaps they did not intend to bid an eternal fare-

well to the Saviour. Perhaps they said, as they retired, I will go home and think about it; I will hear him again concerning this matter. At a more convenient season I will follow him. But, alas! that season never came; they walked no more with Jesus. Take warning, dear friends, you that are anxious about your souls. Oh! do not be easily offended. Do not lose a sense of your lost condition. Oh! do not grow careless of your Bible and the means of grace. Oh! do not go back to the company of sinners. These are all marks of one who is going back from Jesus. Wait patiently for the Lord, until he incline his ear and hear your cry. Still press to hear the words of Jesus. Still cry for the teaching Spirit. "If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him;" "No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

II. Lesson. *The careful anxiety of Christ lest his own true disciples should go away:* "Then said Jesus to the twelve, Will ye also go away?" Verse 67.

I have no doubt the heart of Jesus was grieved when the multitude went away, and walked no more with him. That good Shepherd never yet saw a lost sheep running on to destruction, but his heart bled for it: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together!" He could see all the future history of these men; how they would lose all their impressions; how they would harden in their sins; how, like a rolling snowball, they would gather more and more wrath around them, and, I doubt not, he wept in secret over them, and said: "If ye had known, even you; but now they are hid from your eyes." He traced their history up to that hour when he would say: "Depart from me." But however much Christ grieved over their departure, this only fanned the flame of his love to his own, so that he turned round and said: "Will ye also go away?"

1. Observe how much love there is in these words. When the crowd went away, he did not cry after him; his soul was grieved, but he spoke not a word; but when his own believing disciples were in danger of being led away, he speaks to them: "Will ye also go away?" ye whom I have chosen; ye whom I have washed; ye whom I have sanctified and filled with hopes of glory; "Will ye also go away?" Oh! see, Christians, how anxiously Christ watches over you. He is walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, and his word is: "I know thy works." He watches the first decaying of the first love. He speaks aloud: "Will ye also go away?"

2. Observe, Christ keeps his disciples from backsliding by putting the question to them: "Will ye also go away?" It is probable that some of the twelve were inclining to go away with the rest. We are often deceived by example—carried away from Christ before we think of it: but Christ wakens us by the ques-

tion; "Will ye also go away?" Think of this question, you that have known Christ, and yet are going back to sin and the world. May God write it on your hearts: "Will ye also go away?" Christians, if you would keep this word in your heart, it would keep you from the thought of going away.

III. Lesson. *A true believer has none to go to but Christ.*

Both the Bible and experience testify, that believers do oftentimes go away from Christ. The same lips that said: "My Lord, and my God," are often found saying: "I will go after my lovers." But this passage plainly shows that it needs but the word of the tender Saviour to reach the heart of the backslider, and he says: "Lord to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."

Two reasons are here given why the believer cleaves to Christ.

1. "Thou hast the words of eternal life." To unconverted minds the words of Christ are hard sayings; to his own, they are tried words—words of eternal life. The very thing that drives the world away from Christ, draws his own disciples closer and closer to him. The world are offended when Christ says we must eat his flesh; it is a word of eternal life to the Christian. The world go away when they hear of Christ dwelling in the soul; the Christian draws nearer, and says: Lord, evermore dwell in me. The world walk no more with Jesus when they hear, It is all of grace; the Christian bows in the dust, and blesses God, who alone has made him to differ: "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life." Dear friends, try yourselves by this. Are the words of Christ to you hard sayings, or are they the words of eternal life? Oh! may God enable you to judge fairly of your case.

2. "We believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." Ah! it is this that rivets the believing soul to Christ—the certain conviction that Christ is a divine Saviour. If Christ were only a man like ourselves, then how could he be a surety for us? He might suffer in the stead of one man, but how could he suffer in the stead of thousands? Ah! but we believe and are sure that he is the Son of the living God, and therefore I know he is a sufficient surety for me. To whom else can I go for pardon? If Christ were only a man like ourselves, then how could he dwell in us, or give the Spirit to abide with us for ever? But we believe and are sure that he is that Christ, the Son of the living God, and therefore I know he is able to dwell in me, and put the Spirit in me for ever. To whom, then, can I go for a new heart but unto Christ? O dear brethren! have you been thus taught? then blessed are ye; "for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto you, but my Father which is in heaven." Hold

fast by this sure faith—you cannot be too sure, and then you will never, never go away from Christ.

Some of you are very wavering in your life, like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed; at one time cast upon the shore, at another time running back into the sea. There is no decision about your Christianity or about your holiness. Why is this? *Ans.* Unbelief. Oh! if you would believe and be sure, then you would never depart from him. You would say: "To whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."

Dundee, 1837.

SERMON LXVIII.

YE WILL NOT COME TO ME.

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

THERE is nothing more sad, and nothing more strange than that when there is a Saviour that is enough for all the world, so few should come to him to be saved. If a life-boat were sent out to a wreck, sufficient to save all the crew, and if it came back with less than half of them, you would inquire, with anxiety, why the rest had not been saved by it. Just so, when Christ has come to seek and save that which was lost, and yet the vast majority are unsaved, it behooves us to inquire why so many are not saved by Christ. We have the answer in these words: "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."

Doctrine.—Sinners are lost, not by reason of anything in Christ, but by reason of something in themselves. They will not come to Christ, that they might have life.

I. *Show that it is not by reason of anything in Christ that sinners are lost.*

1. *It is not because Christ is not sufficient to save all.*—The whole Bible shows that Christ is quite sufficient to save all the world; that all the world would be saved, if all the world were to come to Christ: "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world." The meaning of that is, not that the sins of the whole world are now taken away. It is quite plain that the whole world is not forgiven at present. (1.) Because the whole world is not saved. (2.) Because God everywhere calls sinners to repentance, and the first work of the Spirit is to convince of sin—of the heavy burden that is now lying on Christless souls. (3.) Because forgiveness in the Bible is everywhere attached to believing. When they brought to Jesus a man sick of the palsy, Jesus seeing his faith, said unto him: "Son, be of good

cheer; thy sins are forgiven thee." Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved. The simple truth of the Bible is, that Christ hath suffered and died in the stead of sinners—as a common person in their stead; and every man that is a sinner hath a right to come.

Christ is quite sufficient for all, and I would prove it by this argument: If he was sufficient for one sinner, then he must be sufficient for all. The great difficulty with God (I speak as a man) was, not how to admit many sinners into his favor, but how to admit one sinner into his favor. If that difficulty has been got over in Jesus Christ, then the whole difficulty has been got over. If one sinner may come unto God clothed in Christ, then all sinners may. If one sinner may have peace with God, and God be yet just and glorious, then every sinner may have peace with him. If Christ was enough for Abel, then he is enough for all that come after. If one dying thief may look to him and be saved, so may every dying thief. If one trembling jailor may believe on Jesus, and rejoice believing, so may every other trembling sinner. O brethren! you may doubt and wrangle about whether Christ be enough for your soul, but if you die Christless, you will see that there was room enough under his wings, but you would not.

2. *Sinners are lost, not because Christ is unwilling to save all.*—The whole Bible shows that Christ is quite willing and anxious that all sinners should come to him. The city of refuge in the Old Testament was a type of Christ; and you remember that its gates were open by night and by day. The arms of Christ were nailed wide open, when he hung upon the cross; and this was a figure of his wide willingness to save all, as he said: "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." But though his arms were firmly nailed, they are more firmly nailed wide open now, by his love and compassion for perishing sinners, than ever they were nailed to the tree.

There is no unwillingness in the heart of Jesus Christ. When people are willing and anxious about something, they do everything that lies in their power to bring it to pass. So did Jesus Christ: "What could have been done more for my vineyard, that I have not done in it?" But if they are very anxious, they will attempt it again and again. So did Jesus Christ: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered your children as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" But if they are still more anxious, they will be grieved if they are disappointed. So was Jesus Christ: "When he came near, he beheld the city, and wept over it." But if they are very anxious, they will suffer pain rather than lose their object. So did Jesus Christ: The good Shepherd gave his life for the sheep. Ah! dear brethren, if you perish, it is not because Jesus wishes you to perish.

A word to anxious souls.—How strange it is that anxious souls

do most of all doubt the willingness of Christ to be their Saviour; yet these should least of all doubt him. If he is a willing Saviour to any, O surely he is a willing Saviour to a weary soul! Remember the blind beggar of Jericho. He was in your case, blind and helpless, and he cried: "Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy upon me." And when the crowd bade him hold his peace, he cried so much the more. Was Jesus unwilling to be that beggar's Saviour? He stood still, and commanded him to be brought, and said: "Thy faith hath made thee whole." He is the same willing Saviour still. Cry after him; and, though the world may bid you hold your peace, cry after him just so much the more.

A word to careless souls.—You say Christ may be a willing Saviour to others, but surely not to you. O yes! he is quite willing for you too. See him sitting by the well of Samaria, convincing one poor sinful woman of her sins, and leading her to himself. He is the same Saviour towards you this day. If you do perish, it is not because Christ is willing. He wills all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. He pleads with you, and says: "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?"

II. *True reasons why men do not come to Jesus Christ.*—It is because they will not come. The reason is not in Christ, but in themselves.

1. *Ignorance of Jesus Christ is one reason why sinners do not come to him.* So it was with the Jews. They, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, would not submit themselves to the righteousness of God. And so it is with many sinners amongst us. They will not come to Jesus Christ, because they do not know him. It is quite amazing the great ignorance which exists in the midst of us. Some who have lived under the preached Word for years, yet do not know who Jesus Christ is. He is an utter stranger to them. Some do not know from whence he came, or whither he has gone, or who sent him into the world, or why he came, and why he suffered and obeyed. Many more have no personal knowledge of Jesus Christ. They have had no revelation of Chirst made to them. They are ignorant of his beauty and fitness to their own case as a Saviour; and therefore they will not come to Christ to have life. In a shower of rain, you would not turn aside into a shelter unless you knew that there was a shelter there. Though you had lived at the time of the flood, if you lived in complete ignorance of the ark, it is plain you would not have fled to it; or even if you had known it, and seen it, and heard of it, yet if you did not know the use of it, you would never have fled to it. So is it with sinners now. Many do not know about Jesus Christ, though he is the only ark; and therefore they will not come to him. Many know something about Jesus Christ, but they do not know the use of him to their perishing souls; and so they also will not come to Christ to have life.

Do not live in ignorance of him, dear souls, I beseech you. Seek for him as for silver, yea, search for him as for hid treasures. Do not say you are too old to learn. If the Spirit be your teacher, he can make it quite easy. He can take of the things of Christ, and show them unto you. Do not say you are too young to learn. Happiest they who know him soonest! Happy lambs, that are soon gathered into the Saviour's bosom!

2. *Another reason why sinners do not come to Christ is, that they have no sense that they need him.* If you had slain a man, but had no sense that the blood-avenger was pursuing you, you would not flee to the city of refuge. If your vessel was sinking, but you did not perceive it, you would not get into the life-boat. If you were sick and dying, but had no sense of it, you would not send for the physician. Just so, if you have no sense of being under the wrath of God, and exposed to hell, you will not come to Christ, that you may have life. If you look around, you will see that the most of men have no feeling of anxiety about their souls. You will find men anxious about their families; about their money or their goods; about their character in the world; but, ah! where do you find men anxious about their souls? If you ask me why so few come to Jesus Christ, I answer, Because so few are anxious about their souls. Now, if a man be never awakened to flee from wrath, it is plain and certain that he will never come to Jesus Christ. The three thousand were pricked in their hearts, and then inquired after Christ. The jailor trembled for his soul, and then was brought to rejoice in Christ Jesus. But no one was ever brought to Christ without being convinced of sin.

Careless persons, you should seek these convictions; you should cry to God for them; you should try to get your heart made alive to the sadness of your natural condition; for if you are never awakened, you will never come to Jesus Christ; you will never be saved.

Anxious persons, you should seek to keep up these convictions. They are easily lost. You should cry to God to make them deeper on your heart. If you lose them, they may never come back. You may become another Lot's wife—a pillar of salt. If you lose them, you will never come to Christ, and never be saved.

3. *A third reason why sinners do not come to Christ is, that the heart rises against him.* Many are brought, in some measure, to a sense of their sin and lost condition, who yet cannot be persuaded to come to Jesus Christ. It is not anything in Christ that prevents them—it is something that rises up in their own heart. Christ is quite open—he is a door which no man can shut; and they would fain be at rest in him, and yet their proud heart rises up against him.

There may be two reasons for this: (1.) Perhaps your anxiety has set you upon establishing your own righteousness; and, there-

fore, you are too proud to come to Jesus Christ. This was the way with the Jews. They were not only ignorant of God's righteousness, but they were about to establish their own righteousness; and, therefore, they would not submit to the righteousness of God. Perhaps you thought, when you were first awakened, that you would soon find your way to peace. You thought, by tears, and prayers, and amendment of your life, to blot out past sin. You have been making a false Christ to yourself, and that is the reason you do not like the true Christ; and Christ says of you: "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life." To come to Christ, you would need to forsake your own righteousness—to confess that your wisdom is folly—to lie down empty, and vile, and without praise, and to consent that Jesus Christ shall have all the praise; but your proud, self-flattering heart rises against this; and this is the reason you perish: "You will not come to me, that you might have life." (2.) Another way in which anxious souls keep away from Christ is this: You have been shaken off from all dependence on your own repentance, or prayers, or amendment, to make you righteous in the sight of God. You have laid you down in the dust, and confessed that, if ever you are to be justified, it must be through the obedience and sufferings of the Son of God. Now, you have lain so long thus emptied, that you think Jesus Christ should have been revealed to you by this time. In a word, you have been humbling yourself to make yourself worthy of Jesus Christ. Alas! this is a still prouder thought than the one before. You are not seeking to buy forgiveness from God by your humblings and by your tears, but you are seeking to buy Christ from God by these humblings. You think that your humblings and tears deserve Christ; so that you have been attempting to buy that which buys forgiveness. This is a deep snare of the devil, which hinders many anxious souls from coming to Jesus Christ without money and without price.

There is reason to think that many souls perish in this way. They fulfil this sad word of Christ: "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." I would leave two directions with anxious souls. (1.) You must be made willing to come to Jesus Christ, if you would be saved. You cannot be saved against your will. Some people have hopes that they will be lifted into Christ against their will. This is impossible. Noah was not lifted into the ark, but God said: "Come in." So Christ's people are a willing people. They come willingly, with all their heart and soul. Not only do they flee willingly from wrath, but they flee willingly to Jesus Christ; they choose to be saved by him rather than any other way. If there were ten thousand other saviours, they would still choose Christ; for he is the chiefest among ten thousand, and they feel it sweetest and best to be nothing and have nothing, that Christ may be all in all. (2.) God only can bend your will to come to Jesus Christ: "No man can call

Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." It is God that must beat down all your proud imaginations. It is he that must reveal your guilt and nakedness. He must make you feel the emptiness and sin of all your self-righteousness. He must reveal the beauty of Christ unto you, his comeliness, his desirableness. He must convince you that it is sweetest to have no praise, and to let Jesus have the whole. Oh! seek the teaching of God. The teaching of man is a mere dream, if you have not the teaching of God. Cry night and day for the inward teaching of the Spirit. "Every man, therefore, that hath heard and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me;" and, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."

III. *The sinfulness of not coming to Jesus Christ.*

The words of Jesus are full of pathos—enough to break the proudest heart: "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."

1. The greatness of the Saviour shows the sinfulness of not coming to him. He is the eternal Son of God whom sinners are despising. John bore witness of him; his miracles bore witness to him; his Father bore witness of him; the Scriptures, on every page, testify of him; yet ye will not come to him that ye might have life. It is the Son of God that hath undertaken the doing and dying of all in the stead of sinners; and yet you, a trembling sinner, will not honor him so much as to trust your soul upon his finished work. Ah! how shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation?

2. The loveliness of the Saviour shows the sin of not coming to him. Methinks there is a touch of heaven's melody in these words: "Ye will not come to me." I know not whether they more express the high indignation of an insulted Saviour, or the tender compassion of him that wept upon the Mount of Olives, over Jerusalem. It is as if he said; I have left the bosom of the Father, to suffer, and bleed, and die, for sinners, even the chief; yet, O sinner! ye will not come unto me. I have sought the lost sheep over mountain and hill; I have stretched out my hands all the day to the gainsaying and disobedient; I have cried after sinners, and wept over sinners; and yet ye will not come to me, that ye might have life. Ah! dear brethren, if sin against love be the blackest sin under the blue vault of heaven, this is your sin, because ye trample under foot the blood of the Son of God, and do despite unto the gentle Spirit of grace.

3. The very anxiety of some sinners increases their sin. Some sinners are very anxious about their souls, yet will not come to Jesus Christ. They are in search of a saviour, but they will not have Jesus Christ. Are there not some of you who would do anything else to be saved: "Will the Lord be pleased with

thousands of rams, or with tens of thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" If we would bid you pray and weep, you would do that; if we would bid you fast and use the shirt of hair, you would do that; if we would bid you afflict your soul and body, and make pilgrimage to the Holy Land, you would do that; if we would bid you live as monks and nuns, you would do that, as thousands are doing this day; but when we say, Come to Christ, ah! you will not do that. Ah! proud, sinful, self-ruining heart, you would choose any balm but the Balm of Gilead, any Saviour but the Son of God.

Oh! that these words of the sweet Saviour, whom you thus despise, would pierce to the very bottom of your soul; "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."

St. Peter's, July 30, 1837.

SERMON LXIX.

IF ANY MAN THIRST.

"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink."—John vii., 37.

I. Lesson. *Christ's gracious importunity:* "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried."

The feast here spoken of was the great feast of tabernacles, being one of the three yearly festivals, when all the males came up from the country to Jerusalem. They used to build tents, or tabernacles, of the branches of palm trees, olive, myrtle, and willows, on the flat roofs of their houses, in their courts, or in the open streets and gardens. In these they lived for seven days. The priests and Levites used to teach and preach to the people, and it was a time of great joy before the Lord. The eighth, or last day, was a holy convocation, when all the people met in the house of God before going away to their homes. On that day it was that Jesus stood and cried.

1. Observe, it was when the whole people of the land were met together that Jesus stood and cried: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." Jesus never thought his words thrown away, even if there were but a single soul to hear. Never did he use words of more divine power than when he spoke with Nicodemus alone by night, and with the woman of Samaria by the well; but still, when thousands came together, Jesus would not miss the happy opportunity: "Jesus stood and cried." O my

friends! Jesus still stands in the crowded assembly. May you hear his voice this day!

2. Observe, the people were going home. This was the last day of the feast. To-day the courts of the temple are thronged with Jews from all parts of the country; to-morrow they will be on their way home. No time must be lost; speak now or never; "Jesus stood and cried." I doubt not there was many a Jew there that day who never heard the voice of the Saviour again; and therefore I can see what was in the mind of Christ when he lifted up his voice so loud: "Jesus stood and cried." There may be some here to-day who never will hear the word of Christ again. This may be the last day of the feast to some of you. Oh! then, that we might stand and cry, lift up the voice like a trumpet, and say, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink;" and O that you would hear as for eternity!

3. Observe, Christ had often preached to them before, yet he "stood and cried." From verse 14 we learn that it was about the middle of the feast (the middle of the week) that Jesus began to teach in the temple; and no doubt he continued preaching and teaching till the last day of the feast. Some marvelled, some murmured, some sought to lay hands on him. And was his patience not wearied out? Ah! no; who knows the long-suffering of the Son of God? How justly he might have gone away for ever, and said, "If ye will not have me for a Saviour, then I will not be a Saviour unto you, I will go my way to Him that sent me." But no: the more careless the Jews became, the more anxious he became. On the last day he stood and cried, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink."

Jesus is the same still. Many of you have heard his words for a thousand Sabbath-days. He has stretched out his hands all the day; he has sent all his messengers, rising up early and sending them. You have been always unmoved—living in sin—worse than you were. Does Jesus give you up? No; he stands and cries on the last day; he follows you to your dying day.

Some of you are afraid that Jesus will not receive you now, for you have so long resisted his words. Ah! it would be quite just if he were to say: "I will not hear; I will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh." But no; be not afraid. On the last day of the feast he stands and cries. He speaks more loudly, more clearly, more freely than ever. Oh! listen to his words: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink."

II. Lesson. *Christ is the smitten rock.*

The feast of tabernacles was intended to be a picture of the time when the fathers of the Jewish nation lived in tents in the wilderness. It was intended to remind them that they too were strangers and pilgrims in the wilderness, and that they were jour-

neying to a better land. But there was one thing in the wilderness which they had no resemblance of in the feast of tabernacles—the smitten rock which gave out rivers of water. In order to make up for this deficieney, it is said that on the last day of the feast the Jews used to draw water in a golden pitcher from the Fountain of Siloam, and pour it out upon the morning sacrifice, as it lay upon the altar. They did this with great rejoicing, having palm branches in their hand, and singing the 12th chapter of Isaiah. Now it was on this very day—perhaps at this very time—that Jesus stood up in the midst of them, and—as if he wished to show them that he was the true smitten rock—cried: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink."

Now, Christ is the smitten rock, because his blood has been poured out for sin. (1.) The rock was smitten before it gave out the stream. So is it with Christ. He was smitten of God and afflicted. He bore the wrath of God; and therefore his blood gushed forth, and eleanses from all sin. Oh! you that fear to be smitten of God, wash in this blood; it flowed from a smitten rock. (2.) The water gushed forth abundantly when Moses smote the rock. It was no scanty stream; it was enough for all the thousands of Israel, and for their cattle; and so is it with the blood of the Saviour. It is no scanty stream. There are no sins it cannot wash out; there is no sinner beyond its reach; there is enough here for all the thousands of Israel. (3.) It was a constant supply: "They drank of the spiritual rock which followed them, and that rock was Christ." We are not expressly told in the Old Testament that the waters of the smitten rock did actually follow the camp of Israel, but some learned divines are of opinion that it was so—that the water continued to flow wherever Israel went; so that it might be said the smitten rock followed them. So is it with Christ. He is a rock that follows us. He is like rivers of water in a dry place. You may wash, and wash again.

III. Lesson. *All are invited to come to Christ and drink:* "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink."

1. *Careless sinners are here invited to come to Christ and drink.* Men in their natural condition are quite careless about their souls and about Jesus Christ. They thirst after pleasure, they thirst after money, and they thirst after the world; but they do not thirst after Christ or heavenly things. Yet Christ wishes us to cry aloud in the hearing of such: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." Let me speak to such. You have no anxiety of soul, no desires after Jesus Christ, no wish to receive his Holy Spirit. You are not thirsty for anything beyond the waters of this world; you are quite happy where you are, and as you are; yet the day may come when you shall be a weary, thirsty soul. O that it may come soon! Now Jesus says: "If ever you feel thirsty, remember,

come unto me, and drink." "How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and ye scorners delight in scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn ye at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you; I will make known my words unto you."

2. *Anxious, thirsty souls, are especially invited to come unto Jesus:* "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." Souls awakened by God are thirsty in two ways. (1.) They thirst after the forgiveness of sins; they have been awakened to know their lost condition; the weight of God's anger has been revealed to them. They go from mountain to hill seeking a resting-place, and finding none. At last they sit down, weary and thirsty. They feel that all they do just signifies nothing—that they cannot bring themselves nearer to peace. They feel as if already in that place where they shall ask in vain for a drop of water to cool the tongue. Do any of you know what this condition is? Then you are here spoken to by Christ. (2.) They thirst after deliverance from sin. Awakened persons generally put away all outward sin. When a drunkard or swearer is awakened, he puts away his outward sin; but he is far from being able to change his heart. On the contrary, most wicked and hateful thoughts sometimes rise into the soul. The heart is filled with such vile desires that the soul is almost driven to distraction. He goes from mountain to hill seeking a new heart, but finding none. He sits down, at last, weary and thirsty. Do any of you feel this? It is to you Christ speaks: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink."

O thirsty souls!—afflicted, tempest-tost, and not comforted—why will ye not come unto Jesus, the smitten rock, to drink? One says, I have sinned too much—I dare not come as I am. *Ans.* But are you not thirsty? Christ says: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." Another says, I have sinned against Christ—I have turned a deaf ear to his warning voice—I have mocked at his messengers—I have profaned his sacraments—eaten bread and wine when I was living in sin; and surely I dare not come. But are you not thirsty? Hear what Christ says: "If any man thirst." Another says: But I am unwilling to come to Christ—I have a proud, unbelieving heart—my heart rises against coming to Jesus Christ; surely I dare not look to Jesus. But are you not thirsty? Christ does not ask the willing or the believing, but the thirsty. He asks no more: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink."

3. *Thirsty believers are here bid to come to Jesus.* Among the crowd on that great day of the feast, we are told that there were many who believed on Jesus (verse 31); and it was for their sakes also that he spake these blessed words: "If any man thirst." All true believers are a thirsty people. They are travelling in a wilderness, and therefore they need the rock to follow them. Oh! it is a bad sign of a soul when there is no thirst. True Christians

are like new-born babes; they desire the sincere milk of the Word; they need nourishment, and need it often; they cannot live without it. Oh, then, hear the word of Jesus: "Come unto me, and drink."

(1.) Remember you must come to Christ before you can drink. It is only when you have a believing view of the Saviour that you can receive the Spirit. It is only when your eye is fixed on the smitten rock that you can drink of the living water. Are there not some Christians hearing me who seem to receive very little of the Spirit of God? Are there not some Christians among you who often exhibit a mean, worldly spirit?—some who are easily betrayed into a fiery, passionate spirit? Why is this? *Ans.* You do not come to Jesus to drink; you do not keep the eye of faith on Jesus Christ; you do not live by faith on the Son of God. You are thinking to walk holily without coming unto Jesus day by day, and hour by hour. You do not look on the Lord our strength at God's right hand; therefore you receive little of the Holy Ghost.

(2.) Remember when you come to Jesus you must drink. O how many seem to come to Jesus Christ, and yet do not drink! How few Christians are like a tree planted by the rivers of water! What would you have thought of the Jews, if, when Moses smote the rock, they had refused to drink? or what would you have thought if they had only put the water to their lips? Yet such is the way with most Christians. It pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell. The Spirit was given to him without measure. The command is given to us to draw out of his fulness; yet who obeys? Not one in a thousand. A Christian in our day is like a man who has got a great reservoir brimful of water. He is at liberty to drink as much as he pleases, for he never can drink it dry; but instead of drinking the full stream that flows from it, he dams it up, and is content to drink the few drops that trickle through. O that ye would draw out of his fulness, ye that have come to Christ! Do not be misers of grace. There is far more than you will use in eternity. The same waters are now in Christ that refreshed Paul—that gave Peter his boldness—that gave John his affectionate tenderness. Why is your soul less richly supplied than theirs? Because you will not drink: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink."

IV. Lesson. *The change on all who drink—they become fountains like Christ:* "He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."—John vii., 38.

The Holy Spirit is an imperishable stream. It is not like those rivers of which you have heard which flow through barren sands till they sink into the earth and disappear. Not so the stream of grace. When it flows from Jesus Christ, it flows into

many a barren heart; but it is never lost there. It appears again, it flows forth from that heart in rivers of living water. When a soul is brought to believe on Jesus, and to drink in the Spirit, it often appears as if the Spirit were lost in that soul. The stream flows into such a barren heart, that it is long before it makes its appearance; but it is never lost. The Scripture must be fulfilled: "He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

1. *A new motive for coming to Jesus.*—If you will come to Jesus and drink, you shall become a fountain, you shall be changed into the image of Christ. Are there none of you living in a godless family? O come to Jesus and drink! You will become a fountain of grace to your family. Through your heart, through your words, through your prayers, the stream of grace will flow into other hearts. Those you love best in all the world may in this way receive grace. O come unto Jesus and drink! Many of you live in a godless neighborhood, come to Jesus and drink, and you will become a fountain of grace to your neighborhood. From you shall flow rivers of living water. O if all of you that know the Lord Jesus would only drink out of his fulness, even this neglected place might become as the garden of the Lord, well watered everywhere!

2. *New test if you have come to Jesus.*—If you have believed on Jesus, then you have received the Spirit, and from you there must be flowing rivers of living water. Is this the case? Alas! how many of you must answer, No; we know not what you mean.

(1.) Are there not some hearing me whose heart is more like a sink of iniquity than a fountain of living water? Are there not some who send forth from their heart rivers that pollute and poison every place where they go? Are there not some who send forth streams of horrid imaginations and impure desires? Are there not some who send forth polluting conversation, foolish, lascivious talking and jesting, which are not convenient? Ah! how plain you have never been brought to Jesus! The river of grace has never been turned into that foul bosom.

(2.) Are there not some who are like a fountain sealed? They seem to come to Jesus, but they do not give out any living stream. I stand in doubt of you.

Every one that believes on the Lord Jesus must receive the Spirit. Every one that receives the Spirit will make it manifest by sending forth rivers of living water. Be not deceived, my dear friends. He that doeth righteousness is righteous. If you are living a dead, useless life, you are no Christian. "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith. Prove your ownselves. Know ye not your ownselves how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobate?"

St. Peter's, October 22, 1837.

SERMON LXX.

CONVICTION OF SIN.

"And when he [the Comforter] is come, he will convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."—John xvi., 8.

When friends are about to part from one another, they are far kinder than ever they have been before. It was so with Jesus. He was going to part from his disciples, and never till now did his heart flow out towards them in so many streams of heavenly tenderness. Sorrow had filled their heart, and therefore divinest compassion filled his heart. "I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go away."

Surely it was expedient for himself that he should go away. He had lived a life of weariness and painfulness, not having where to lay his head, and surely it was pleasant in his eyes that he was about to enter into his rest. He had lived in obscurity and poverty, he gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; and now, surely, he might well look forward with joy to his return to that glory which he had with the Father before ever the world was, when all the angels of God worshipped him; and yet he does not say, It is expedient for me that I go away. Surely that would have been comfort enough to his disciples. But no; he says, "It is expedient for you." He forgets himself altogether, and thinks only of his little flock which he was leaving behind him: "It is expedient for you that I go away." O most generous of Saviours! He looked not on his own things, but on the things of others also. He knew that it is far more blessed to give than it is to receive.

The gift of the Spirit is the great argument by which he here persuades them that his going away would be expedient for them. Now, it is curious to remark that he had promised them the Spirit before in the beginning of his discourse. In chap. xiv., 16–18, he says: "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you again." And again: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." Verse 26. In that passage he promises the Spirit for their own peculiar comfort and joy. He promises him as a treasure which they, and they only, could receive: "For the world cannot receive him, because it

neither sees nor knows him;" and yet, saith he, 'he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." But in the passage before us the promise is quite different. He promises the Spirit here, not for themselves, but for the world; not as a peculiar treasure, to be locked up in their own bosoms, which they might brood over with a selfish joy, but as a blessed power to work, through their preaching, on the wicked world around them; not as a well springing up within their own bosoms unto everlasting life, but as rivers of living water flowing through them to water this dry and perishing world; for he does not say, When he is come he will fill your hearts with peace and joy to overflowing; but, "When he is come, he will convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." But a little before he had told them that the world would hate and persecute them; "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." John xv., 19. This was but poor comfort, when that very world was to be the field of their labors; but now he shows them what a blessed gift the Spirit would be; for he would work, through their preaching, upon the very hearts that hated and persecuted them. "He shall convince the world of sin." This has always been the case. In Acts ii. we are told that when the Spirit came on the apostles the crowd mocked them, saying: "These men are full of new wine;" and yet, when Peter preached, the Spirit wrought through his preaching on the hearts of these very scoffers. They were pricked in their hearts, and cried: "Men and brethren, what must we do?" and the same day three thousand souls were converted. Again, the jailer at Philippi was evidently a hard, cruel man towards the apostles; for he thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks; and yet the Spirit opens his hard heart, and he is brought to Christ by the very apostles whom he hated. Just so is it, brethren, to this day. The world do not love the true ministers of Christ a whit better than they did. The world is the same world it was in Christ's day. That word has never yet been scored out of the Bible: "Whosoever will live godly in the world, must suffer persecution." We expect, as Paul did, to be hated by the most who listen to us. We are quite sure, as Paul was, that the more abundantly we love you, most of you will love us the less; and yet, brethren, none of these things move us. Though cast down, we are not in despair; for we know that the Spirit is sent to convince the world; and we do not fear but some of you who are counting us an enemy, because we tell you the truth, may even this day, in the midst of all your hatred and cold indifference, be convinced of sin by the Spirit, and made to cry out: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

I. *The first work of the Spirit is to convince of sin.*

1. *Who it is that convinces of sin:* "He shall convince the world of sin, because they believe not in me." It is curious to remark, that wherever the Holy Ghost is spoken of in the Bible, he is spoken of in terms of gentleness and love. We often read of the wrath of God the Father, as in Rom. i.; "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." And we often read of the wrath of God the Son: "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way;" or, "Revealed from heaven taking vengeance;" but we nowhere read of the wrath of God the Holy Ghost. (1.) He is compared to a dove, the gentlest of all creatures. (2.) He is warm and gentle as the breath: "Jesus breathed on them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." (3.) He is gentle as the falling dew: "I will be as the dew unto Israel." (4.) He is soft and gentle as oil; for he is called "The oil of gladness." The fine oil wherewith the high priest was anointed was a type of the Spirit. (5.) He is gentle and refreshing as the springing well: "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life. (6.) He is called "The Spirit of grace and of supplications." He is nowhere called the Spirit of wrath. (7.) He is called the "Holy Ghost, which is the Comforter." Nowhere is he called the Avenger. (8.) We are told that he groans within the heart of a believer, "helping his infirmities;" so that he greatly helps the believer in prayer. We are told also of the love of the Spirit, nowhere of the wrath of the Spirit. We are told of his being grieved: "Grieve not the Holy Spirit;" of his being resisted: "Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost;" of his being quenched: "Quench not the Spirit." But these are all marks of gentleness and love. Nowhere will you find one mark of anger or of vengeance attributed to him; and yet, brethren, when this blessed Spirit begins his work of love, mark how he begins; he convinces of sin. Even he, all-wise, almighty, all-gentle and loving though he be, cannot persuade a poor sinful heart to embrace the Saviour, without first opening up his wounds, and convincing him that he is lost.

Now, brethren, I ask of you, Should not the faithful minister of Christ just do the very same? Ah! brethren, if the Spirit, whose very breath is gentleness and love; whom Jesus hath sent into the world to bring men to eternal life; if he begins his work in every soul that is to be saved, by convincing of sin, why should you blame the minister of Christ if he begins in the very same way? Why should you say that we are harsh, and cruel, and severe, when we begin to deal with your souls by convincing you of sin? "Am I become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" When the surgeon comes to cure a corrupted wound; when he tears off the vile bandages which unskilful hands had wrapped around it; when he lays open the deepest recesses of your wound, and shows you all its venom and its virulence, do you call him cruel? May

not his hands be all the time the hands of gentleness and love? Or, when a house is all on fire; when the flames are bursting out from every window; when some courageous man ventures to alarm the sleeping inmates, bursts through the barred door, tears aside the close-drawn curtains, and with eager hand shakes the sleeper, bids him awake and flee, a moment longer and you may be lost, do you call him cruel? or do you say this messenger of mercy spoke too loud—too plain? Ah, no. "Skin for skin; all that a man hath will he give for his life." Why, then, brethren, will you blame the minister of Christ when he begins by convincing you of sin? Think you that the wound of sin is less venomous or deadly than a wound in the flesh? Think you the flames of hell are less hard to bear than the flames of earth? The very Spirit of love begins by convincing you of sin; and are we less the messengers of love because we too begin by convincing you of sin? Oh, then, do not say that we have become your enemy because we tell you the truth.

II. *What is this conviction of sin?* I would begin to show this by showing you what it is not.

1. *It is not the mere smiting of the natural conscience.* Although man be utterly fallen, yet God has left natural conscience behind in every heart, to speak for him. Some men, by continual sinning, sear even the conscience as with a hot iron, so that it becomes dead and past feeling; but most men have so much natural conscience remaining that they cannot commit open sin without their conscience smiting them. When a man commits murder or theft, no eye may have seen him, and yet conscience makes a coward of him. He trembles, and is afraid; he feels that he has sinned, and he fears that God will take vengeance. Now, brethren, that is not the conviction of sin here spoken of; that is a natural work which takes place in every heart; but conviction of sin is a supernatural work of the Spirit of God. If you have had nothing more than the ordinary smiting of conscience, then you have not been convinced of sin.

2. *It is not any impression upon the imagination.* Sometimes, when men have committed great sin, they have awful impressions of God's vengeance made upon their imaginations. In the nighttime they almost fancy they see the flames of hell burning beneath them; or they seem to hear doleful cries in their ears telling of coming woe; or they fancy they see the face of Jesus all clouded with anger; or they have terrible dreams, when they sleep, of coming vengeance. Now, this is not the conviction of sin which the Spirit gives. This is altogether a natural work upon the natural faculties, and not at all a supernatural work of the Spirit. If you have had nothing more than these imaginary terrors, you have had no work of the Spirit.

3. *It is not a mere head knowledge of what the Bible says against*

sin. Many unconverted men read their Bibles, and have a clear knowledge that their case is laid down there. They are sensible men. They know very well that they are in sin, and they know just as well that the wages of sin is death. (1.) One man lives a swearer, and he reads the words, and understands them perfectly: "Swear not at all." "The Lord will hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." (2.) Another man lives in the lusts of the flesh, and he reads the Bible, and understands these words perfectly: "No unclean person hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." (3.) Another man lives in habitual forgetfulness of God; never thinks of God from sunrise to sunset, and yet he reads: "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God." Now, in this way, most unconverted men have a head knowledge of their sin, and of the wages of sin; yet, brethren, this is far from conviction of sin. This is a mere natural work in their head. Conviction of sin is a work of God upon the heart. If you have had nothing more than this head knowledge that you are sinners, then you have never been convinced of sin.

4. *Conviction of sin is not to feel the loathsomeness of sin.* This is what a child of God feels. A child of God has seen the beauty and excellency of God, and, therefore, sin is loathsome in his eyes. But no unconverted person has seen the beauty and excellency of God; therefore, even the Spirit cannot make him feel the loathsomeness of sin. Just as when you leave a room that is brilliantly lighted, and go out into the darkness of the open air, the night looks very dark; so when a child of God has been within the veil, in the presence of his reconciled God, in full view of the Father of lights, dwelling in light inaccessible and full of glory—then, when he turns his eye inwards upon his own sinful bosom, sin appears very dark, very vile, and very loathsome. But an unconverted soul never has been in the presence of the reconciled God; and therefore sin cannot appear dark and loathsome in his eyes. Just as when you have tasted something very sweet and pleasant, when you come to taste other things, they appear very insipid and disagreeable; so when a child of God has tasted and seen that God is gracious, the taste of sin in his own heart becomes very nauseous and loathsome to him. But an unconverted soul never tasted the sweetness of God's love; he cannot, therefore, feel the vileness and loathsomeness of sin. This, then, is not the conviction of sin here spoken of.

What, then, is this conviction of sin? *Ans.* It is a just sense of the dreadfulness of sin. It is not a mere knowledge that we have many sins, and that God's anger is revealed against them all; but it is a heart-feeling that we are under sin. Again: it is not a feeling of the loathsomeness of sin—that is felt only by the children of God: but it is a feeling of the dreadfulness of sin, of the dishonor it does to God, and of the wrath to which it exposes the

soul. Oh, brethren! conviction of sin is no slight natural work upon the heart. There is a great difference between knowing a thing and having a just sense of it. There is a great difference between knowing that vinegar is sour, and actually tasting and feeling that it is sour. There is a great difference between knowing that fire will burn us, and actually feeling the pain of being burned. Just in the same way, there is all the difference in the world between knowing the dreadfulness of your sins and feeling the dreadfulness of your sins. It is all in vain that you read your Bibles and hear us preach, unless the Spirit use the words to give sense and feeling to your dead hearts. The plainest words will not awaken you as long as you are in a natural condition. If we could prove to you, with the plainness of arithmetic, that the wrath of God is abiding on you and your children, still you would sit unmoved—you would go away and forget it before you reached your own door. Ah, brethren, he that made your heart, can alone impress your heart. It is the Spirit that convinceth you of sin.

1. *Learn the true power of the read and preached Word.* It is but an instrument in the hand of God. It has no power of itself, except to produce natural impressions. It is a hammer, but God must break your hearts with it. It is a fire, but God must kindle up your bosoms with it. Without knowing him we may give you a knowledge of the dreadfulness of your condition, but he only can give you a just sense and feeling of the dreadfulness of your condition. The most powerful sermon in the world can make nothing more than a natural impression; but when God works through it, the feeblest word makes a supernatural impression. Many a poor sermon has been the means by which God hath converted a soul. Children of God, O that you would pray night and day for the lifting up of the arm of God!

2. *Learn that conversion is not in your own power.* It is the Spirit alone who convinces of sin, and he is a free agent. He is a sovereign Spirit, and has nowhere promised to work at the bidding of unconverted men. He hath many on whom he will have mercy; and whom he will he hardeneth. Perhaps you think you may take your fill of sin just now, and then come and repent, and be saved; but remember the Spirit is not at your bidding. He is not your servant. Many hope to be converted on their death-bed; and they come to their death-bed, and yet are not converted. If the Spirit be working with you now, do not grieve him, do not resist him, do not quench him; for he may never come back to you again.

III. *I come to the argument which the Spirit uses.* There are two arguments by which the Spirit usually gives men a sense of the dreadfulness of sin.

1. *The Law:* "The law is our schoolmaster to bring us to

Christ." "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God." The sinner reads the law of the great God who made heaven and earth. The Spirit of God arouses his conscience to see that the law condemns every part of his life. The law bids him love God. His heart tells him he never loved God, never had a thought of regard towards God. The Spirit convinces him that God is a jealous God, that his honor is concerned to uphold the law, and destroy the sinner. The Spirit convinces him that God is a just God, that he can by no means clear the guilty. The Spirit convinces him that he is a true God, that he must fulfil all his threatenings: "Have I said it, and shall I not do it?" The sinner's mouth is stopped, and he stands guilty before God.

2. *The second argument is the Gospel:* "Because they believe not on Jesus." This is the strongest of all arguments, and therefore is chosen by Christ here. The sinner reads in the Word that "he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life;" and now the Spirit convinces him that he never believed on the Son of God, indeed he does not know what it means. For the first time the conviction comes upon his heart: "He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." The more glorious and divine that Saviour is, the more is the Christless soul convinced that he is lost; for he feels that he is out of that Saviour. He sees plainly that Christ is an almighty ark riding over the deluge of God's wrath; he sees how safe and happy the little company are that are gathered within; but this just makes him gnash his teeth in agony, for he is not within the ark, and the waves and billows are coming over him. He hears that Christ hath been stretching out the hands all the day to the chief of sinners, not willing that any should perish; but then he never cast himself into these arms, and now he feels that Christ may be laughing at his calamity, and mocking when his fear cometh. O yes, my friends! how often on the death-bed, when the natural fears of conscience are aided by the Spirit of God, how often, when we speak of Christ, his love, his atoning blood, the refuge to be found in him, how safe and happy all are that are in him, how often does the dying sinner turn it all away with the awful question: *But am I in Christ?* The more we tell of the Saviour, the more is their agony increased; for they feel that that is the Saviour they have refused. Ah! what a meaning does that give to these words: "The Spirit convinceth of sin, because they believe not on me."

1. Now, my friends, there are many of you who know that you never believed on Jesus, and yet you are quite unmoved. You sit without emotion, you eat your meals with appetite, and doubtless sleep sound at night. Do you wish to know the reason? You have never been convinced of sin. The Spirit hath never begun

his work in your heart. Oh! if the Spirit of Jesus would come on your hearts like a mighty rushing wind, what a dreadful thought it would be to you this night that you are lying out of Christ! You would lose your appetite for this world's food, you would not be able to rest in your bed, you would not dare to live on in your sins. All your past sins would rise behind you like apparitions of evil. Wherever you went you would meet the word; "Without Christ, without hope, and without God in the world;" and if your worldly friends should try to hush your fears, and tell you of your decencies, and that you were not so bad as your neighbors, and many might fear if you feared, ah! how you would thrust them away, and stop your ears, and cry: There is a city of refuge, to which I have never fled; therefore there must be a blood-avenger. There is an ark; therefore there must be a coming deluge. There is a Christ; therefore there must be a hell for the Christless.

2. Some of you may be under conviction of sin; you feel the dreadfulness of being out of Christ, and you are very miserable. Now, (1.) Be thankful for this work of the Spirit: "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father." God hath brought you into the wilderness just that he might allure you, and speak to your heart about Christ. This is the way he begins the work in every soul he saves. Nobody ever came to Christ but they were first convinced of sin. All that are now in heaven began this way. Be thankful you are not dead like those around you. (2.) Do not lose these convictions. Remember they are easily lost. Involve yourself over head and ears in business, and work even on the Sabbath-day, and you will soon drive all away. Indulge a little in sensual pleasure, take a little diversion with companions, and you will soon be as happy and careless as they. If you love your soul, flee these things—do not stay—flee away from them. Read the books that keep up your anxiety—wait on the ministers that keep up that anxiety. Above all, cry to the Spirit, who alone was the author of it, that he would keep it up. Cry night and day that he may never let you rest out of Christ. Oh! would you sleep over hell? (3.) Do not rest in these convictions. You are not saved yet. Many have come thus far, and perished after all; many have been convinced, not converted; many lose their convictions, and wallow in sin again. "Remember Lot's wife." You are never safe till you are within the fold. Christ is the door. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able."

Dundee, Feb. 4, 1837

SERMON LXXI.

CONVICTION OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

"And when he [the Comforter] is come, he will convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."—John xvi., 8

SECOND DISCOURSE.

In my last discourse from this passage we saw that the first work of the Spirit on the heart of a sinner is to convince of sin; to give him a sense of the dreadfulness of his sins, and to make him feel how surely he is a lost sinner. And from that I drew an argument, that it is the duty of all faithful ministers to do the same; that if the Spirit of gentleness and love begins his work on the soul by awakening in it a deep sense of sin and coming wrath, we are not to be called cruel, or harsh, or too plain and outspoken, if we begin in the very same way—by convincing you of sin, and showing every unconverted soul among you how utterly undone you are.

But I now come to the second work of the Spirit, from which he is properly called the Comforter: "He will convince the world of righteousness." When he has first *broken the bones* under a sense of sin, then he reveals the good Physician, and makes the very bones which he hath broken to rejoice. When he had first revealed the coming storm of wrath, so that the sinner knew not where to flee, then he opens the secret chamber, and whispers, Come in hither; it may be thou shalt be hid in the day of the Lord's anger. When he has cast light into the sinner's bosom, and let him see how every action of his life condemns him, and how vain it is to seek for any righteousness there, he then casts light upon the risen Saviour, and says: Look there. He shows the Saviour's finished sufferings and finished obedience, and says: All this is thine, if thou wilt believe in Jesus. Thus does the Spirit lead the soul to accept and close with Christ, freely offered in the Gospel. The first was the awakening work of the Spirit —this is the comforting work of the Spirit. And this shows you plainly that the second work of the faithful minister is to do the very same—to lead weary souls to Christ—to stand pointing not only to the coming deluge, but to the freely offered ark—pointing not only to the threatening storm, but to the strong tower of safety —directing the sinner's eye not only inwards to his sin and misery, but outwards also, to the bleeding, dying, rising, reigning Saviour.

Brethren, he is no minister of Christ who only terrifies and awakens you, who only aims at the first work of the Spirit, to convince you of sin, and aims not at the second work of the Spirit, to convince you of righteousness. He would be like a

surgeon who should tear off the bandages of your wounds, and lay open their deepest recesses, and then leave you like Israel with your sores not closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment. He would be like a man who should awake you when your house was all on fire, and yet leave you without showing you any way of escape.

Brethren, let us rather be taught to follow in the footsteps of the blessed Spirit, the Comforter. He first convinces of sin, and then convinces of righteousuess. And so, brethren, bear with us, when we first awaken you to a sense of the dreadfulness of your sins, and then open the refuge and say, Come in hither, "hide thee as it were for a little moment, till the indignation be overpast."

I know there may be many of you quite offended because we preach Christ to the vilest of sinners. It was so with the Pharisees; and doubtless there are many Pharisees among us. When we enter into the haunts of wickedness and profligacy, and, in accents of tenderness proclaim the simple message of redeeming love, that the wrath of God is abiding on sinners, but that Christ is a Saviour freely offered to them, just as they are; or when a child of sin and misery comes before us, and the minister of Christ first plainly tells of God's wrath against his sin, and then as plainly, and with all affection, of Christ's compassion, and freely offered righteousness; oh! how often the decent, moral men of the world are affronted. The very imagination that the same Saviour is offered as freely to the veriest offscourings of vice as to themselves, this is more than they can bear. What! they cry; do you offer these wretches a Saviour before they have reformed their lives, before they have changed their character? I answer, Yes. The whole need not a physician, but they that are sick; and I beseech you to mark that this is the very way of the Spirit of God.

He is the Holy Spirit, of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. He is the Sanctifier of all that are in Jesus; and yet, when he has convinced a sinner of sin, his next work is to speak peace, to convince that sinner of righteousness. If you ask me, then, why I do not say to the child of sin and shame, Go and reform yourself—become honest and pure, and then I will invite you to the Saviour: I answer, Because even the Spirit, the Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier, does not do this. He first leads the soul into the wilderness, and then he allures it to come to Christ. He first shuts up the soul in prison under a sense of guilt, and then opens a door, reveals Christ an open refuge for the chief of sinners.

Brethren! do not forget it, he is the Comforter before he is the Sanctifier. Ah, then! do not blame us, if, as messengers of Christ, we tread in the very footsteps of that blessed Spirit. If even he, the Holy Sanctifying Spirit, whose very breath is all purity, if even he invite the vilest sinner to put on these beautiful

garments, the divine righteousness of Jesus, do not say that we are favoring sin, that we are the enemies of morality, if we carry this message to the vilest of sinners: "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved."

I. *What is this righteousness?*

I answer, It is the righteousness of Christ, wrought out in behalf of sinners. Now righteousness means righteousness with respect to the law. When a person has not only never broken the law, but has rendered complete obedience to it, that person is righteous. It consists of two parts, then—*first*, freedom from guilt; and *second*, worthiness in the sight of God.

1. *In the case of an unfallen angel*, for example, he may be called righteous in two ways. (1.) He is negatively righteous, because he has never broken the law of God, he has never loved anything which God would not have him love; never done anything which God would not have him do; he has acquired no stain of guilt upon his snow-white garments. But (2), He is positively righteous, because he has fulfilled the law of God. He has obeyed in all things his all-holy will. He has spread his ready wings on every errand which the Father commanded, ministering night and day to the heirs of salvation. In all things he has made it his meat and drink to do the will of his heavenly Father. So, then, he has not only kept his snowy garments clean, but he has gained the laurel wreath of obedience, he is worthy in the sight of God, God smiles on him as he approaches. Now, brethren, both of these put together make up a righteousness in the sight of God.

2. *In the case of unfallen Adam.* (1.) He was negatively righteous. He was made free from all guilt. Innocent and pure he came from the hands of his Maker. Not more truly did the calm rivers of Paradise reflect the blue heaven from their untroubled bosom, than did the tranquil bosom of unfallen Adam reflect the blessed image of God. His soul was spotless as the white robes of angels. His thoughts were all directed heavenward. He had not once broken the law of God, in thought, word, or deed. His will was even with God's will. He had no conscience of sin. But (2) Adam did not acquire a positive righteousness; that is, the righteousness of one who has obeyed the law—who has done the will of God. He was put into Paradise in order to acquire that righteousness. He was put there in pure and holy garments, to acquire the laurel wreath of obedience, like the holy angels. But man fell without acquiring this meritorious righteousness in the sight of God. Now, brethren, both these put together, both freedom from guilt and perfect obedience, make up a perfect righteousness in the sight of God.

3. I come, then, to show that the righteousness of Christ, freely offered to sinners, includes both of these. *There is freedom from*

guilt in Christ, because he is gone to the Father. When he came to this world, he was not free from guilt. He had no sin of his own. Even in his mother's womb he was called "that holy thing;" but yet he did not breathe one moment in this world, but under the load of guilt. When he was an infant in a manger, he was under guilt; when he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, he was under guilt; when he sat down wearied at the well, he was under guilt; when he was in that dreadful agony in the garden, when his sweat was as it were great drops of blood, he was under guilt; when he was in his last agony on the cross, he was under guilt. He had no sin of his own, and yet these are his words: "Innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head; therefore my heart faileth me."

Inquiry.—How do you know that Christ was under guilt?

Answer.—(1.) Because he was under pain. He suffered the pains of infancy in the manger; he suffered weariness, and hunger, and thirst, and great agonies in the garden and on the cross. But God has eternally connected guilt and pain. If there were no guilt there could be no pain. (2.) Because God hid his face from him: "My God, my God." Now, God hides his face from nothing but guilt; therefore Christ was bearing the sins of many. He was all over with guilt. He was as guilty in the sight of God as if he had committed all the sins of his people. What wonder, then, that God hid his face even from his own Son?

But Christ is now free from guilt. He is risen and gone to the Father. When a man is lying under a debt, if he pays it, then he is free from the debt. So Christ was lying under our sins, but he suffered all the punishment, and now is free; he rose, and we see him no more. When a man is banished for so many years, it is unlawful for him to return to his country till the time has expired, and the punishment is borne; but when the time is expired, then he is free from guilt in the eye of the law. He may come back to his home and his country once more. So Christ was banished from the bosom of the Father for a time. God hid his face from him; but when he had borne all that God saw fit to lay on him, then he was free from guilt, he was free to return; and so he did; he rose, and went back to the bosom of the Father from which he came. Do you not see, then, trembling sinner, that there is freedom from all guilt in Christ? He is quite free: he never shall suffer any more. He is now without sin, and when he comes again, he is coming without sin. If you will become one with him, you, too, are free from guilt; you are as free as Christ is; you are as safe from being punished as if you were in heaven with Christ. If you believe on Christ, you are one with him- a member of his body; and as sure as Christ your Head is now passed from the darkness of God's anger into the light of his

countenance, so surely are you, O believer, passed from darkness into God's marvellous light. O what a blessed word was that of Christ, just before he ascended: "I go to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God!" God is now as much ours as he is Christ's.

Inquiry. What good is it to me that Christ is free from guilt?

Answer. Christ is offered to you as your Saviour. *There is perfect obedience in Christ*, because he hath gone to the Father, and we see him no more. When he came to this world, he came not only to suffer, but to do—not only to be a dying Saviour, but also a doing Saviour—not only to suffer the curse which the first Adam had brought upon the world, but to render the obedience which the first Adam had left undone. From the cradle to the cross he obeyed the will of God from the heart. When he came into the world, his word was: "Lo! I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O God; yea, thy law is within my heart." When he was in the midst of his obedience, still he did not change his mind. He says: "I have meat to eat that ye know not of: my meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." And when he was going out of the world, still his word was: "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." So that it is true what an apostle says; that he was "obedient even unto death." The whole law is summed up in these two commands—that we love God and our neighbor. Christ did both. (1.) He loved God perfectly, as God says in the 91st Psalm: "Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him; I will set him on high." (2.) He loved his neighbor as himself. It was out of love to men that he came into the world at all; and everything he did and everything he suffered in the world, was out of love to his neighbor. It was out of love to men that he performed the greatest part of his obedience, namely, the laying down his life. This was the principal errand upon which he came into the world. This was the most dreadful and difficult command which God laid upon him, and yet he obeyed. But a short while before he was betrayed, God gave him an awful view of his coming wrath, in the garden of Gethsemane. He set down the cup before him, and showed that it was a cup without any mixture of mercy in it; and yet Christ obeyed: his human nature shrank back from it, and he prayed: "If it be possible let this cup pass from me;" but he did not waver one moment from complete obedience for he adds: "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt."

Now this is the obedience of Christ, and we know that it is perfect. (1.) Because he was the Son of God, and all that he did must be perfect. (2.) Because he is gone to the Father. He is ascended into the presence of God. And how did the Father receive him? We are told in the 110th Psalm. A door is opened in heaven, and we are suffered to hear the very words with which

God receives his Son: "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies my footstool."

So, then, God did not send him back, as one who had not obeyed perfectly enough. God did not forbid him his presence, as one unworthy to be accepted; but God highly exalted him—looked upon him as worthy of much honor—worthy of a seat on the throne at his right hand. Oh! how plain that Christ is accepted with the Father! how plain that his righteousness is most lovely and all divine in the sight of God the Father.

Hearken, then, trembling sinner! this righteousness is offered to you. It was wrought just for sinners like you, and for none else; it is for no other use but just to cover naked sinners. This is the clothing of wrought gold and the raiment of needlework. This is the wedding-garment—the fine linen, white and clean. Oh! put ye on the Lord Jesus. Why should you refuse your own mercies? Become one with Christ, by believing, and you are not only pardoned, as I showed before, but you are righteous in the sight of God; not only shall you never be cast into hell, but you shall surely be carried into heaven—as surely as Christ is now there. Become one with Christ, and even this moment you are lovely in the sight of God—comely, through his comeliness put upon you. You are as much accepted in the sight of God as is the Son of Man, the Beloved, that sits on his right hand. The Spirit shall be given you, as surely as he is given to Christ. He is given to Christ as the oil of gladness, wherewith he is anointed above his fellows. You are as sure to wear a crown of glory, as that Christ is now wearing his. You are as sure to sit upon Christ's throne, as that Christ is now sitting on his Father's throne. O weep for joy, happy believer! O sing for gladness of heart: "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

II. *What is conviction of righteousness?*

Show what it is not.

1. *It is not any impression on the imagination.* Just as men have often imaginary terrors, so men have also imaginary views of Christ, and of the glory of being in Christ. Sometimes they think they see Christ with the bodily eye; or sometimes they think they hear words borne in upon their mind, telling of the beauty of Christ. Now this is not conviction of righteousness. Indeed, such things may accompany true conversion. There is no impossibility in it. Stephen and Paul both saw Christ, and most of you remember a very singular example of something similar in more modern times. But, however this may be, one thing is certain, that conviction of righteousness is very different from

this. It is a far higher and nobler thing—given only by the Spirit of God. Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed.

2. *It is not a revelation of any new truths not contained in the Bible.* When the Spirit revealed Christ to the apostles and prophets of old, he revealed new truths concerning Christ. But when he convinces a sinner of the righteousness of Christ, he does it by opening up the truths contained in the Bible. If he revealed new truths, then we might put away the Bible, and sit alone, waiting for the Spirit to come down on us. But this is contrary to the Bible and experience. David prays: "Open thou mine eyes, that I may see wonders." Where? Not in heaven above nor earth beneath, but "out of thy law." It is through the truth that the Spirit always works in our hearts: "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy Word is truth." Therefore, when you look for conviction of righteousness, you are not to look for new truths not in the Bible, but for divine light cast upon old truths already in the Bible.

3. *It is not mere head knowledge of what the Bible says of Christ and his righteousness.* Most unconverted men read their Bibles, and many of them understand very wonderfully the doctrine of imputed righteousness; yet these have no conviction of righteousness. All awakened souls read their Bibles very anxiously, with much prayer and weeping; and many of them seem to understand very clearly the truth that Christ is an all-sufficient righteousness; yet they tell us they cannot close with Christ—they cannot apply him to their own case. Again: the devils believe and tremble. The devil has plainly much knowledge of the Bible; and from the quotations he made to Christ, it is plain that he understood much of the work of redemption; and yet he is none the better for it; he only trembles and gnashes his teeth the more. Ah, my friends! if you have no more than head knowledge of Christ and his righteousness, you have no more than devils have; you have never been convinced of righteousness.

What is it?

Answer. It is a sense of the fitness and preciousness of Christ, as he is revealed in the Gospel.

1. I have said it is a sense of the preciousness of Christ, that you may see plainly that it is no imaginary feeling of Christ's beauty; that it is no seeing of Christ with the bodily eyes; that it is no mere knowledge of Christ and of his righteousness in the head, but a feeling of his preciousness in the heart. I before showed you that there is all the difference in the world between knowing a thing and feeling a thing—between having a knowledge of a thing, and having a sense of it. There is all the difference in the world between knowing that honey is sweet, and tasting that it is sweet, so as to have a sense of its sweetness. There is a great difference between knowing that a person is beautiful, and actually seeing, so as to have a present sense of the beauty of the

person. There is a great difference between knowing that a glove will fit the hand, and putting it on, so as to have a sense of its fitness. Just so, brethren, there is all the difference between having a head knowledge of Christ and of his righteousness, and having a heart feeling of his fitness and preciousness. The first may be acquired from flesh and blood, or from books; the second must come from the Spirit of God.

2. Again, I have said, it is a sense of the fitness of Christ. It is conceivable that a person may have a sense of Christ's preciousness, without having a sense of his fitness. Some awakened souls appear to feel that Christ is very precious; and yet they dare not put on Christ: they seem to want a sense of his fitness to their case. They cry out: "O how precious a Saviour he is to all his people!" "O that I were one of his people! O that I were hidden in his bleeding side!" And yet they have no sense of his fitness to be their Saviour; they do not cry out: "He just fits my case!—he is the very Saviour for me!" For, if they felt this, they would be at peace; their lips would overflow with joy. But no; they dare not appropriate Christ. Now, then, conviction of righteousness is to have such a sense of Christ as leads us, without hesitation, to put on Christ; and that I have called a sense of his fitness.

It gives no comfort to know that Christ is a precious Saviour to others, unless I know that he is a precious Saviour to me. If the deluge is coming on—the windows of heaven opening, and the fountains of the great deep broken up—it gives me no peace to know that there is an ark for others, unless you tell me that there is an ark for me. You may tell me of Christ's righteousness for ever, and of the safety of all that are in him; but you must convince me that that righteousness answers me, and is offered to me, else I have no comfort. Now, this is what the Spirit does when he convinces of righteousness. This, and this only, is conviction of righteousness.

O brethren! it is no slight work of nature to persuade a soul, even an anxious soul, to put on Christ. If it were a natural work, then natural means might do it; but it is a supernatural work, and the hand of the Spirit must do it. Flesh and blood cannot reveal Christ unto you, but my Father which is in heaven. No man can call Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

1. *Let all unawakened persons see how far off they are from salvation.* Many of you may be saying just now in your heart: It is quite true I am not at present a saved person; but I am not very far from the kingdom of God. I have just to repent and believe on Jesus, and then I am saved. Now, since this is so short and simple a matter, I may do it any time. I may enjoy the world and its pleasures a little longer; and then, when death or disease threatens me, it may be good time to become anxious. Now, all this argument proceeds upon a falsehood. You think you are not

far off from salvation; but ah! my friend, you are as far from salvation as any one can be that is in the land of the living. There is only one case in which you could be further from salvation, and that is in hell. You are as far from salvation as any one that is out of hell. (1.) In my last discourse, I showed you that there must be a divine work upon your heart before you can repent. You may have much head knowledge of sin without the Spirit, but he only can convince you of sin. That Spirit is a sovereign Spirit. He is given to the children of God as often as they ask him; but he is not at the bidding of unconverted men. You cannot bid him come when you fall sick, or when you are going to die; or if you should bid him, he has nowhere promised to obey. (2.) And now, I wish you to see that there is a second divine work needful on your heart before you can believe. The Spirit must convince you of Christ's righteousness. Flesh and blood cannot reveal Christ unto you, but my Father which is in heaven. That God is a sovereign God. He hath mercy upon whom he will have mercy. He is not at the bidding of unconverted men. He has nowhere promised to bring to Christ all whom he awakens. Oh! how plain that you are as far from salvation as any soul can be that is out of hell. And can you be easy when you are at such a distance from salvation? Can you go and sit down to a game of chance, to while away the time between this and judgment? Can you go and laugh and be merry in your sins? How truly, then, did Solomon say: "The laughter of fools is like the crackling of thorns under a pot"—a loud noise for a moment, then everlasting silence—a short blaze, and a dark eternity.

2. *Some of you may be awakened by God.*

(1.) Remember, unless you attain to conviction of righteousness, your conviction of sin will be all in vain. Remember, anxiety for the soul does not save the soul. Sailors in a shipwreck are very anxious. They cry much to God in prayers and tears; and yet, though they are anxious men, they are not saved men—the vessel goes to pieces, and all are drowned. Travellers in a wilderness may be very anxious; their hearts may die within them; yet that does not show that they are safe; they may perish in the burning sands. So you are much afraid of the wrath of God, and it may be God has, in mercy, stirred up these anxieties in your bosom; but you are not yet saved; unless you come to Christ all will be in vain Many are convinced who are never converted. Many are now in hell who were once as anxious to escape as you.

(2.) Remember, God only can give you this. The Spirit convinces of righteousness. It is not flesh and blood that can give you a sense of the preciousness of Christ. It is true, the Bible and preaching are the means through which God works this conviction. He always works through the truth—never without the truth. If you be truly awakened I know how anxiously you will

wait on these means; how you will search the Scriptures with tears, and lose no opportunity of hearing the preached Word. But still, the Bible and preaching are only means of themselves; they can only make natural impressions on your mind. God only can make supernatural impressions. Cry to God, then.

(3.) But remember, God is a sovereign God. Do not cry to him to convert you, as if it were a debt he owed you. There is only one thing you can claim from God as a right, and that is a place in hell. If you think you have any claim on God, you are deceiving yourself. You are not yet convinced of sin. Lie at the feet of God as a sovereign God—a God who owes you nothing but punishment. Lie at his feet as the God who alone can reveal Christ unto you. Cry night and day that he would reveal Christ unto you—that he would shine into your darkness, and give you the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. One glimpse of that face will give you peace. It may be you shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger.

3. *Some of you have come to Christ.* Oh, what miracles of grace you are! Twice over you are saved by grace. When you were loathsome in your sins, and yet asleep, the Spirit awakened you. Thousands were sleeping beside you. He left thousands to perish, but awakened you.

Again, Though awakened, you were as loathsome as ever: you were as vile in the sight of God as ever, only you dreaded hell. In some respects you were more wicked than the unawakened world around you. They would not come to Christ, because they felt no need. But you felt your need, yet would not come. You made God a liar more than they, yet God had mercy on you. He led you to Christ—convinced you of righteousness. So you are twice over saved by grace. "O to grace how great a debtor!" "What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits?" Will you not love him with all your heart? Will you not serve him with all you have? And when he says: Feed this poor orphan for my sake, will you not say: Lord, when I give for thee, it is more blessed to give than to receive?

Dundee, February 11, 1837

SERMON LXXII.

MY LORD, AND MY GOD.

"And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them. then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord, and my God."—John xx., 26-28.

I. Lesson. *When believers meet together, Jesus stands in the midst, and says: "Peace be unto you."* "His disciples were within," &c. —Verse 26.

It was on the evening of the day in which Jesus rose from the dead that the disciples were assembled together. He had appeared unto Mary Magdalene, and unto Peter, and unto two of the disciples, on the way to Emmaus; and now they were met together to meditate, to wonder, to pray over these things, when Jesus stood in the midst, and said: "Peace be unto you." "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord."

Again: it was upon the same evening, a week after, that the disciples met again; and Jesus again revealed himself to them, saying: "Peace be unto you." This was a fulfilment of the promise which he made long before: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." And again he said: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." This promise has always been, and always will be fulfilled. Jesus still loves the assembly of his saints. If you could look into the private history of Christians, you would find that most of them have been awakened in the house of God; that they were first brought to a soul-refreshing view of Christ there; that they have been comforted there, and have received most of their heavenly joys there. Ah! it is where disciples meet that Jesus comes in and says: "Peace be unto you." David says: "My feet were almost gone; my steps had wellnigh slipped; for I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked, until I went into the sanctuary, then understood I their end." All his difficulties were solved, and he was enabled to say: "God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." So Thomas had spent a most uncomfortable week. These words, "I will not believe," always bring pain and sorrow after them. His mind was full of misgivings and racking doubts; but he came to the meeting of the disciples, and there Jesus revealed himself to him, and he was filled with amazement and joy.

I trust this may be the experience of some this Sabbath-day. Perhaps some have spent a week of trouble instead of peace—a

week of doubting when others are rejoicing. Some of you, when others were glad, said: "I will not believe." Learn from Thomas not to forsake the assembling of yourselves together. Doubting, drooping, trembling, may Christ reveal himself to you, saying: "Peace be unto you."

When the doors were shut, Jesus stood in the midst, and said: "Peace be unto you."

1. *When doors are shut through fear of persecution, Jesus reveals himself to the soul.* So it was with the disciples. They had shut the doors of their upper chamber for fear of the Jews. They were reproached and vilified as those who had been with Christ; nay, there was some fear that they would be made to share the same death; so they shut the doors of the place where they met. But that was the very time Jesus chose to come in. When the world was threatening them, saying, Torments and death be unto them, Jesus said: "Peace be unto you." So is it now. The world is just as bitter against Christians now as ever it was. Some of you who joined yourselves to the Lord last Sabbath-day may have found out by this time that the world hates you. The servant is not greater than his Lord. Some of you may have become partakers of the afflictions of the Gospel, and are feeling this day that the offence of the cross has not ceased. Worldly friends may upbraid—may persecute—may reproach you; but never mind. When the doors are shut for fear, Jesus comes in, and says: "Peace be unto you." Remember, when you are bolting persecution out, you are not bolting Jesus out. He can come through all these bars. When the world says, Plagues be upon you, Christ says: "Peace be unto you." And herein is a wonder, that Christ's voice, though it be a still small voice, is yet far louder than the world. It calmed the waves of the Sea of Galilee, and, oh! it will speak peace to your soul. When the waves of persecution roar against you, he says: "Fear not; it is I. Peace be unto you."

2. *When a man is quite shut up, Jesus comes in, and says: "Peace be unto you."* The reason why some awakened persons are long of coming to peace, and some never come to peace at all, is, that they think to find an open door for themselves. They feel shut up, by the fears of wrath hemming them in on every side, but still they hope to find some way of their own by which to escape. They are not altogether shut up. They have not been brought to despair of ever saving themselves. They have not been brought to feel and say, I never can do anything to save myself. It is impossible such persons can be brought to peace as every door is not shut. If God were to give them peace, they would praise themselves, and say: We did it.

Are there any such hearing me? Look here. It was when the doors were shut that Jesus came in; and so it is with the soul. It is when the mouth is stopped, and you stand lost and guilty

before God—when you have no door of your own—Jesus comes in, and says: "I am the door; peace be unto you."

3. *When doors of worldly comforts are shut, Christ comes in, and says: "Peace be unto you."* So it was with the disciples. They were like a family of orphans deprived of their head. They were like a nest of unfledged birds, from whom the murderous hand had carried off their dam, beneath whose sheltering wing they used to find repose. They had left all to follow Christ, they had come to trust under his almighty wing; and now he had left them all but desolate. They shut their doors upon the cold bleak world, to show that no comfort was to be expected from the world. That was the very time when Jesus came in with sweetest power to fulfil his word, "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you," saying: "Peace be unto you."

So is it now. When worldly comforts abound, then the consolations of Christ do little abound. It is not when the world is full of smiles and kindness that a true believer has the sweetest visits of the Saviour. It is rather when the believer is left like an orphan, when comforts are withdrawn, when friends die, or prove untrue, when the bleak world looks chillingly, and he shuts the door, saying, "Miserable comforters are ye all"—it is then that Jesus comes in, and says, "Peace be unto you." The brightest gleams of sunshine are those that come through the darkest clouds; so the sweetest visits of the Saviour are when the doors of worldly comfort are shut. Are you a believer? You will have troubles; but, oh! you will have Christ with them all.

II. Lesson. *How kind Christ is to wayward believers!*

Thomas was a most unbelieving believer, and yet Christ followed him with kindness. If the other disciples were foolish, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets had spoken, much more was Thomas. 1. He should have believed the prophets. It was written in the 16th Psalm: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." He knew this to be the word of God. Thomas should have believed the witness of God. 2. Thomas should have believed the simple word of Christ. Three times Christ had solemnly taken his disciples into a lonely place, and told them that he must be crucified, and that he would rise again on the third day. Thomas should have believed the witness of Christ. 3. Thomas should have believed the words of Mary and Peter, and of the two disciples that went to Emmaus, and of all the other disciples, who told him, "we have seen the Lord." But, oh! he was foolish, and slow of heart to believe all that was spoken concerning Jesus, for he said, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." He doubts the word of God, he doubts the word of Christ, he doubts the word of his brethren

Nothing but seeing, and feeling, will satisfy him. Surely Christ will cast off this proud, wayward, unbelieving soul. He does not deserve any more testimony. Ah! what foolish words do I speak; he never deserved any testimony at all. But O what grace there is in Christ! how he comes over mountains of provocation towards wayward believers! He actually comes in, and offers Thomas the very evidence he asked: "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing." Such is the love of Christ to wayward believers. Christ may have dealt in the very same way with some of you.

Speak to awakened souls who yet say "I will not believe."—Some of you have been awakened by God, and made anxious about your souls. You feel the guilt of a broken law, you feel the curse of a rejected Gospel hanging over you. We point you to Christ, and say, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world." But you say you cannot—you dare not—you will not believe. You cannot believe that God had such divine compassion in his bosom to provide a ransom for one so vile as you! You cannot believe that Christ has got so strange a love that he should be willing to be the surety of such an enemy as you! Your word is just this: "Except I see, I will not believe." Ah! you are just Thomas over again. You are foolish, and slow of heart to believe all that has been spoken concerning Jesus.

1. *You have rejected the testimony of God.*—You search the Scriptures, and these are they which testify of me; yet ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life. All the prophets have borne witness to you concerning Jesus, setting him forth before you as a silent, suffering Lamb; as one making atonement for sins. In the Psalms you have been led to cry, "See, God, our shield; look upon the face of thine Anointed." But O, you have refused all this! You have still said, Christ is not for me; I will not believe.

2. *You have rejected the witness of Christ.*—Christ himself has borne witness to you. He has told you that if you are weary and heavy laden, you should come to him, and find rest; that if you are thirsty, you should come to him and drink. He is the faithful and true witness, and he says, "If it were not so, I would have told you;" and yet you have refused all this. You have still said, Christ is not for me; "except I see, I will not believe."

3. *You have rejected the testimony of believers.*—Christian friends have borne witness to you. They have said, "We have seen the Lord." Christians have told you that they were in the same case with you—had the same sins and the same heart. They had the same fears, and the same darkness; but Christ came in when the doors were shut, and said, "Peace be unto you." We have no better right to Christ than you. We take him because we are lost sinners, and he is the Saviour of the lost. He is as free to

you as to us. But, ah! you have despised all this evidence—you still say, Christ is not for me; "except I see, I will not believe."

Now, it would be quite just in Christ to say: I will seek you no more. It would be quite just in Christ to leave you in your darkness—in your unbelief. But as he dealt with Thomas, so hath he dealt with you. He has tried one way more with you. Last Sabbath-day he broke bread, and poured out wine, and made a picture of his silent wounds; of his dying love; and he said: "Reach hither thy finger: be not faithless, but believing!" O the compassion of Christ—it passeth all knowledge!

1. *To believers.* Did you come to the table of Christ full of unbelief; unable to realize Christ; unable to lay hold on him? and did he reveal himself to you in the broken bread and poured-out wine? Ah! this is the same mercy he gave to Thomas. You, of all persons in the world, should feel that Christ is a long-suffering Saviour.

2. *To awakened persons.* Did you keep back from the table of Christ because you dared not say that Christ was yours? But did you look on and see Christ evidently set forth crucified? Did you see how the bread was broken; a picture of his body that was broken? Did you see the wine poured out; a picture of his blood that was shed? Ah! did your heart not burn within you when you looked around—saw, as it were, the silent, suffering Lamb of God? This is the word of Christ unto you: "Be not faithless, but believing." The very fact that your eyes have been permitted to see another sacrament, shows plainly that Christ is seeking you; stretching out the hands to you; offering himself to you. "Be not faithless, but believing."

III. Lesson. *Thomas's appropriating faith:* "Thomas saith unto him, My Lord, and my God."

When Thomas came to the meeting of disciples that evening, I doubt not his heart was very desolate. Unbelief and unhappiness always go together. An unbelieving believer is of all men most miserable. His brethren around him were full of joy, for they had seen the Lord. Mary still remembered the blessed tone of his voice when he said: "Mary! and she answered, Rabboni?" Peter was wondering over his amazing love when he said: "Go tell the disciples, and Peter." And the bosom of John was filled with a silent feeling of unutterable love. All were glad but *one.* That one was Thomas. But now, when Christ came in; when he revealed himself a crucified but risen Redeemer; when he showed his special kindness to Thomas, the heart of Thomas could stand out no longer, and he cried out, in words of appropriating faith, before all: "My Lord, and my God."

Learn two things:—

1. *To appropriate Christ—to call him your own.* It will not save you to know that Christ is a Saviour. The devils know that,

and tremble. It would not have saved you from the flood to know that there was an ark. You must be in it, if you would be saved. So it will not save you that you know there is a great and glorious Saviour, if you do not call him your own: "My Lord, and my God."

Obj.—It would be too bold in me to call him mine.

Ans.—He offers himself to you. He stretched out his hands to you when you were gainsaying and disobedient. He has awakened you—followed you till now. Ah! it is daring presumption to refuse him. Take with you words, and say: "My Lord, and my God." Is there any presumption in taking Christ at his word?

2. *Confess him before all.* Thomas had denied Christ before all, saying: "I will not believe;" and therefore it was right he should confess Christ before all, saying: "My Lord, and my God." Ah! are there none of you who have denied Christ before all? Some of you have said: I will not believe; have kept away from the table of Christ because you dare not call Christ your own. Some of you have denied him in your life, proclaiming to all who know you that you despise the Son of God. Remember, then, I beseech you, the sight of last Sabbath-day. Remember Christ has again offered himself to you, and is this day seeking you. Come, then, and let your acceptance of Christ be as open as your denial of him. Go home, tell your friends, tell your companions, he is "my Lord, and my God."

Dundee, Nov. 4, 1837.

SERMON LXXIII.

HAVE I BEEN SO LONG TIME WITH YOU?

"Have I been so long time with you, and yet thou hast not known me, Philip?"—John xiv., 9.

CHRIST had been with his disciples night and day during the three years of his ministry. They had seen him in all situations, walking on the sea, feeding the multitudes, raising the dead. They had heard all his words in the synagogues, in the temple, in the fields. He had fed them with milk, and not with strong meat, giving them instruction just as they were able to bear it; and yet it is amazing how blind they were to his glory and greatness. They were foolish, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets had spoken concerning him, and all that he had spoken concerning himself.

This was the last night that Jesus was to be with his disciples, and his heart was full of a tenderness which is not of the world at

all. But the more full and tender his holy heart became, the more dull and stupid did his disciples become. "Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?"

Two things give this reply a peculiar tenderness: 1. He reminds Philip that he had been with him. He was equal with the Father, was in the bosom of God, and yet had come and dwelt with them. He had left the company of the worshipping angels to company with them; the King of glory dwelt with worms! Had he smiled on them from heaven, that would have been wonderful; but he says, "I have been with you, with you by the wayside and by the well, with you on the sea and in the wilderness, I have been your elder brother, and yet have you not known me?" 2. That he had been long with them: "So long time." Had it been for a moment that the Son of God had visited the earth, O it would have been wonderful! but it was for years. Three years he had gone in and out with them. He had taught them, opened the Scriptures, taught them to pray, led them like an elder brother all that time, willing to explain everything to them. O, then, what tenderness there is in this word: "Have I been so long?"

Doctrine.—When Christ has been long with any soul, he expects that soul to know him.

I. *To Christians.*

1. *Christ has been with believers.* He says to every child of God: "I have been with you." (1.) In conversion. It is the revealing of Christ to the soul which brings it to peace. When Christ revealed himself to Saul, then he fell to the ground, and cried, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" So it is still. Christ is with the soul in conversion. Are you converted? Then you have been with Jesus, and Jesus has been with you. (2.) In the wilderness Christ is with the soul. The soul leans on the Beloved coming up out of the wilderness. If you be believers at all, you know what it is to have the sweet strengthening presence of the Beloved. (3.) In affliction. Christ is peculiarly near in the fire and in the water: "When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee." And again, "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you." If you be Christians, you have felt that Christ is with you in the day of adversity. When doors are shut, Jesus stands in the midst, and says, "Peace." (4.) In prayer: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." He is near at our breathing, at our cry, to offer up our prayer with much incense. He never misses the simplest cry of the simplest believer. Christians, you know that Christ is with you in prayer. It is this which gives you boldness at the throne of grace.

2. *Christ has been long time with believers:* "Have I been so long time with you?" he says. Christ had been only three years with the disciples when he said this. He has been a much longer time with some of you. Look back, dear Christians, on the way by which he has led you. This day is an eminence, stand upon it, and look back. How long time has Christ been with you? Some of you who are up in years were converted in youth, you had a lifetime with Christ. He has been with you as your surety, as your strength, as your elder brother, as your advocate with the Father. He has been with you thus for many, many years. If some great nobleman were to come and pay you a visit, and be an intimate friend with you, you would think it a great thing. But O how much greater is this! Christ has been with you, Christ knows your name, Christ has often said of you, as of Zaccheus, "To-day I must abide at thy house."

Some of you may have been but lately brought to the knowledge of Christ. You have but lately opened the door and let him in. Still he hath been long with you. To have Christ with you for a single day is to have him long with you, it is so great an honor, it is so great a blessing. O there is a day at hand when you will reckon a moment spent with Christ as more than all your life besides! "A day spent in thy courts is better than a thousand."

3. *Christ reproves believers for knowing so little of him:* "Hast thou not known me, Philip?" The apostles knew much of Christ, and yet they were slow of heart to believe *all*. So is it with Christians now. They know much of Christ, yet they are slow of heart to believe all. There are many signs that Christians do not know Christ.

1. *Little happiness among Christians.* There is very little sense of being pardoned. Some of you, who appear to be Christians, would almost start were I to ask you if you feel the forgiveness of sins. You seem to fear it, as an unlawful question, as if it were a secret not for you to know. Is this the case with you? Ah! how truly Christ may say: "Have I been so long time with you, yet hast thou not known me?" Has not Christ been revealed to you a crucified Saviour, the wrath of God all poured out on him? "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!"

2. *Little communion with God.* When you stand in the sunshine, you feel the warm beams of the sun; so, when you stand in Christ, you should feel the warm beams of his love. There is little of this. Believers are said to be "a people near to God." Entering through the rent veil, they draw near to the Father, they dwell in his secret place, and abide under his shadow. There is little, very little of this. How truly may Christ say: "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?"

3. *Little holiness among Christians.* If Christians had an eye

on a reigning, praying, coming Saviour, O how different persons they would be! What manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, seeing ye look for such things? (1.) How much covetousness there is among some of you that seem to be Christians, how much calling your money your own, hugging it all to yourself, to please yourself, to be enjoyed by yourself; and all this when the cause of Christ calls loud for sacrifices! (2.) How much bitterness there is among some of you that seem to be Christians, how much of a proud, unforgiving spirit, keeping up the remembrance of injuries, nursing your wrath! (3.) How much likeness to the world in your feasts and luxuries, in your trifling, yea, sinful amusements; and, above all, in your conversation! Who that hears you speak, would know that ever you had been with Jesus, or he with you? Why is all this? *Ans.* Because ye know so little of Christ. For all that Christ has been so long with you, yet you know almost nothing of him. Ah! do not let this year go without resolving to know more of Christ. He is with you still. A little while, and ye shall not see him. A few days, and you may see no more of him. Your days of grace may be nearly ended. Many of you will not see the close of another year. Walk in the light, while ye have the light. Know Christ, and then ye shall be like him.

II. *Awakened.*

1. *Christ is with awakened souls.* (1.) He awakened them. No man is naturally anxious about his soul. It is a work of Christ on the soul. When the lightning has passed through a wood, as you look upon one tree and another that has been split by its mighty flash, you say: Ah! the lightning has been here; so, when you see a heart split and broken under a sense of its lost condition, you may say: Ah! Christ has been here. Are any of you awakened? Christ has been with you. He saw you in your sin and folly. He pitied you, he drew near, he touched your heart, and made you feel yourself lost, in order that you might seek him as a Saviour. Do not doubt Christ has been with you. (2.) He is seeking awakened souls, and therefore is with them. When a shepherd goes into the mountains in search of lost sheep, he seeks peculiarly those which are bleeding and torn, making the valleys resound with their sad bleatings; he bends over the wounded sheep. When a good physician enters the hospital, he hurries to the beds of the most diseased, of those who are piteously groaning under their pains; he bends over such. So does Christ seek bleeding, groaning souls, with a peculiar care. His word is: "He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted; he hath given me the tongue of the learned to speak a word in season to them that are weary." Are you an awakened soul? Then you may be quite sure Christ is with you, bending over you.

2. *Long time.* Some persons continue under convictions of sin

for a long time; some for months and years. This year, I doubt not, has seen many souls awakened. Now Christ waits long upon these souls. He stands at the door all the day: "I have stretched out my hands all the day to a gainsaying and disobedient people;" and then, when night comes, as he still stands and waits: "My head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night." Are there any awakened souls hearing me? Christ has been long with you. The Bible has been his witness; it has been with you night and day. His ministers have told you of Jesus; they have waited and been long-suffering with you. Christ himself has bended over you. Never did a beggar stand at the door of a rich man so long as Christ has stood at your door.

3. *Yet hast thou not known me.* Although Christ be so long with awakened souls, yet many will not know him. It is life eternal to know him. It would heal all their pains if they would only look upon him; but they will not look. Some of you are in this state. It is your sin, and it is your misery. (1.) Christ has long stood at your door and knocked. If you had opened, you would have seen a bleeding Saviour, a surety, a righteousness. You would have looked to him, and been lightened; but you would not open. (2.) Christ has stood and cried: "If any man thirst, let him come to me, and drink." You feel very thirsty, yet you do not come to Christ to drink. (3.) Christ has cried: "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." You are bent down with your burden, yet you will not come to Christ in order to have life. (4.) Christ has cried, "Follow me: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness." You vibrate between him and the world. You cling to the world, even though you are miserable. How long shall it be thus? Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, poor anxious soul? Remember, some have lived anxious, and died anxious. Remember, it will only increase your hell, that Christ was so long with you, and you would not know him. Turn to Christ now. Let not another year begin without knowing Jesus.

III. *Unawakened.*

1. *Christ is with them.* In one sense, he is not with them. They are without Christ, and without God in the world. In another sense, he is with them: "I know thy works." (1.) He is with them in the house of God. It is wonderful to me how Christ persuades so many Christless people to come to the house of God; I never could explain it. Crowds followed Jesus; crowds follow him still. *Ques.* What brings you to the house of God? It is the constraining grace of Christ. Here Christ is with you. Christ unlocks his treasure, and says: "Come, buy, without money and without price." (2.) Christ is with them in providences. O it is wonderful to see the providences of unawakened souls! Every

one of them is from the hand of Christ: "I stand at the door, and knock." In the year now past, Christ has striven with you in his providence. To some of you he hath come once and again. Christ is with you. (3.) With them in their sins. Christ is present at all their unholy feasts, unholy jests, desires, engagements: "I know thy works." Do you ever think, when you are engaged in some silly game, that Christ is by your side? He sees the smile of satisfaction on your cheek, but he sees also the deluge of wrath that is over your soul. He sees you sporting yourself with your own deceivings; sitting on the brink of hell, yet pleased with a rattle, tickled with a straw. *Ques.* What does he say? He says: "How long, ye simple ones, will ye love your simplicity?" and again: "Lord, let it alone this year also."

2. *So long time.* There is reason to think that Jesus strives with the soul from its earliest years; that he strives on to the last. Some good men have thought that Christ doth sometimes give over striving, and leaves the soul to be joined to its idols; but perhaps it is more accordant with Scripture to say, that Jesus waits all the day. How long a time Christ has pleaded with some of you! This day another year of striving with you is finished. Think of this. O the long-suffering of Christ!

3. *Not known me.* Ah! there is reason to think that many of you are as ignorant of Christ as the day I began my ministry among you; yea, as ignorant as the day you were born. If you knew Christ, it would break your heart with a sense of sin; but your heart is whole within you. If you knew Christ, it would drive you to seek an interest in him, but you seek him not. Hark how tenderly the Saviour pleads with you this day: "Have I been so long time with you?" O it will be one of the greatest miseries of hell, to remember how often Christ was with you in this house of prayer, in your providences, aye, in your sins; and you would not look at him! to remember how often he was set forth a broken Saviour in the sacrament; preached by his servants a free Saviour; how often he bended over you, and wept over you, and ye would have none of him!

O, sirs, I fear this year will witness against you in the judgment-day! I fear there are many of you who will accuse me in that day, and say: Why did you not speak plainer, louder, oftener? Why did you not knock oftener at our doors, to tell us and our children of Christ, the way of glory? ah! was it not worth more effort to save us from an eternal hell? Ah! dear friends, be wise. Many of you will not see another year come to a close. If there be fifty—O how dreadful!—you may be among that fifty; nay, if there be forty, thirty, twenty, ten, still you may be among the ten. If there be but one, you may be that one. O it will be an awful word in that day: "I was a long time with you, but you would not know me!" Amen.

Dundee, Dec. 31, 1837.

SERMON LXXIV.

WHO SHALL SEPARATE US FROM THE LOVE OF CHRIST?

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."—Rom. viii., 35–37.

In this passage there are three very remarkable questions: 1. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" Paul stands forth like a herald, and he looks up to the holy angels, and down to the accusing devils, and round about on a scowling world, and into conscience, and he asks, Who can accuse one whom God has chosen, and Christ has washed? It is God who justifieth. The holy God has declared believers clean every whit. 2. "Who shall condemn?" Paul looks round all the judges of the world—all who are skilled in law and equity; he looks up to the holy angels, whose superhuman sight pierces deep and far into the righteous government of God; he looks up to God, the judge of all, who must do right—whose ways are equal and perfect righteousness—and he asks, Who shall condemn? It is Christ that died. Christ has paid the uttermost farthing: so that every judge must cry out, There is now no condemnation. 3. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Again, he looks round all created worlds—he looks at the might of the mightiest archangels—the satanic power of legions of devils—the rage of a God-defying world—the united forces of all created things; and when he sees sinners folded in the arms of Jesus, he cries, Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Not all the forces of ten thousand worlds combined, for Jesus is greater than all. "We are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

The love of Christ! Paul says: "The love of Christ passeth knowledge." It is like the blue sky into which you may see clearly, but the real vastness of which you cannot measure. It is like the deep, deep sea, into whose bosom you can look a little way, but its depths are unfathomable. It has a breadth without a bound, length without end, height without top, and depth without bottom. If holy Paul said this, who was so deeply taught in divine things—who had been in the third heaven, and seen the glorified face of Jesus—how much more may we, poor and weak believers, look into that love and say: It passeth knowledge!

There are three things in these words: 1. Explain the love of Christ. 2. Who would separate us from it? 3. They shall not be able.

I. *I would speak of the love of Christ.*

1. *When it began*—in the past eternity: "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 the earth; and my delights were with the sons of men."—Prov. viii., 30, 31. This river of love began to flow before the world was—from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. Christ's love to us is as old as the Father's love to the Son. This river of light began to stream from Jesus towards us before the beams poured from the sun; before the rivers flowed to the ocean; before angel loved angel, or man loved man; before creatures were, Christ loved us. This is a great deep, who can fathom it? This love passeth knowledge.

2. *And who was it that loved?* It was Jesus, the Son of God, the second person of the blessed Godhead. His name is "Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace," "King of kings and Lord of lords," Immanuel, and Jesus the Saviour, the only begotten of his Father. His beauty is perfect: he is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person. All the purity, majesty, and love of Jehovah, dwell fully in him. He is the bright and morning Star: he is the Sun of righteousness and the Light of the world; he is the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the valleys—fairer than the children of men. His riches are infinite; he could say, "All that the Father hath is mine." He is Lord of all. All the crowns in heaven were cast at his feet; all angels and seraphs were his servants; all worlds his domain. His doings were infinitely glorious. By him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible. He called the things that are not as though they were; worlds started into being at his word. *Yet he loved us.* It is much to be loved by one greater in rank than ourselves—to be loved by an angel; but O, to be loved by the Son of God! this is wonderful; it passeth knowledge.

3. *Whom did he love?* He loved us! He came into the world "to save sinners, of whom I am the chief." Had he loved one as glorious as himself, we would not have wondered. Had he loved the holy angels, that reflected his pure, bright image, we would not have wondered. Had he loved the lovely among the sons of men—the amiable, the gentle, the kind, the rich, the great, the noble—it would not have been so great a wonder. But, ah! he loved sinners, the vilest sinners, the poorest, meanest, guiltiest wretches that crawl upon the ground. Manasseh, who murdered his own children, was one whom he loved; Zaccheus, the grey-haired swindler, was another; blaspheming Paul was a third; the wanton of Samaria was another; the dying thief was another; and the lascivious Corinthians were more. "And such were some of you." We were black as hell when he looked on us; we were hell-worthy, under his Father's wrath and curse; and ye

he loved us, and said: I will die for them. "Thou hast loved me out of the pit of corruption," each saved one can say. Oh, brethren! this is strange love: he that was so great, and lovely, and pure, chose us, who were mean and filthy with sin, that he might wash and purify, and present us to himself. This love passeth knowledge!

4. *What this love cost him.* When Jacob loved Rachel, he served seven years for her; he bore the summer's heat and winter's cold. But Jesus bore the hot wrath of God, and the winter blast of his Father's anger, for those he loved. Jonathan loved David with more than the love of women, and for his sake he bore the cruel anger of his father, Saul. But Jesus, out of love to us, bore the wrath of his Father poured out without mixture. It was the love of Christ that made him leave the love of his Father, the adoration of angels, and the throne of glory; it was love that made him not despise the Virgin's womb; it was love that brought him to the manger at Bethlehem; it was love that drove him into the wilderness; love made him a man of sorrows; love made him hungry, and thirsty, and weary; love made him hasten to Jerusalem; love led him to gloomy, dark Gethsemane; love bound and dragged him to the judgment hall; love nailed him to the cross; love bowed his head beneath the amazing load of his Father's anger. "Greater love hath no man than this." "I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."

Sinners were sinking beneath the red-hot flames of hell; he plunged in and swam through the awful surge, and gathered his own into his bosom. The sword of justice was bare and glittering, ready to destroy us; He, the man that was God's fellow, opened his bosom and let the stroke fall on him. We were set up as a mark for God's arrows of vengeance; Jesus came between, and they pierced him through and through; every arrow that should have pierced our souls, stuck fast in him. He, his own self, bare our sins in his own body on the tree. As far as east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. This is the love of Christ that passeth knowledge. This is what is set before you to-day in the broken bread and poured-out wine. This is what we shall see on the throne—a Lamb as it had been slain. This will be the matter of our song through eternity: "Worthy is the Lamb!"

1. *O the joy of being in the love of Christ!* Are you in this amazing love? Has he loved you out of the pit of corruption? Then, he will wash you, and make you a king and a priest unto God. He will wash you in his own blood whiter than the snow; he will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. A new heart also will he give you. He will keep your conscience clean, and your heart right with God. He will put his Holy Spirit within you, and make you pray with groanings

that cannot be uttered. He will justify you, he will pray for you, he will glorify you. All the world may oppose you—dear friends may die and forsake you; you may be left alone in the wilderness; still you will not be alone; Christ will love you still.

2. *O the misery of being out of the love of Christ!* If Christ loves you not, how vain all other loves! Your friends may love you, your neighbors may be kind to you; the world may praise you—ministers may love your souls; but, if Christ love you not, all creature-love will be vain. You will be unwashed, unpardoned, unholy; you will sink into hell, and all the creatures will stand around and be unable to reach out a hand to help you.

3. *How shall I know that I am in the love of Christ?* By your being drawn to Christ: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." Have you seen something attractive in Jesus? The world are attracted by beauty, or dress, or glittering jewels; have you been attracted to Christ by his good ointments? This is the mark of all who are graven on Christ's heart—they come to him; they see Jesus to be precious. The easy world see no preciousness in Christ; they prize a lust higher, the smile of the world higher, money higher, pleasure higher; but those whom Christ loves he draws after him by the sight of his preciousness. Have you thus followed him, prized him—as a drowning sinner cleaved to him?—then he will in no wise cast you out—in no wise, not for all you have done against him. "But I spent my best days in sin"—Still I will in no wise cast you out. "I lived in open sin"—I will in no wise cast you out. "But I have sinned against light and conviction"—Still I will in no wise cast you out. "But I am a backslider"—still the arms of his love are open to enfold your poor guilty soul, and he will not cast you out.

II. *Many would separate us.*

From the beginning of the world it has been the great aim of Satan to separate believers from the love of Christ; and though he never has succeeded in the case of a single soul, yet still he tries it as eagerly as he did at first. The moment he sees the Saviour lift a lost sheep upon his shoulder, from that hour he plies all his efforts to pluck down the poor saved sheep from its place of rest. The moment the pierced hand of Jesus is laid on a poor, trembling, guilty sinner, from that hour does Satan try to pluck him out of Jesus's hand.

1. *He did this in old times:* "As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."—Verse 36. This is a cry taken from the book of Psalms. God's people in all ages have been hated and persecuted by Satan and the world. Observe *the reason:* "For thy sake"—because they were like Jesus, and belonged to Jesus. *The time:* "All day long"—from morning till night. The world have

a perpetual hatred against true believers, so that we have to say at evening: "Would God it were morning; and at morning, Would God it were evening." They have no other perpetual hatred. *The manner:* "We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." The world care no more for ill-treating a Christian than the butcher does when he lays hold of a sheep for the slaughter. The drunkards make a song of us. Such was the cry of believers of old. The same cry has been heard amid the snowy heights of Piedmont: and, in later days, amid the green hills and valleys of Scotland. And we are miserably deceived if we flatter ourselves that the same cry will not be heard again. Is the devil changed? Does he love Christ and his dear people any better? Is the worldly heart changed? Does it hate God and God's people any less than it did? Ah! no. I have a deep conviction that, if God only withdraw his restraining grace, the flood-gates of persecution will soon break loose again; and many of you, left unconverted under our ministry, will turn out bloody persecutors—you will yet avenge yourselves for the sermons that have pricked your hearts.

2. *The apostle names seven forms in which trouble comes.* Two of them relate to the troubles that are common to man, and five to those that are more peculiar to the children of God.

(1.) *Tribulation and distress:* "Man that is born of a woman is of a few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth as a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not." God's children are not freed from distresses: sickness, poverty, loss of friends. Jesus said to them: "In the world ye shall have tribulation." "Whom I love I rebuke and chasten." Now, Satan tries to take advantage of these times of tribulation, to separate the soul from the love of Christ; he tempts the believer to despise the chastening of the Lord; to plunge into business, or among worldly friends, or to follow worldly means of soothing sorrow. Again: he tries to make the soul faint under them; repine and murmur, and charge God foolishly; not believe his love and wisdom in the furnace. In these ways Satan tries to separate from the love of Christ. A time of tribulation is a time of danger.

(2.) *Persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword*—all these are the weapons Satan stirs up against God's children. The history of the Church in all ages has been a history of persecution. No sooner does a soul begin to show concern for religion; no sooner does that soul cleave to Jesus, than the world talk, to the grief of those whom God hath wounded. What bitter words are hurled against that soul! In all ages this has been true: "They wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the world was not worthy." Those that eat the bread of God have often been driven from their quiet meal; those who are clothed with Christ have often had to part with worldly clothing, and have been exposed to famine, nakedness,

peril, and sword—the last extremity. Cain murdered Abel. They killed the Prince of Life; and so all his creatures ever since have been exposed to the same. Do not say, The times are changed, and these are not the days of toleration. Christ is not changed, Satan is not changed, and, when it suits his turn, he will use the same weapons.

III. *All these cannot separate us.*

"In all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us."

How are we more than conquerors?

1. *We conquer even before the battle is done.* In all other battles we do not know how the victory is to turn until the battle is won. In the battle of Waterloo, it was long thought that the French had gained; and Napoleon sent several despatches to Paris, declaring that he had won. But in the fight with the world, Satan, and the flesh, we know how the victory is to turn already. Christ has engaged to carry us through. He will guard us against the darts of the law, by hiding us in his blood. He defends us from the power of sin by his Holy Spirit, put within us. He will keep us, in the secret of his presence, from the strife of tongues. The thicker the battle, the closer will he keep to us; so that we can sing already: "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." We know that we shall overcome. Though the world were a million times more enraged; though the fires of persecution were again to be kindled; though my heart were a million times more wicked; though all the temptations of hell were let loose upon me; I know I shall overcome through him that loved me. When Paul and Silas sang in the low dungeon, they were more than conquerors. When Paul sang, spite of his thorn, "I will glory in my infirmities," he was more than a conqueror.

2. *We gain by our conflict.* Often a victory is a loss. So it was in that battle in Israel, after the dark night in Gibeah. All Israel mourned, for a tribe was nearly cut off out of Israel; and so, in most victories, the song of triumph is mingled with the sobbings of the widow and orphan. Not so in the good fight of faith. We are more than conquerors. We gain by our enemies. (1.) *We cling closer to Christ.* Every wave of trouble for Christ's sake lifts the soul higher upon the Rock. Every arrow of bitterness shot after the believer makes him hide more in the clefts of Jesus. Be content, dear friend, to bear these troubles, which make you cling closer to your Beloved. (2.) *They shake us loose from sin.* If ye were of the world, the world would love its own. If the world smiled and fawned upon you, you would lie on its lap. But when it frowns, then Jesus is our all. (3.) *Great is your reward in heaven.* We gain a brighter crown. Be not afraid; nothing shall ever separate you from the love of Christ.

O that I could know that you were all in Christ's love—that the arms of Jesus were infolding you; then I would know that all the hatred of men, and all the policy of hell, would never prevail against you! "If God be for you, who can be against you?" If God has chosen you, called you, washed you, justified you, then he will glorify you. O yield to his loving hands, you that are not far from the kingdom of God! Let him wash you, for then he will carry you to glory. Amen.

Dundee, Oct. 30, 1841.—(Action Sermon.)

SERMON LXXV.

MAN THAT IS BORN OF A WOMAN.

"'" Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not." —Job xiv., 1, 2.

THREE things are taught us in these words.

1. *The beauty of man:* "He cometh forth like a flower."—Verse 2. There is something beautiful about man. He was made at first in the image of God; and though sin has blighted and defaced that image, yet there are the traces of God's workmanship to be seen in man still. His body is fearfully and wonderfully made; and the soul, though wholly averse from God by nature, is yet *a lost piece of silver.* 2. *He is short-lived:* "Of few days—he cometh forth like a flower." When Pharaoh asked Jacob how old he was, although he was one hundred and thirty years old, he said: "Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been,"—few, compared with the life of other men. Some of the patriarchs lived nine hundred years; Methuselah nine hundred and sixty-nine. How few are our days compared with this! few, compared to eternity—few, when we think of the work to be done. 3. *Full of trouble.* If his few days were all full of joy, it would not be so sad a case, but they are full of trouble; and those that are most anxious for worldly pleasure generally have deepest troubles. Troubles of the body, and of the mind, and of the estate, come upon the back of one another like wave upon wave.

We have had solemn experience of these truths within these few days. There have been five solemn deaths, all connected with our parish, and, taken together, they form a practical commentary on these words. 1. Two children died, both lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death not far divided. They were full of promise, and their fond relatives looked forward to their being

a joy and comfort to them. They came forth like a flower, and were cut down. 2. A young man in his prime. He had reached the vigor of manhood, and thought to see many good days in the land of the living; but God changed his countenance, and he has passed away. 3. Another was the blooming mother of eight blooming children, beloved and admired by all around her, with all this world could give to make her happy; but the cry came at midnight. She came forth like a flower, and was cut down. 4. The last was an aged man, called upon, after long forbearance, to give in his account. How solemn the lesson! The child—the young man—the mother—the hoary head—are all laid low this day! "Man that is born of a woman is of few days."

1. *Learn the need of immediate conversion.* Some of you are angry that I speak so much of conversion; but, ah! when I stand beside these open graves, I am ashamed of myself for speaking so little. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." "Repent, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out."

Children, seek conversion now, for little children die. These new-made graves are less than yours would be. Young men, seek conversion now, for young men die—they are cut down in their prime. Mothers, do not say you will seek conversion afterwards, when your family are grown, and you have more leisure; seek it now, for mothers die. Old men, do not say this is nothing to you. Others may die, but you must die; and therefore the lesson comes doubly home to you: Seek conversion now.

2. *Learn the folly of living in pleasure.* There is no net by which the devil catches more souls than the silken one of worldly pleasure. It is common for worldly people to take it for granted that there is no harm in these things. Children are fond of games; young people delight in dances, and songs, and laughter; coarser spirits love the glass, and the glee, and the coarse debauch; more polished circles love the ball, and the concert, and the play; and old withered dames, and swearing captains, tottering on the brink of eternity, could hardly sleep at night without their hand at whist. Where is the harm? Sit down upon yon grave, and ask the dead. Are you not Christless; unpardoned; unholy; on the road to hell. Are your days not numbered? May you not be cut down this night? Where would you be if you were hurried away from the dance, or the play, or the card-table, to the presence of your Judge? "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment." "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?" "She that liveth in

pleasure is dead while she liveth." This is the time for seeking conversion.

Are we to have no pleasure, then? Yes, in Christ—holy pleasures, such as are at God's right hand for evermore. Ah! I have tasted all the pleasures of time, and they are not worth one drop of Christ's sweet love.

3. *Learn to seek one another's souls.* Ah! there is no place for teaching ministers how to speak like the death-bed. I often feel that I have never preached at all, when I look upon the faces of the dying! O pray for me, that I may go out and in among you more faithfully; that I may speak more boldly, and not fear your anger or reproaches! You will not be angry with me when you are dead. You will not say I preached too plainly then.

Brethren in the eldership! Come and help me in this. You see our people are dying; hundreds are now in eternity who were once under your care and mine.

Dear teachers! Teach the children plainly, for children die. Do not mind their impatience and waywardness. Remember they are dying children—Death's mark is on them. The forester puts a mark round the trees that are to be cut down. Every child has got Death's mark.

Parents! Seek your children's souls from infancy. Pray for them before they are born. Travail in birth with them till Christ be formed in them. Do not say they are too young, and cannot understand. *God can teach babes.*

O if you neglect this, will you not regret it when the green sod lies on their breast?

4. *Learn how unable you are to bear the wrath of God.* In the time of health and strength, it is common for men to boast against God. They are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men: therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain. They can sin with a high hand. But when they are brought to the brink of the grave by fever or wasting consumption; when they need some one to turn them on their bed, or to hold up their fainting head, or to feed them with a spoon like a child; then we see that a sinner is nothing in the hands of an angry God. And O what will it be in eternity, when he falls into the hands of the living God! Perhaps he doubted whether there was a God; but all of a sudden he sees there is a God. He thought there was no Christ—in a moment he meets his holy eye. He thought there was no hell, and laughed at those who believed it—in a moment he is tossing among its fiery waves; and now he feels it must be eternal. After a thousand years it is but beginning, and no nearer an end. The soul will sink into insupportable gloom; it will wish to die, and not be able. "What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath, fitted to destruction?" O brethren, flee from the wrath to come! You cannot

bear it. Can you bear a fever, or the stroke of palsy, or a stroke of lightning, or wasting consumption? and these are but the little finger of God's anger.

5. *Learn the preciousness of Jesus.* "Man is of few days," but "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." How amazing the love of Christ, that he died for us—such poor, weak flowers, and worms of a day! How safe we are in Jesus! Although we are nothing—fleeing like a shadow—yet in him we abide for ever. Our very dust is precious dust to him. Body and soul he will bring with him, and we shall reign for ever and ever. O you that are in Christ, prize him! You that are in doubt, solve it now by running to him. You that are out of him, choose him now.

Dundee, February 20, 1842.

SERMON LXXVI.

CHRIST, A LAW-MAGNIFYING SAVIOUR.

"Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see. Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I sent? who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the Lord's servant? Seeing many things, but thou observest not; opening the ears, but he heareth not. The Lord is well-pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honorable."—Isa. xlii., 18–21.

I. *The name here given to sinners:* "Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see."—Verse 18. These words are applied here, first to idolators, but they are equally applicable to all unconverted men. All of you who are unconverted are naturally deaf. You do not hear the voice of Providence. Mercies and afflictions come knocking at your door, but you hear them not. You do not hear the voice of Christ. It is like the sound of many waters, yet you are deaf, you hear not its warnings and invitations. You do not hear the voice of pastors. They are watchmen to blow the trumpet, and warn the people, they have the tongue of the learned; but you are "like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear; which will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely."—Ps. lviii.

Blind.—This word is constantly used in the Bible to describe the stupidity of unconverted souls. Unconverted ministers are called "Blind leaders of the blind."—Matt. xv., 14. Jesus once said to a Pharisee, "Thou blind Pharisee."—Matt. xxii., 26. And again, "Ye fools and blind."—Matt. xxiii., 17. "Thou knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind."—Rev. iii., 17.

This is the true state of every unconverted soul. You do not

see your own soul; its depravity, its guilt, its lost and ruined condition. You do not see the Sun, the glorious Sun of Righteousness, his beauty, his glory, his excellency: "No beauty that we should desire him." You do not see your way. You know not at what you stumble. Your path leads into hell, but you do not see it, nor believe it.

Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind. Those of you who are deaf and blind are generally the least attentive in the congregation. You say, The minister has nothing for me; and so you think of something else to amuse your mind. But observe, God does here speak to you: "Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind." Those of you who are careless, stupid, blind, carnal ones, are the ones that should attend, for God calls upon you. When will you listen, if not when God is calling upon you?

But you say, This is a contradiction; "If I am deaf, how can I hear? If I am blind, how can I look?" *Ans.* Leave God to settle that difficulty. Only listen and look up. There is truly no difficulty about it. He told Ezekiel to preach to dry bones: "O ye dry bones! hear the word of the Lord;" and John to preach to men like the stones of Jordan. It is while we are speaking, and through the very words we speak, that God gives life, and hearing, and eye-sight. Only turn your deaf ears towards God, and your blind eye-balls towards Jesus. Who can tell but some deaf and blind soul may now, for the first time, be looking up to Jesus?

II. *The object pointed to:* "Who is blind, but my servant? or deaf, as my messenger that I sent? who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the Lord's servant? Seeing many things, but thou observest not: opening the ears, but he heareth not"—Verses 19, 20. Every expression here evidently points to Christ.

1. *My servant.*—This name is constantly given to Christ: "*Behold my servant.*"—Verse 1. "Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high."—Isa. lii., 13. "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many."—Isa. liii., 11. "I am among you as he that serveth."—Luke xxii., 27. He took a towel and girded himself. "He took upon him the form of a servant."—Phil. ii., 7. The reason why, is, that he came not to do his own will, but the will of him that sent him.

2. *My messenger.*—This name is also applied to Christ: "If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand."—Job xxxiii., 23. And again: "The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in."—Mal. iii., 1. He is so called because God sent him. He came from God, with a message of eternal life to sinners.

3. *He that is perfect.*—"He is the Rock; his way is perfect." As for God, his way is perfect. It is only of Christ that these

words are fully true. He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. He knew no sin. He was the holy child Jesus, the perfect one, perfect in the eye of the law, perfect in the eyes of his Father, perfect in the eyes of his Church. "Such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners."

4. *Blind and deaf:* "Who is blind as my servant, and deaf as my messenger?" Also verse 20: "Seeing many things, but thou observest not; opening the ears, but he heareth not." This describes the way in which he went through his work in this world. Same as verse 2: "He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets." Same as Ps. xxxviii., 13, 14: "But I as a deaf man heard not, and I was as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth. Thus I was as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs." Also Isa. liii., 7: "He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." He was blind to the vileness of sinners. He saw, and yet he did not see. Surely, if he had looked at the black hearts of those for whom he died, he could not have died for them. Surely if he had looked only at one sin, he could not have but cast us away, or gone back to his Father's bosom. "But who is blind as my servant?"

He was blind to his own sufferings. He hasted to Jerusalem, as if he did not see the cross before him. He saw it, but observed not. He lay in the garden of Gethsemane, as if he did not see the lanterns and torches of those that were coming to take him. "Who is blind as my servant?"

He was deaf. He seemed not to hear their plotting against him, nor their accusations, for he answered not a word. "Pilate said to him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? and he answered him to never a word, insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly."—Matt. xxvii., 13, 14. It is to the Lord Jesus patiently enduring all for us that you are bid to listen and to look. Consider him, study him. We have learned but little of Christ yet, brethren; and you who are Christless know him not at all.

III. *The work of Christ:* "He will magnify the law, and make it honorable."—Verse 21. This is in some respects the most wonderful description of the work of Christ given in the whole Bible. He is often said to have fulfilled the law. Thus, Matt. iii., 15: "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." And again, Matt. v., 17: "Think not that I come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." But here it is said, he will "magnify the law, and make it honorable." He came to give new lustre and glory to the holy law of God, that all worlds might see and understand that the law is holy, and

just and good. When God wrote the law upon the heart of Adam in his creation, that was magnifying the law. He showed it to be a great and holy and happy law, when he wrote it in the bosom of so holy and happy a creature as man then was. When God spoke the law from Mount Sinai, that magnified the law, and made it glorious. When he spoke it with his own voice in so dreadful a manner, when he wrote it twice with his own finger, this was magnifying it—enough, one would think, to make our modern Sabbath-breakers tremble to erase it. But most of all when Christ died, did he give lustre, and greatness, and glory, and majesty, to the law of God in the sight of all worlds.

1. *By his sufferings.* He magnified the holiness and justice of the law by bearing its curse. When Adam sinned, he denied that the law was holy and just. The devil said to him: "Ye shall not surely die." He believed the devil. He thought God would not make him die—he thought God would fall back from his strict and holy law. He will not do it. Will he destroy the creatures he has made merely for taking an apple? When any man sins, he denies the holiness of God's law. When a man swears, or breaks the Sabbath, or dishonors his parents, or lies, or steals, he says in his heart: God will not see, God will not take notice, God will not cast me into hell for this. He does not believe the threatenings of God. He does not believe that the law is holy and just. If those of you who live in sin really believed that every sin you committed was to bring down another stripe for eternity, another wave of fire to roll over your bodies and souls in hell for ever, you could not sin as you do; and therefore you dishonor the law —you make it small and contemptible—you persuade yourselves that God's law will never be put in force. Thus every sin is done against God—"against *thee*, *thee* only." Now God sent his Son into the world to magnify the law, by dying under its curse. He took upon him the curse due to sinners, and bore it in his body on the tree, and thereby proved that God's law cannot be mocked.

When God cast the devil and his angels into hell, this showed in a very dreadful manner the truth of his threatenings, the awful strictness of his law. If God had cast all men into hell, it would have shown the same thing. But much more when Christ bowed his head under the stroke of the law's curse. He was a person of infinite dignity and glory: "God over all, blessed for ever." He thought it no robbery to be equal with God. He was far exalted above all blessing and praise. God-man; the only being who ever stood on this earth who was God and man. He was one who had no personal sin. He was perfect; knew no sin, did no sin, was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. He was infinitely dear to God. His own Son; his only begotten Son; one who was in the beginning with God, and was God; into whose bosom the love of the uncreated God had flowed from all eternity. It was he who came and bowed his neck to the

stroke of the law. He was seen of angels. Angels desired to look into the awful scene. The eyes of millions of worlds were turned towards Calvary. When Jesus died, he redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; and now all worlds saw that God could not be mocked. He added lustre to the holy law. Angels and archangels saw, and trembled as they saw. He that did not spare his Son will spare no other.

Learn the certainty of hell for the Christless. Which of you that are Christless can hope to escape the curse of the law, since God did not spare his Son? If you have made up your mind to refuse Christ, then you must bear hell. You say you are a person of great mind, of great power, of great wealth; but ah! you are not equal to the Son of God, and even he was not spared. You say your sins are not many, not gross, not so bad as those of other men; ah! but Christ knew no sin; he had no personal sin; all was imputed sin. How surely will you suffer! You say God has been kind to you, has given you many mercies; ah! remember, Christ was the Son of his love, and yet the law demanded it, God spared not his own Son. Though you were the signet on his right hand, yet would he pluck you thence; though you were a right eye, yet would he pluck you out.

Learn to flee from sin. Every sin will have its eternal punishment. The sin you are committing has either been suffered for in Christ, or will be suffered for by you in hell. Why will you fill up your cup of torment to the brim? If you will not come to Christ, at least you might spare yourself from greater damnation.

2. *By his obedience.* He added lustre to the goodness of the law by obeying it. When Adam preferred the service of the devil to the service of God, he said that the law of God was not good. The fruit appeared good for food, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, and so he ate. And so with every sinner now. When you prefer sin to holiness; when you prefer to swear, or to break the Sabbath, or to go with the wicked, to serving God with all humility of mind, then you say, God's law is bondage. It is not good to be under it. It would not make me happy to keep it. I am happier in breaking it than I would be in keeping it. *It is not good to love God with all my heart, and my neighbor as myself.* Now, when Christ came and obeyed the law from the cradle to the grave, when the Son of God came and delighted to do the will of God, and had the law always in his heart, loving God with all his heart, and his neighbor as himself, this gave new lustre to the law. It showed to all worlds that it is the happiness and chief good of the creature to keep God's holy law.

Christ was the freest being in the universe, most absolutely free, doing all things according to the pleasure of his own will. He was also most wise, only wise. He knew the nature of things; knew their beginning and end. He had also tasted the joys of heaven. He had drunk from all eternity the river of God's plea-

sures; had enjoyed all that the Father enjoyed, the fulness of joy that is in God's presence, and the pleasures that are at his right hand for evermore; and yet, when he stood in our nature, he delighted in the law of God after the inward man; yea, God's law was within his heart. The whole Book of Psalms bears witness to the inward holiness of his heart. He loved God with all his heart, and soul, and mind, and strength; he loved his neighbor as himself, yea, more than himself; for he gave up his own life for ours. He was subject to parents and governors. He loved the holy Sabbath. He magnified the law, and made it honorable. He gave it a new lustre in the sight of all worlds. He showed with a new clearness and brightness before unknown, that it is the chief happiness of the creature to keep the whole law.

Learn the true wisdom of those of you who are new creatures, and who love God's holy law. All of you who are really brought to Christ are changed into his image, so that you love God's holy law. "I delight in the law of God after the inward man;" "The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart." Ps. xix. The world say, What a slave you are! you cannot take a little amusement on the Sabbath, a Sabbath walk or tea-party; you cannot go to a dance or theatre; you cannot enjoy the pleasures of sensual indulgence; you are a slave. I answer, Christ had none of these pleasures. He did not want them; nor do we. He knew what was truly wise, and good, and happy, and he chose God's holy law. He was the freest of all beings, and yet he knew no sin. Only make me free as Christ is free; this is all I ask. "Great peace have they who love thy law, and nothing shall offend them."

IV. *The effect:* "God is well pleased."

1. *With Christ.* God is well pleased with Christ for many reasons. (1.) Because he is his image: "The brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person." (2.) Because he is lovely. (3.) For his dying: "Therefore doth my Father love me." John x., 17. He loves him with a full love; he pours out the love of his whole heart; an unclouded love; sunshine without a cloud; an everlasting love.

2. *With all that are in Christ.* Whoever of you is willing to forsake your own righteousness, and to take Christ as your surety, God not only pardons, but is well pleased with you for his righteousness' sake. The same love wherewith he loves Christ, he will pour out on you; and, O! who can wonder, when you really think of the law-magnifying righteousness of the Lord Jesus? It is an ocean of divine righteousness, and those who are plunged in it are, as it were, lost in divine righteousness. It is an atmosphere of light, ready to envelope the soul, so that the sinner may be covered entirely, and thus become divinely fair, and infinitely well pleasing to God.

Invitation. He that wrought out this righteousness invites you

all to get the benefit of it. To you who have no concern: "Hear, O ye deaf; and look, ye blind." "Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of man." You that are weary, he invites still more tenderly: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden." "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." If you come this day to Christ, you do not need to fear that God's infinite majesty will be against you; for the Lord is well pleased for his righteousness' sake, for he magnified the law, and made it honorable. Amen.

Dur[illegible]e, March 6, 1842.

SERMON LXXVII.

THE OBEDIENCE AND DISOBEDIENCE OF ONE.

"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."—Rom. v., 19.

1. THERE is an exact parallel between the way in which we are made sinners, and the way in which we are made righteous. This is obvious at the first reading of the text; and the more our eyes are opened to see the wondrous truths that are hidden here, the more we shall discover this, that all who are justified, are justified in the very same way as they were made sinners.

2. Unconverted men know neither of these truths. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them." I am persuaded that if those of you who are carnal men, get a glimpse of the meaning of this verse to-day, you will think it consummate folly, although it be the whole counsel of God for the salvation of a sinner. If the Gospel pleased carnal men, it would not be the Gospel; it would prove itself to be false.

3. It is deeply important that you know both of these. They are life to the soul. You must know the first, how you were made sinners, in order that you may lie down as a dead, condemned soul at the feet of Christ. You must know the second, how a sinner is made righteous, in order that you may have all joy and peace in believing. O that God the Holy Spirit may open all your eyes to-day, and mine!

I. *The way in which we were made sinners:* "By the disobedience of one."

1. *The one man.* Our first father, Adam—the root and spring of the human race, and also the head and representative of us all; perfect in body, perfect in soul, full of grace and truth, image of God, very good. It pleased God to deal with mankind from the

very first in this way. As you heard lately, he did not deal with men as a field of corn, where every stalk stands upon its own root; but he dealt with man as with a tree, all the branches of which have but one root and stem. He seems to have dealt with the angels in the other way, each angel standing on its own root; but he dealt with mankind like a tree and its branches. So that if Adam stood, all stood; if he fell, all fell. Some may say: It is not just to deal this way with man: we were not consulted in this matter whether we would have Adam for our head or no. I answer: "Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" God has made us thus—the holy, wise, good, and gracious God. Whether you believe it or not, whether you like it or not, God has made man thus, and you cannot change it.

2. *Disobedience:* The eating the forbidden fruit. Only one sin. Some of you see little evil in one sin, or in a hundred sins; but here you see one sin cast Adam and all his children out of paradise. God did not wait till it was repeated. It appeared a small sin. The outward action was small, only stretching out the hand and taking an inviting fruit. Some of you think little of sins that make no great noise; such as breaking the Sabbath, drinking too much, speaking what is false, sitting down Christless at the Lord's table; but see here, one small sin brought a world under the curse of God. God would rather a world should perish than one small sin go unpunished.

3. *The consequence:* "Many were made sinners." I have said that it pleased God to deal with mankind as a tree. If you strike with the axe at the root of a tree, the whole tree falls, not only the stem, but the branches, and even the twigs upon the branches; and all the branches die and wither, and become fit for the burning. So it was when Adam fell. Satan laid the axe at the root of the tree; and when Adam fell, many fell along with him. All his branches fell that same day. One stroke brought all down. Even the branches most distant from Adam, even the tenderest twigs springing from these branches, fell, and withered, and died that day. (1.) *Death passed upon all men.* From that hour man became a dying thing, the seeds of dissolution were sown; the fair, blooming creature began to wither and dissolve; and every branch came dying into the world. (2.) *Spiritual death.* Just as in a tree when it is felled, the nourishment is immediately cut off from both the stem and branches; so it was with fallen man. In the day he ate he surely died; not a spark of spiritual life remained in him, or any of his. This explains how your children come into the world utterly dead to God and divine things. They are lively in other things. The new-born babe clings to its mother's breast, but not to Jesus. (3.) *The curse of God.* This is the proper meaning of "were made

sinners." It is a judicial term, "were held in God's sight as guilty, lost, undone sinners." In that day the frown of God came upon all men. The holy nature of God abhorred the apostate race. The curse of the broken law passed upon all men.

Ah, brethren! here is matter for humiliation that few of you think about. Not only are you covered over with an infinite load of actual sins; not only have you got a heart like the inside of a grave, full of dead men's bones and rotten flesh, and all uncleanness; or, like the cave of hell, "a hold for every foul spirit, and the cage of every unclean and hateful bird," but you belong to a cursed race; you are the wicked branch of a wicked tree, you are entirely and originally a sinner, spiritually dead, disinclined from all that is good. O pray to discover your connexion with the first Adam, to make you cleave to the second Adam! The world scoff and deride this truth, but that proves it to be divine; for if the Gospel appeared wise to the world, it would disprove itself.

II. *The way in which we are made righteous:* "By the obedience of ONE shall many be made righteous."

1. *One.* This second ONE is the Lord Jesus Christ, the second Adam, and the Son of God. (1.) The first Adam was fair, exquisitely fair, as he came from the hand of God; but the second is altogether lovely, fairer than the children of men. (2.) The first Adam was made in the likeness of God; but the second is God himself, the Lord from heaven, the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person. (3.) The first Adam was full of heavenly wisdom, so that he named all the creatures as they came; but in the second are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. He is the wisdom of God. He spake as never man spake. He calls all the stars by their names. (4.) The first was the head of the whole human race, the federal head; so that in him they stood, and in him they fell. Christ is offered as a head to every creature, and is actually the head of all the redeemed, and of myriads of holy angels, all gathered together in him, even in him.

O glorious ONE! Divine and human perfections meet in him! O that you were filled with sweet, admiring, adoring thoughts of him this day! O that he would rise upon you like the sun! He is the Light of the world, the Sun of righteousness, the bright and morning Star. It is that ONE who justifies the ungodly, who has power to forgive sins. He is precious to all that believe.

2. *His obedience:* Twofold.

(1.) *He obeyed the holy law of God.*—Satan thought he had got God's law for ever dishonored, when he got the whole human race to abhor it, to disown it, and not to obey it; but he was foiled in this very thing. The Son of God came and obeyed it. The obedience of that ONE was more glorifying to God, more amazing to

angels, than the obedience of a world would have been. He magnified the law, and made it honorable, made it shine brighter far than ever, as a holy, just, and good law.

Look through the life of Jesus, as related in the Gospel, and you will see what it is to obey the law of God. He had no other gods before his Father. He bowed to no idols. He took not his holy name in vain. He remembered the Sabbath-day to keep it holy. He came down to Nazareth, and was subject to Joseph and Mary. "Woman, behold thy son." He did not kill, he did not commit adultery, he did not steal, there was no guile found in his mouth, he coveted not. Or, if you sum the ten commandments, and make them into two, He loved God with all his heart, and mind, and strength; and he loved his neighbor as himself. An unquenchable love to God burned in his bosom. He regarded God in all that he did. Even when God bruised him and put him to grief, when God cried, "Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones;" even then he cried, "My God, my God!" He kissed the hand that smote him. He loved his neighbor more than himself: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends," "For my love they are my adversaries," "While we were yet sinners Christ died for us." Even when they were nailing him to the cross, wagging their heads at him, railing on him, offering him vinegar, he cried, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Love is the fulfilling of the law! Now God is love, and Christ is God. This is part of the obedience of One, by which he makes many sinners righteous.

(2.) *He laid down his life.* In this he obeyed a special commandment of his Father. Adam was not only under the ten commandments, but he had a special commandment given him, to try his obedience to God's will, namely, that he should not eat the forbidden fruit. In like manner Christ was not only under the ten commandments, but under a special commandment, the most difficult that ever was given to any being, that he should die for sinners: "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life. This commandment have I received of my Father."—John x., 17. And a little after: "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"—John xviii., 11.

Therefore does he say: "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart."—Psal. xl. And, "Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."—Phil. ii., 8. This was the most amazing trial of obedience that ever was. It was

a long trial: "I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up: while I suffer my terrors I am distracted." He was "a man of sorrows" from his youth. Often, often, he sank under the dark cloud of his Father's anger, till he groaned his last on Calvary. There was nothing in the nature of things to oblige him to do it. There was nothing good or amiable in those for whom he died; they were vile sinners, not asking him to die for them, blind to his excellency and divine glory. Yet he was obedient unto death. This is the obedience by which he covers and justifies all those, however sinful, that come to God by him.

3. *The consequence:* "*Many are made righteous.*" We have seen that in the fall and ruin of man, it pleased God to deal with man, not as a field of corn, each standing on his own root, but as a tree, in which all the branches stand or fall together. We were not made sinners, each by his individual sin, but all by the sin of one. In like manner it has pleased God to justify sinners, not each by his own obedience, by his own goodness and holiness, but "by the obedience of ONE." Just as Adam by his one sin brought death, the curse of God, and total spiritual death, not only upon himself, but upon all branches, even the most distant, even the minutest, even though unborn; so the second Adam, by his own obedience, brought pardon, righteousness, spiritual life, and eternal glory to all his branches, even the most distant, the smallest, even those unborn.

(1.) *They are made righteous.* Those who betake themselves to Christ are made righteous. It matters not what they have been before, they are righteous now. They belong to a righteous family, to a righteous tree; the root is righteous, and so are all the branches. They are not forgiven only—not only have their infinite sins been blotted out, but they are made righteous. They are not only made innocent, as if they had done no sin, but righteous, as if they had fulfilled all righteousness. All that Christ did and suffered is counted theirs. Neither are they made righteous as if they had obeyed, but as if they had obeyed divinely. They are made righteous all at once. We were made sinners all at once—by one blow—by one man's sin; so those of you who cleave to Christ are made righteous all at once. You have not to wait many years before you find acceptance. You find it the moment you cleave to Christ: "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life"—"In the Lord have I righteousness and strength"—"In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory."

(2.) *Many, not few.* The first Adam was the root of a numerous family, to whom, by his disobedience, he transmitted death and sin. The second Adam is the root of a numerous family, to whom he gives pardon and holiness. They are scattered over every country and every age, so that often they seem few, but they are many when gathered together. "So shall thy seed be."

"I saw a great company which no man could number," every one made righteous in this way. "In my Father's house are many mansions," and none of them will be empty, yet every one will be righteous in the disobedience of one. O will ye not be among the many!

(3.) *Many, not all.* The second Adam offers himself to all. He is willing to be co-extensive with the first Adam. Ruin, by the fall of the first Adam, extended to every creature; and so the gift of the second Adam is to every creature; "Go, and preach the Gospel to every creature." The Gospel is preached to every creature under heaven. Christ stands willing to be a root of pardon, and righteousness, and eternal life, to every creature. Yet all do not, and will not, come. The most stay away, and die in their sins. I fear the most of you are now staying away from Christ. O that you were all made righteous in God's way!

III. *Lessons.*

1. *Most are on the wrong way.* Many people are in earnest in a wrong direction. When a ship is wrecked, and the sailors take to the long-boat, they toil hard to get to land, but often they row in wrong directions So with sinners. Many of you are in earnest, but not in the right direction. Most are trying to be righteous in the obedience of many—each in his own. You want to stand on your own root. You will not take guilt from the first Adam, neither righteousness from the second. Are you wiser than God? If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain. You are trying to make Christ useless. Is it not better to submit to God's way—to fall in with the divine scheme—to submit to the righteousness of God?

2. *All believers are equally righteous before God.* I have seen a family of children all dressed alike, that none might boast over the others, all being equally fair. So it is with God's family; they are all righteous in the obedience of One. One garment covers them all—the robe of their elder Brother. Believers differ in attainments, in gifts and graces, but all are equally justified before God. It is not work of their own that justifies them, it is the work of Christ alone. Ah, brethren! there is no boasting in Christ's family. "Where is boasting then? It is excluded." This is what keeps most away. They cannot bear to be on the same level with a drunkard or a publican. They cannot bear to come before God along with Mary Magdalene and the dying thief.

3. *You may come always to God this way.* It is not once only that you need this divine obedience to cover you, but all your life long. The moment you forsake Christ, you lose your righteousness before God. But you may return now. This obedience is always the same—always full—always divine. You say you are changed: Christ is not changed. You say you have got new guilt: Christ is still the same. You may still be made righteous

once more in the obedience of one. Why stay away from Christ? Can you make yourself righteous away from him? Can you be righteous any other way than by submitting to him?

Dundee, April 17, 1842.—(Action Sermon.)

SERMON LXXVIII.

THE LORD KNOWETH HOW TO DELIVER.

"The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished."—2 Peter ii., 9.

THERE are only two great classes of people in the world—the *godly* and the *unjust;* and the way in which God deals with these two classes makes up the history of the universe. To one of these classes every one of you belongs. 1. The *godly* are those who have been born again—made partakers of the divine nature, and live unto God. 2. *The unjust* are those who are ungodly—who have never been born again—who live to themselves and to the world. God deals very differently with these two classes.

I. *His treatment of the godly.*

1. *He allows them to fall into temptations.* The whole Bible shows that it is common for believers to be carried through many and great temptations. Temptations may be understood in two ways. (1.) *Solicitations to sin.* All believers are allowed to fall into these. The old nature remains; though crucified, and mortified, and hated, yet it remains. Satan shoots his fiery darts—lays snares for the soul. The world watches for our halting. No doubt Noah felt these in the old world, and Lot as he walked through the streets of Sodom. (2.) *Trials.* All kinds of trial which try the soul whether it will abide in Christ or no—reproaches and persecutions. Often the trial is fiery. The whole Bible testifies that it is common for believers to fall into these. The ordinary course of a believer passes through these: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able."—1 Cor. x., 13. Think it not strange. James says: "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." And Paul says, "that he served the Lord with all humility of mind, with many tears and temptations."—Acts xx., 19. You may think it strange that God should take us by such a way to glory—by tears and temptations. Why did he let Noah live so long in a world of trials? Why did he let Lot remain in the midst of Sodom?

1*st, To manifest the reality of grace.* It is said: "There must

be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you."—1 Cor. xi., 19. For the same reason there must be temptations, that those of you who are really God's children may be made manifest. In a time when there is no trial or temptation, it is easy to receive the Word with joy, and many among you appear to be Christians; but when temptation comes, many go down—many that seemed to get good at one time, to be moved, and to wait diligently on the Word. Perhaps if you had been allowed to go smoothly through life without temptations, you would have remained with a name to live all your days; but temptation came, and you sank, just to show that you were none of his. But Noah is kept in the midst of the old world, not conforming to the world, to show that there is a divine power working in him—to show that there is an electing, forgiving, upholding God. Lot is kept in Sodom to show the same thing. And you that are believers are kept by the power of God, through manifold temptations.

2*d. To condemn the world.* Noah was moved with fear, by which he condemned the world. When a poor fellow-worm and fellow-sinner was enabled to live above the world, to commune with God, and to go in and out among them, living for eternity, it proved to them that there was a Saviour—that there was a God of grace. A believer is a living demonstration of the way of salvation. Lot condemned the men of Sodom, when he vexed his soul from day to day, when he lived among them a pardoned sinner, upheld by the Holy Spirit. And so the few believers in this place are condemning it. O, if you had never seen what conversion is—if you had no examples of a holy, renewed believer in your neighborhood, you would stand with a bolder face in the judgment! But, ah! every believer in this place condemns you. Why not wash where we have been washed?

3*d, That we may be conformed to Christ.* Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial that is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of the sufferings of Christ. Christ was tempted by the devil, and hated by the world; and we must be glad to share in his sufferings. God desires us to be like our Head in all things.

2. *The Lord knows how to deliver them.*

(1.) *They know not how to deliver themselves.* I have no doubt Noah often said: I fear I too shall be carried away with the flood; I fear my faith will fail me; I know not what to do. And Lot often trembled in Sodom; and David, when Saul pursued him. Many of you do not know how to deliver yourselves. You are compassed about as with a flood, by old companions, old lusts, a hating world, a roaring lion. (2.) *Man knows not how to deliver you.* It is common for souls under temptation to ask counsel of ministers, but they cannot deliver you. Nothing is more vain than the help of man in an hour of temptation. (3.) *The*

Lord knows. More is meant than the mere words imply. The Lord not only knows how to do it, but will certainly deliver the godly out of temptation. He loves them. Every godly one is a jewel in his sight; he died for them, and he will not lose one. When he puts them into the furnace, he sits as a refiner. He has promised they shall never perish: "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." He will with the temptation make a way of escape: "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not."

It matters not what the temptation be. It matters not how great the temptation be, and how weak the believing soul. Some children of God say sometimes: If it were a lesser trial, I could bear it; if the furnace were not so hot, if the temptation were not so great, I could get through; or, if I had more strength, if I were an older and more experienced believer. Look at the words: "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation." Is anything too hard for the Lord?

It matters not how few the believers be. There was but *one* Lot and *one* Noah. Perhaps they said: "The Lord hath forgotten me, and my God hath forsaken me." God is as able to deliver one as a thousand. One soul is precious in his sight: "I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and bring you to Zion"—"I will sift the house of Israel like as corn is sifted in a sieve; yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth"—"Those whom thou hast given me have I kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled."

II. *God's treatment of the unjust:* "God knoweth how to reserve the unjust to the day of judgment to be punished."

1. *The end of all the ungodly is to be punished.* Whatever be God's present dealings with the ungodly, their end is to be punished. Whatever shall be found laden with sin, his end is to be punished. The angels sinned. They were of a noble nature—originally in the image of God; yet God did not spare them, but cast them down to hell. The old world sinned—a great multitude—a worldfull; God brought in the flood upon them. An individual town sinned; God turned it into ashes, and made it an example to all that should afterwards live ungodly. This will be the end of all in this congregation who live on in sin. Ah! it will be more tolerable for Sodom than for you. Your end is to be burned.

2. *Not now: "God knoweth how to reserve."* Judgment against an evil work is not executed speedily. During the French Revolution, a young man stepped forward, and dared God Almighty to strike him dead. No evil followed. Many of you have gone on in sin thus. The first time you sinned, you trembled lest you should be quickly summoned to judgment; but no evil followed, and now your heart is fully set in you to do evil. Ah! you little understand. "The Lord knoweth how to reserve." God's ways

are not like our ways. When a man steals, the cry immediately follows: "Stop, thief!" else he will be out of reach. When a murder is committed, a reward is offered for the apprehension of the murderer, lest he should escape from the hands of justice. Not so with God. He is not in haste to punish. You cannot flee out of his dominions. Your feet shall slide in due time. God is reserving you to the day of judgment to be punished. He endures with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction.

(1.) *It is not that you have sinned little.* Many of you have sinned more than others that have been taken away. I have no doubt there are many in hell who had far less sin than some of you.

(2.) *It is not that God loves your sin.* God hates it infinitely. Every new sin you commit provokes him in a fearful manner. Every new Sabbath you break—every new lust you pour forth—God is more and more angry with you.

(3.) *It is not that you are in health—that there are no means of your destruction at hand.* God could smite in one hour. Here is the explanation: "God knoweth how to reserve the unjust." O employ this day of long-suffering, while Jesus waits to save you, and God refrains from destroying you! Lord, help a worm!

SERMON LXXIX.

DILIGENCE NECESSARY

"Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless."—1 Pet. iii., 14.

I. *The description of believers here given:* "Seeing ye look for such things." So Paul: "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen."—2 Cor. iv., 18. The unconverted among you look at things seen. All your thoughts, talk, hopes, and fears, are taken up about the things of time and sense. But those of you who have anointed eyes, and hearts illumined by the Holy Ghost, look beyond the bounds of time. But the look here spoken of is more than mere knowledge: it is the look of desire, of earnest longing. It is called "looking and hasting unto." It is like the look of a child for an absent parent, when he looks and runs to meet him. It is like the look of a bride for the coming of the bridegroom. What are the things?

1. *The second coming of the Lord.* The scoffers say, "Where is the promise of his coming?"—Verse 4. "But the day of the Lord will come."—Verse 10. "Looking for and hasting unto

the coming of the day of God."—Verse 12. The great event of that day is the coming of Jesus in the clouds of heaven. The world are not looking for this, but you that are Christ's are looking for such things. The world think Christ well away, and hope he may never come back again. They believe, in some sort, that the Son of God was once born of a woman, and lay in the manger at Bethlehem; that he walked on the hills of Galilee, and did many wonders, that he died, and went to his Father. And they hope to see no more of him. They think the world is well quit of him. Certain I am, that if he were returning to this place, the most of the inhabitants would wail because of him.

But he will come, and like a thief in the night. He is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness: "That same Jesus shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."—Acts i., 11. "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction."—2 Thess. i., 7. "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."—Rev. i., 7. Even so. Amen. "Ye look for such things." If you are Christ's at all, you are desiring that blessed hope. Many faithful and godly men believe that the day is near; and who will venture to say they may not be right? The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. Does a bride long for the coming of the bridal-day? So will you that are Christ's love his appearing.

2. *The trial by fire:* "The heavens shall pass away with a great noise: and the elements shall melt with fervent heat: the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up"—"All these things shall be dissolved."

The scoffing world do not look for such things. They do not desire them, neither do they expect them. They read of them in the Bible as they would read a terrific tale, or a tragedy; they do not read of them as coming realities. Yonder blue heaven, they think, shall always span the earth with its calm cerulean arch; the elements shall continue their sportive warfare, the wind blowing east, and then west; the summer zephyr changing with the winter blast. The green earth, they think, shall still roll on with its seed-time and harvest, summer and winter. Their houses and towers, they hope, shall last for ages; they call their lands after their own names. Ah, brethren! can you say you are looking for anything else than just that to-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant? But those of you that are taught of God look for such things. You expect and desire that awful day. You are ever and anon looking up to see when the heavens shall catch fire, and pass away; when the hand that stretched them out like a tent to dwell in, shall roll them up like a scroll. You are waiting for the

day when the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. You look upon the earth as one does upon a crazy house, from which he is about to remove. You look on its mountains, trees, and fields, as soon to be burned up, and all its works, its houses, and palaces, and towers, as soon to be a smoking funeral pile. No wonder Jesus said: "They are not of the world." The wonder is, brethren, that we are so much of the world.

3. *The new heavens and earth:* "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."—Verse 13. The promise of the new heavens and earth is contained in Isa. lxv., 17; again in Isa. lxvi., 22; and again, Rev. xxi., 1: "I saw a new heaven and a new earth." What that glorious world shall be I cannot tell. No thunder-clouds shall ever darken the sky; no lightning flash; no blighting east wind blow; no pestilential fogs; no raging whirlwind. There shall be no more curse; thorns and thistles shall nowhere be found; paradise will be restored. All this may be—I cannot tell; but one thing is certain: "Therein dwelleth righteousness." "There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." The wicked shall be plucked away. The world do not look for such things. You do not believe that you shall ever be bound up in bundles, and cast away. You do not believe that there is a world where you will be separated from your believing friends and neighbors. But we look for such things. We look for a time when you will no more scorn us, and cast out our name as evil; when you will no more hate and revile us; a world where you will never be, "wherein dwelleth righteousness."

II. *The duty here commanded:* "Be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace."

The duty here commanded is *diligence;* diligence in so living as that, when Christ shall appear, he may find you in peace, without spot and blameless. Two things are implied in this command.

1. *Be diligent to get into Christ.* In order to be found in peace, without spot and blameless, a man must be found in Christ. If any man be out of Christ, he is not at peace with God, neither is he without spot and blameless. There is but one way of being unspotted and unblamable before God, and that is by being in Christ. By nature, "there is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that understandeth; there is none that seeketh after God; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." You are all spotted by your constantly wicked heart; and your wicked life is a continual blot before God. Be diligent to be found in peace.

(1.) *Seek it as the one thing needful:* "One thing have I de-

sired of the Lord." Most in this congregation have some desire to be saved. You would like not to be cast into hell; you would like to be received into glory; but not many will be diligent, or press into the kingdom of God. Get your heart so engrossed with this, that it shall be your main concern, sleeping and waking. Ah! if you knew the worth of Christ, you would be diligent to be found of him in peace.

(2.) *Leave no means untried.* When a man is diligent in seeking some earthly thing, he leaves no means untried to get at his end. When a merchant is seeking goodly pearls, he goes from market to market. When a beggar is seeking his meat, he goes from door to door; a hundred refusals do not daunt him; he still knocks on at the next gate. And so, if you are really in earnest, you will leave no means untried—Bible, prayer, united prayer, faithful ministers, and godly friends.

(3.) *Give up all that hinders.* When a man is diligent in worldly things, he gives up all that would mar his success. If a man is thoroughly set upon going a journey, he leaves his bed early in the morning. If a man is running for his life, he soon throws away every weight. So, if you are diligent in seeking Christ. If your way of business prevents you; if it brings so much care as to hinder you, so that you see it will be your ruin, you will give it up. If any company is ruinous to you, destroys your seriousness, hinders your prayers, and wastes your precious hours, you will break it off. If any idol hinders your cleaving to Christ, cast it away. Be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace. Herod would not give up his Herodias.

2. *Be diligent to abide in Christ:* "Beware lest ye fall from your own steadfastness."—Verse 17. Abide in him, little children, that when he shall appear ye may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. (1.) *Leave no guilt upon the conscience.* Guilt mars our communion with Christ, hides the reconciled face, brings clouds, hidings, frowns. Give daily diligence to come as you came at the first. He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved. (2.) *Be diligent to grow in grace.* A growing tree is a living tree. When a tree ceases to grow, it is in danger of being blown down. So with a believer. Get more knowledge, faith, love. (3.) *Seek daily likeness to Jesus.* We are not justified by our sanctification; and yet without sanctification we cannot have abiding peace or communion. We are justified entirely by the doing and dying of the Lord Jesus; and yet, when justified, he will change us into his image; so that the longer we are justified we should be the more sanctified. Study holiness, if you would have peace now, and be found of Christ in peace. The holiest believers are ever-more the happiest.

III. *Motives to diligence.*

1. *The most are very careless.*—The most around you are living

as if there were no coming Saviour, no heavens on fire, no earth to be burned up. The people of this town are like the people of Sodom, they are at ease in sin. Though they have not fulness of bread, they have abundance of idleness. The most of believers are very careless, not looking for the Bridegroom; therefore be you diligent. Let your carelessness make you the more diligent. Tremble lest you be infected with the general carelessness and slumber. It is an infectious disease.

2. *There is need of all your diligence.* The righteous scarcely are saved. You live in a world of enemies, your own heart, the temptations of the world, the snares of the devil. Few get to heaven without desperate falls. If you were travelling in Alpine countries, among rocks and precipices, you would see your need of diligence, lest you fall and break your bones. Such is your journey now.

3. *The time is short:* "What! could ye not watch with me one hour?" If you have yet to get into Christ, the time is short. You are like a traveller who has a long journey before him, and has slept till the day is far spent. He must double his pace, and so must you. If you are in Christ, the time is but short. You are like a sentry on guard. Your hour is a short one; do not grow sleepy, but keep awake. Watch, for ye know neither the day nor the hour.

4. *Your diligence will be too late, if Christ find you Christless.* When the bridegroom came, the foolish virgins went to buy; but they were too late. So many of you will begin to seek when too late. When you lift up your eyes in hell, or when Jesus comes, you will cry, "Lord, Lord;" but all diligence will be then too late. When the boat has left the shore, it is in vain for you to run. Now your diligence may be to good purpose. Yet there is room, the door is now open. "Be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace."

Dundee, May 14, 1842.

SERMON LXXX.

FOLLOW THE LORD FULLY.

"But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it."—Numb. xiv., 24.

THE children of Israel lay encamped below Mount Sinai for about a year, during which time God gave them the law and the tabernacle. Moving across the desert with the pillar-cloud before them,

they soon came to Kadesh-barnea, in the edge of the desert, and on the border of the promised land. Here, by God's direction, they sent twelve spies to search the land, and to bring back word "whether the people were strong or weak, few or many; and what the land is that they dwell in, whether it be good or bad; and what cities they dwell in, whether in tents or in strongholds."—Numb. xiii., 18, 19. Accordingly the spies searched the land from one end to another, going up by the rocky dells of Hebron, and returning by the pleasant Vale of Eschol. After forty days they returned, bearing a cluster of grapes between two upon a staff; also some pomegranates and some figs. And as they stood in the midst of assembled Israel, all eyes rested on them—all ears were open to hear their report. The land was good, they said, flowing with milk and honey; but the people were strong, and their cities walled, and very great. Two men alone of the twelve stood boldly forward, Caleb and Joshua; and Caleb said, "Let us go up at once, for we are well able to overcome it." But the people wept that night, and bade stone Caleb with stones.—Numb. xiv., 10. And God was angry, and said the congregation should die in the wilderness. "But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it."

Doctrine.—It is a blessed thing to follow the Lord fully.

I. *What it is to follow the Lord fully.*

1. *To follow Christ all our days.* This was the way with Caleb; he followed the Lord all his days—he followed him fully. We find it recorded of him, forty years after, when he was an old man of eighty-five, that "he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel." He did not follow God for a time, or by fits and starts, but all his days—he followed him fully.

(1.) *There are many like Lot's wife,* who flee out of Sodom for a while. She was greatly alarmed—the angels laid hands upon her—she heard the words of warning, and fled for a time; but she soon gave up—she looked back, and became a pillar of salt. So, many are awakened and flee for their life; they weep; pray; seek salvation; but they do not hold out—they are allured by an old companion or a favorite lust, and so they draw back. (2.) *Many are like those in John* vi.: They follow Jesus for a time, and are called his disciples; they hear the gracious words that proceed out of his mouth; but by and by some discovery of doctrine or duty is made which offends them: "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with Jesus." It is those who never go back that follow him fully. (3.) *Many are like the Galatians.* When Paul first preached to them, they received him "as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus." They spoke of the blessedness of being in Christ, and the great salvation.

They loved Paul, so that if it had been possible they would have plucked out their own eyes and given them to him (Gal. iv., 15); and yet they did not follow the Lord fully. They were soon removed from the Gospel of Christ to another gospel. "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you?" And now they hated Paul for speaking the truth to them. So with many of you. This is not following fully. (4.) *Many in affliction begin to follow Christ.* —Ps. lxxviii., 34. When laid on a sick-bed, or when some bereavement occurs, they take to their Bible; begin to weep and pray. But the world comes back upon them; temptation, old companions; and they go back. They do not follow the Lord fully.

Ah! how many in this congregation are witnesses that ye have not followed the Lord fully. Ye did run well, who did hinder you? How many of you were impressed! Divine things appeared great and precious in your eyes—you came to the Lord's table; you sat down with solemnity—and where are you now? Have you not gone quickly out of the way?

2. *Those of you who would follow Christ fully all your days.*

(1.) *Must be like Lot:* Not only flee from Sodom, but flee to Zoar—you must not resist in convictions, however deep. It is a good thing to be awakened, but, ah! you are not saved. If you would follow Christ fully, you must get fully into Christ. (2.) *You must continue in his word:* "Then said Jesus to those Jews that believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed."—John viii., 31. Remember ye are saved by the Gospel, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain." You must be like Mary, who sat at his feet and heard his word. (3.) *You must be like aged Simeon:* "Behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, the same was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel." Perhaps he was converted when a young man; but it was no slight work—soon over; he followed the Lord fully all his days; and now, when he was an old man, he was still waiting for the Consolation of Israel. He followed the Lord fully, and now he follows the Lamb in paradise. (4.) *You must be like the palm tree:* "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. Those that he planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing."—Ps. xcii. The palm tree and cedar have both this wonderful property, that they are fruitful to the last: and so it is with the living believer; he is a Christian to the last—full of the Spirit, full of love, full of holiness to the last. Like fine wine, the older the better. "The path of the just is like the shining light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." (5.) *You must be like Paul.* From the day of his conversion, Paul was a new creature. The love of Christ constrained him, and he lived no more unto himself, but unto him that died for him, and rose

again. We never hear of his slackening his pace, or giving over fighting: "Forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth unto the things that are before, I press towards the mark." Even when an old man, he did not lose the fire of his love, or zeal, or compassion: "I am ready to be offered, and the hour of my departure is at hand; I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." He followed the Lord fully: he never looked back, he never halted, he never slumbered, he was a second Caleb. So must you be, if you would be saved.

"He that endureth to the end shall be saved." Not he that has a good beginning, but he that follows fully.

II. *To follow Christ with all the heart.*

This was the way in which Caleb followed the Lord, with all his heart, fully. He had no inconsistencies—he followed the Lord in all he did.

1. *The most of Christians do not follow the Lord fully—the most have some inconsistency.* Most do not reflect Christ's image in every part. The most do not think it attainable: they are discouraged from seeking it. Many do not think it desirable; at least they think it better for the time to have this and that weakness.

(1.) *Some do not follow Christ in his lowliness.* Christ compared himself to the lily of the valleys: "I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys." This was to express his lowliness—his genuine humility. Although he had no sin of his own to make him humble, yet he was humble in his own nature. He did not vaunt himself—did not seek the flattery of men. Some do not follow Christ in this. Some who seem really saved persons, yet have this unlikeness to Christ. They are proud—proud of being saved, proud of grace, proud of being different from others. (2.) *Some do not follow Christ in his self-denial.* He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich. While we were sinners, Christ died for us. He had not where to lay his head. Yet many who seem to be Christians seek their own comfort and ease before everything else. They do not drink into Christ's Spirit in this. (3.) *Some do not follow his love.* Christ was love. He descended out of love; lay in the manger out of love; lived a life of sinless obedience out of love; died out of love. Yet some who are Christians do not follow him in this; do not love as he loved. Some have little compassion upon sinners; can sit at ease in their own houses, and see a world perish for lack of knowledge. How few will do anything out of love!

2. *Many Christians have a time of decay.*

(1.) *So it was with Ephesus.* At one time they were "blessed with spiritual blessings"—"chosen to be holy and without blame before him in love." They were followers of God, as dear children, and walked in love, as Christ loved them. But a time of

decay followed, and Christ says : " I have this against thee, that thou hast left thy first love." They were not like Caleb : they did not follow the Lord fully. (2.) *So it was with David.* When he fell into gross and open sin, his whole soul seemed to decay for a time, all his bones seemed to be broken, and he feared that God would take away the Spirit from him for ever. He did not follow the Lord fully. (3.) *So it was with Solomon.* When Solomon began to reign, it seemed as if he would follow the Lord fully. The Lord appeared to him in Gibeon, saying : " Ask what I shall give thee." " God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding, exceeding much ; and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea-shore." And God enabled him to build the temple, and blessed him in all things. Yet did Solomon suffer a sad decay : " He loved many strange women. For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods, and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father." He did not follow the Lord fully. (4.) *So it was with Asa.* " Asa did that which was good and right in the sight of the Lord his God."—2 Chron. xiv. : By his faith he overcame the Ethiopian army of a thousand thousand. He also made a covenant, and all Judah rejoiced at the oath. Yet he suffered a sad decay. For when the king of Israel came against him, his faith failed him. And when he was old, he was diseased in his feet ; nevertheless he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians. He did not follow the Lord fully. (5.) *So it was with the five virgins.* They were wise, and took oil with them in their vessels with their lamps ; yet while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. They suffered a sad decay. They did not follow the Lord fully.

Ah ! this must not be the way with you, if you would be like Caleb, and follow the Lord fully. You must follow him without any inconsistency, and without any decay.

1. *You must be like those that say : "I am the Lord's."* " One shall say, I am the Lord's." God says, " My son, give me thine heart." Ye are bought with a price, ye are not your own. If you would be a Caleb, you must give yourself away to him, you must give away your understanding, will, and affections, your body and all its members, your eyes and tongue, your hands and feet : so that you are in no respect your own, but his alone. Oh, it is sweet to give up yourself to God, to be filled with his Spirit, to be ruled by his Word ; a little vessel full of him, a vessel to bear his name, a vessel afore prepared unto glory ! This is to follow the Lord fully.

2. *You must be changed into the same image.* " We all, 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."—2 Cor. ii., 18. Our foolish hearts think it better to retain some part of Satan's image, but, ah ! this is our

happiness, to reflect every feature of Jesus, and that for ever, to have no inconsistency, to be like him in every part; to love like him, to weep like him, to pray like him, to be changed into his likeness: "I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness."

3. *You must have his whole law written in your hearts.* "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts." This is your chief happiness, to let every commandment have its proper place in your heart, to have it graven deep there, so that it cannot be effaced. This is to follow the Lord fully.

III. *To follow Christ at all hazards.*

So it was with Caleb. The congregation bade stone him with stones; still he did not care, he would do his duty, whatever evil should befall him. He followed the Lord fully. Ah! there are many that follow Christ in the sunshine, that will not follow him in the storm. When the winter comes, the swallows fly away. There are many like the swallows. Many do not follow fully.

1. *Reproach makes many stagger.* As long as it is fashionable to be religious, and a man's character is advanced by it, rather than otherwise, then many follow Christ; but when it becomes a proverb and a byword, many are offended. Butterflies come out when the sun is warm; but a shower of rain makes them hide.

2. *When men lose their worldly ease.* When Paul and Barnabas were going to Asia, they took John Mark along with them; but when the work appeared dangerous, he went back.—Acts xv., 37.

If we would follow the Lord fully, we must go through good and bad report.

1. *If we would follow Christ fully, we must bear his reproach:* "Let us go out to him without the camp, bearing his reproach." We must bear the reproach even of our nearest friends: "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me." We would fain go to heaven without reproach, but it cannot be, if we go the narrow way, and follow Christ fully.

2. *We must not think of ease if we follow Christ fully.* Christ trod a thorny path: he was crowned with thorns; we must not think to be crowned with roses. Paul says, "For whom have I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ."

3. *We must be willing to lose our life:* "Neither count I my life dear unto myself;" "The time cometh, when whoso killeth you shall think that he doeth God service;" "Whoso findeth his life shall lose it;" "Be faithful unto death;" "They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and they loved not their lives unto the death."

Oh! it is sweet to follow Christ fully, for then we shall reign

with him. If we suffer with him, we shall reign with him. If we deny him, he will deny us.

IV. *How we may be enabled to follow the Lord fully.*

1. *By keeping the eye upon him.* This was what enabled Caleb to follow the Lord fully. He endured as seeing him who was invisible; he set the Lord always before him. If Caleb had been seeking a name, or his own wealth, fame, or honor, he would not have followed fully, he could not have followed all his days, nor with all his heart, nor at all hazards.

If you would follow Christ fully, you must know him fully. (1.) *It is a sight of his beauty* that draws us to follow him. "He is the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely." "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." There is an indescribable loveliness in Christ that draws the soul to follow him. All divine perfections dwell in him, and yet he offers to save us. (2.) *His suitableness.* He just answers the need of our soul. We are all guilt, he is all righteousness. We all weakness, he all strength. Nothing can more completely answer our soul than Christ doth. The chickens run under the feathers of their mother when they see them stretched out, the dove flutters into the clefts, Noah into the ark; and our soul thus follows Jesus. (3.) *His freeness.* "He will in no wise cast out." He forgives seventy times seven. It is the keeping the eye on Christ that makes you follow him. It is seeing the King in his beauty that makes the soul cleave to him, and run after him. "My soul followeth hard after thee." "Run the race set before you, looking unto Jesus."

2. *By having the Holy Spirit, Caleb had another spirit.* The other spies were carnal men; but Caleb had another spirit, he had the Holy Spirit dwelling in him, leading him, upholding and renewing him. So with all who follow the Lord fully. (1.) The Spirit of God in the soul is a constant stream, a well of water springing up unto everlasting life. Lot's wife looked back; but she had not the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. (2.) The Spirit is a filling Spirit, he loves to fill the heart, to fill every chamber. "Be filled with the Spirit." "Now the God of hope fill you." He loves to write the whole law on the heart, to lift the whole soul to God.

V. *The motives to follow to the Lord fully.*

"Him will I bring into the land." The other spies died of the plague, the people fell in the wilderness; but Caleb and Joshua, because they followed the Lord fully, were received into the land.

1. *It is the only happy life.* There is no happier life under the sun than to follow Christ all our days. There is not a more miserable creature on earth than a backslider. Every time we turn aside from following Christ, we are providing misery for ourselves, hidings, desertions, and broken bones. The only happy life is to

follow with all our heart. We generally think it is happy to have this or that idol, but we are quite mistaken. Your true happiness is in self-surrender, in giving up your heart and all to him. Any one inconsistency mars your joys, mars communion. Are you not far happier in your times of closest walking with God? O that it were so with me always! Decays bring darkness and misery. The only happiness is to suffer the loss of all things. Many Christians are not willing to deny themselves, to suffer for Christ's sake, not willing to bear reproach or persecution. Christ will give a hundred fold more; peace of conscience.

2. *This is the way to be useful.* It is the thriving Christian that is the useful Christian, the one that follows Christ fully. The blessing to Abraham was: "I will bless thee, and make thee a blessing." This was eminently true of Paul. He followed Christ fully; and what a blessing he was! So would you be, if you followed Christ fully. If you bore all the features of Christ about with you, what a blessing would you be to the place and to the world! not a cumberer of the ground. How useful to your children and neighbors!

3. *This is the way to die happily.* If you die the death of Christ's people, you must live their life. Inconsistent Christians generally have a painful death-bed; but those that follow Christ fully can die like aged Paul, "I am ready to be offered;" like Job, "I know that my Redeemer liveth."

4. *This will insure a great reward.* Every man shall be rewarded according as his work has been. Some will be made rulers over five, some over ten cities. I have no doubt that every sin, inconsistency, backsliding, and decay of God's children, takes away something from their eternal glory. It is a loss for all eternity; and the more fully and unreservedly we follow the Lord Jesus now, the more abundant will our entrance be into his everlasting kingdom. The closer we walk with Christ now, the closer will we walk with him to all eternity. "Thou hast a few names in Sardis which have not defiled their garments. They shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy." Amen.

Dundee, 1842.

SERMON LXXXI.

THE UNWORTHY COMMUNICANT WARNED.

"For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."—1 Cor. xi., 29, 30.

When it pleased God lately to pour out his Spirit in a remarkable

manner on one of the parishes of Scotland, I was told by the minister that the sin that took deepest hold upon the consciences of the people, was the sin of unworthy communicating. He told me it was a most affecting sight, to see aged persons of threescore and ten sitting weeping over the broken sacraments of bygone years. If it shall please God to pour out his Spirit on the grown-up part of this congregation, I feel deeply persuaded that this dreadful sin of unworthy communicating will be like a mill-stone around most of your necks. Yes, my dear friends, God has a controversy with you about this matter, and he will either plead with you in time or in eternity.

1. There is such a thing as eating and drinking unworthily. Even in the days of the Apostle Paul this sin existed; and so it does in our day. There are many at the Lord's table who should not be there. There are many who come without the wedding garment; many who displease and provoke God by coming; many who will repent it to all eternity.

2. They get no good by it, but great evil. They eat and drink damnation to themselves. They think they are eating harmless bread and wine; or perhaps they think they are covering the sins of the past six months by eating; whereas God says they are eating and drinking damnation to themselves. It is as if they were eating poison.

3. He explains wherein their unworthiness consists: They do not discern the Lord's body. The phrase here used is evidently taken from the sense of taste in the human body, whereby we discern between different kinds of food. To discern the Lord's body, is to have a peculiar taste or relish for the way of salvation by Christ and him crucified. When a heavy laden sinner feels the power of the Gospel; when he sees the sweetness, freeness, and fulness of Christ, he then tastes or discerns the Lord's body. But those who have not come to Christ, have never got this taste, this relish for the way of salvation by Christ. They may be very decent, good-natured people; they may read the Bible, and keep up a form of godliness; but they have never tasted the honey in the clefts of the Rock. These are they who profane the Lord's table.

I. *None should come to the Lord's supper but those who discern the Lord's body:* i. e., *have a true relish for Christ.*

1. *From the actions of the communicant.* You do not come to look at the bread and wine, but to feed upon them. You stretch out the hand, and take of the bread and eat it; you take the wine and drink it. Now, since that bread and wine represent the Lord's body, it is plain to a child, that the meaning of that action is: "I relish the Lord Jesus Christ. He is my manna, my sweet food, my only way of pardon, peace and holiness, my Lord and my God." When a hungry beggar comes to your door, and

you give him a piece of wholesome bread, how gladly does he catch at it, and begin to eat it! Why? Because he relishes it; it is what he requires. Such is your feeding at the Lord's table. You thereby declare that Christ is your Saviour, your manna, your all. When the man found the treasure in the field, he was glad, and went and sold all that he had and bought that field. Such is your declaration in coming to the Lord's table; Christ is precious to me; I have left all for him. The bride in the Song of Solomon says: "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." So do you say in coming to the Lord's table: I have found rest in the shade of Christ; his fruit is sweet to me; his way of pardon, his Spirit, his commands—all are sweet to my taste. When the maniac had the devils cast out, he sat at the feet of Jesus clothed, and in his right mind. Once he bade Jesus depart: "What have I to do with thee?" Now Christ is all. Such is your declaration at the Lord's table. When Paul was an unconverted man, he was a blasphemer—he breathed out threatenings; but when he got a taste of Jesus, he said: "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." Such is your declaration in taking that bread and wine.

Can you truly say that you have found the treasure, that you have sold all for it, that you have sat down under the shade of that apple tree, and that you delight in his holy fruit; that you were once far from Christ, but now sitting at his feet; that you now preach the faith which once you destroyed; that, like Paul, you glory only in the cross of Christ? Can you say, in the sight of God, that Christ is your manna, your sweet food, your peace, your all? Then you are welcome to the Lord's table. Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.

Most of you cannot say this. You have not found the treasure. Will you come to the Lord's table? To what purpose? You will eat and drink unworthily. It will provoke God in a dreadful manner. You will repent it when you die. You will grieve on account of it to all eternity. Some even perpetrate in half an hour what they will mourn for ever and ever. Judas, in eternal torments, bewails his sin and folly. So will you.

2. *From the words of Jesus:* "This do in remembrance of me." An unconverted man cannot remember Christ; for he hath never seen him, neither known him. A man who never tasted honey, cannot remember the taste of it; so a man who never had a saving taste of the sweetness of the Lord Jesus, cannot possibly remember him. Indeed, there is a kind of remembrance of Christ that any man may have. You may remember the events of his life; that he was born in a stable; that he walked on the Lake of Galilee; that he wept over Jerusalem; that he prayed in Gethsemane;

that he died on the cross in Calvary; but even the devils can remember Christ in this way. They remember all his history much more perfectly than we do. Satan has more knowledge of divine things than many doctors of divinity. And lost souls in eternal misery remember Jesus; they remember all he did, and all he suffered, and how often he would have saved them. Judas, in his place in hell, remembers Jesus. But, ah! this is not the saving remembrance of Jesus which we have at the Lord's table.

When a laboring, heavy laden sinner is brought to the feet of Jesus, he finds a joy and peace in believing he never felt before. He gets a discovery of the love of Christ that he never had before; the love of Jesus in coming for the ungodly, and dying for them; the freeness of Christ to every creature; to sinners, even the chief; to publicans and sinners coming to him; the wisdom and excellency of this way of salvation; the amazing glory and perfection of the righteousness of God. When the Spirit thus takes the veil from the eyes, he gets a sight of Christ which he never will, and never can forget. This is the spiritual relish and discerning of the Lord's body. Every new exhibition of Jesus calls up again this sweet sense of his goodness and beauty. He cannot hear his name but his heart is caught away to him. His name is like ointment. When ministers preach his Word, the memory rushes back to Jesus; and when the broken bread and wine are set before his eyes, his heart is drawn away to remember Jesus. As when the widows stood by Peter weeping, showing the coats and garments that Dorcas had made, every new piece of handiwork of their departed friend called up fresh love in their bosom, and fresh tears to their eyes. So to those that know Jesus, the broken bread and poured-out wine stir up their inmost souls to remember Jesus.

Have you this sanctified memory? Do you remember when the name of Christ was all a blank to you? and is it now like ointment poured forth? Do you remember when first you saw the Lord, or if not the very time, do you feel the amazing change that has been wrought in you? Then welcome; "This do in remembrance of me."

But most, I fear, have no such memory. You have no gracious discovery of Christ to remember. You have never discerned the Lord's body. You say you will remember his life and death. Why, devils could do that. Would it not shock you to see devils seated at the Lord's table? and yet they have as much right to sit there as unconverted souls.

3. *From the practice of the apostles.*—One example: The Ethiopian eunuch was "a man of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, and had the charge of all her treasure." Acts viii., 27. By the amazing grace of God this man became concerned about his soul: a Bible had come in his way, and per-

haps some wandering messenger of mercy. He could not rest, but left his country to go to Jerusalem. There he found no peace, no light. Sad and weary he proceeded on his journey home. Still his heart was heavy; he sat reading Isaiah the prophet. By the mercy of God, Philip was sent to him, and in his chariot preached to him Jesus, the Lamb of God. O what a new world now opened to the Ethiopian! He sees the way of righteousness without works. Now they come to water: "What doth hinder me to be baptized? If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest. I believe that Jesus is the Son of God. So they went down into the water, and Philip baptized him; and he went on his way rejoicing." Is this your experience, beloved? Have you sought Christ as he did? Have you found him as he did? Do you believe with all your heart? Then the Lord's table is open to you, and you will go on your way rejoicing.

But, ah! it is not so with most. If some of you had been keeper of Candace's treasures, you would not have gone the length of the street to find the way to be saved. Some of you never read your Bible as that Ethiopian did—never sought instruction. You dare not say that you have believed with all your heart. Why, then, would you sit down at this holy table? You may come: but, alas! you will not go on your way rejoicing.

II. *It is very dangerous.*

1. *They are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.* There is no sin less thought of on earth—there is no sin more thought of in heaven and in hell, than unworthy communicating. Those who commit it are sharing with those who betrayed and murdered the Lord Jesus. They share with them in two respects.—(1.) In pretending love and friendship towards him; (2.) In real hatred to him in their hearts, and contempt for his Gospel. When Judas betrayed the Lord Jesus, he pretended great love for him. He had followed him during all the years of his ministry—had preached in his name. He sat very reverently at the Lord's table; dipped his hand in the same dish with Christ. His words were smoother than butter; but war was in his heart. When he came to betray Christ he said: "Hail, Master!" and kissed him; yet all the while there was awful hatred in his heart—a deadly enmity at Christ and his Gospel.

So the high priests and Pharisees pretended great zeal for God and for his cause: they pretended to be very sanctified and holy men; and yet they hated and condemned Christ to die. The soldiers of Herod pretended great respect to Christ, when they kneeled to him and said: "Hail, King of the Jews!" but all the time they mocked and hated him. Pilate pretended much to be a friend of Christ: he washed his hands, and said: "I am guiltless

of this innocent blood;" and yet he condemned him to be crucified.

So it is with unworthy communicants. You come to the Lord's table with a great show of respect. You appear deeply solemnized. You take the bread and wine, pretending that you have been converted; that Christ is your portion. You appear to be under deep emotion. Yet all the while you despise Christ and his people—ridicule conversion, and the life of grace. "Woe unto that man! it had been good for him that he had never been born."

You have the same heart as Judas, as the high priest, as the soldiers, as Pilate. You are guilty.

2. *Eat and drink judgment.* This is true in two ways. (1.) It is adding another sin, heaping another mountain on the burdened soul, and so bringing heavier condemnation—sinking the soul deeper. (2.) It is always hardening; all sin hardens, but especially sinning in holy things. One who makes jests out of the Bible is hardly ever saved, it is so hardening. But of all sins against holy things, unworthy communicating is the most hardening; so that an unconverted man communicating does often literally eat and drink damnation to himself. Just as a child of God drinks life, so he drinks death, out of that cup.

Some of you may be saying: Though I be unconverted, I will go; for though it do me no good, it will do me no harm. Is it no harm to add another sin to your soul? Is it no harm to harden and seal your heart unto perdition? Is it no harm to eat and drink judgment to yourself?

Some may be saying: I hope I shall cover the sins of my past six months by it. Some of you, who have only been once or twice at church all that time, will be saying: I will make up for past neglect, and cover my sins. Will it cover your past sins, to add another to the heap? Will it atone for your broken Sabbaths, to come and profane the sacrament too? Will it cover sins to eat and drink judgment?

3. *Many weak and sickly, and many sleep.* There are some sins which God visits with temporal judgments, as weakness of body, sickness, and death. When Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Ghost, they fell down dead at the apostles' feet. When Herod gave not God the glory, he was eaten up of worms, and died upon his throne. So it is especially in profaning the Lord's table. This is God's word, who knows best; "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." The Lord Jesus, the master of the table, has all providences in his hand, and he can, and does, make use of them to bring down those who insolently profane his table. Just as God has provided a real hell of material fire that never will be quenched, in order to affect some gross sinners, who would not be moved to flee from anything but bodily pain; so in the Lord's supper it pleases God to make use of

sickness and death to keep off profane hands from that bread and wine. I have often observed God doing this. I remember three deaths which took place in such a way and at such a time, that I could not doubt it was the fulfilment of this verse. Watch and see, beloved!

Take heed, then, O beloved, lest when the bread is in your mouth you should fall down dead. Ah! it is an awful thing to die profaning the Lord's table; for you will sink lower than the grave.

"Therefore, let a man examine himself." What are your real motives for coming to the Lord's table? Is it because you are come to a certain time of life? But are you born again? Is it because your family are coming? Is it for a name? Is it for money? Ah! Judas over again. Is it to get baptism for your child? That is to commit one sin to help you to commit another.

Is it to praise him for what he has done for your soul?—Ps. cxvi. Is it to show the world whom you have chosen? Is it to get nearer to Jesus? Come, then, and lean on his breast, and never draw back. Amen.

Dundee, 1841.

SERMON LXXXII.

MORE BLESSED TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE.

"It is more blessed to give than to receive."—Acts xx., 35.

These words form part of a most touching address which Paul made to the ministers of Ephesus, when he parted with them for the last time. He took them all to witness that he was pure from the blood of all men: "For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." It is deeply interesting to notice that the duty of giving to the poor is marked by him as one part of the counsel of God; so much so, that he makes it his last word to them: "I have showed you all things, how that so laboring 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." These words, which he quotes from the mouth of the Saviour, are nowhere to be found in the Gospels. It is the only traditional saying of our Lord that has been preserved. It seems to have been one of his household words—a common-place—uttered by him again and again; "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

I am glad of having this opportunity of laying before you this part of the counsel of God; for God knows there is no part of it I wish to keep back from you—that you ought to labor to sup-

port the weak; and the only argument I shall use with you is that of our blessed Lord: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

I. *We should give liberally to the poor, because it is a happier thing to give than to receive.*

It is happy, because it is like all happy beings. All happy beings are giving beings; their happiness consists not in receiving, but in giving.

1. *Angels.* The whole Bible shows that the angels are happy beings; far happier than we can conceive. (1.) They are holy beings—ever doing God's commandments. Now, holiness and happiness are inseparable. (2.) They are in heaven—always in the smile of their Father. They "do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven;" they must be happy—no tear on their cheek, no sigh in their bosom. (3.) They are represented as praising God—one crying to another, "Holy, holy, holy," and singing, "Worthy is the Lamb." Now, singing praises is a sign of mirth and gladness. "Is any merry? let him sing psalms." Now, I want you to see that the happiness of these happy spirits consists in giving. 1*st*, they *all* give: "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them that shall be heirs of salvation?" Upon the earth very few people give; most people like to receive money; to keep it, to lay it up in the bank, to see it becoming more and more. There are only a few people that give—these often not the richest; but in heaven all give. It is their greatest pleasure. Search every dwelling of every angel—you will not find one hoard among them all. They are all ministering spirits.

2*d*, *They give to those who are far beneath them.* They are not contented to help those that can help them back again, but they give, hoping for nothing again. There were some poor shepherds in the fields near Bethlehem; yet a great angel did not hesitate to visit them with kind and gentle words; nay, it would seem that there were many more that would fain have been allowed to carry the message; for no sooner was it done than a multitude of the heavenly host were with him praising God. You remember, too, how kind the angels were to the beggar Lazarus. The dogs were the only ones that ministered to him on earth; but the angels stooped on willing wing, and bore him to Abraham's bosom.

3*d*, *The highest love to give most.* There is reason to believe that the highest angels are those who go down lowest, and give up most in the service of God. Jesus expressly says so: "He that is greatest among you shall be your servant." The angels that see the face of God, stoop to serve the meanest children of God. It is the happiness of the happiest angel that he can give up more, and stoop lower down in sweet, humble services, than the angels beneath him.

Dear Christians, you often pray, "Thy will be done on earth as

it is in heaven." If you mean anything, you mean that you may serve God as the angels do! Ah, then, your happiness must be in giving. The happiness of the angels consists in this. If you would be like them, become a ministering spirit.

2. *God.* We know very little of God; but we know that he is infinitely happy. You cannot add to his happiness, nor take from it. We know also many things that enter into his happiness. Everything he does must afford him happiness. As when he created the world, and said, "All very good;" God was happy in creating. But the Bible shows that his happiness mainly consists in giving, not in receiving. (1.) His giving food to all creatures is very wonderful—not one sparrow is forgotten before God. The whole world has been cursed, and God could justly cast the whole into destruction; but he does not, he delighteth in mercy. The young lions seek their meat from God. He feeds the ravens when they cry. (2.) He gives to the wicked: "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and unjust." Just think for a moment how many thousands God feeds every day who blaspheme his name, and profane his Sabbaths. He gives them food and raiment; turns the hearts of people to be kind to them; and yet they curse God every day. Oh! how this shows that God delighteth in mercy. "Be ye merciful, even as your Father in heaven is merciful." (3.) But, most of all, he gave his own Son. God delights in giving. It is his nature. He spared not his own Son. Although he was emptying his own bosom, yet he would not keep back the gift. Now, some of you pray night and day to be made like God: "Blessed art thou, O God: teach me thy statutes." If you will be like him, be like him in giving. It is God's chief happiness, be you like him in it.

Obj. Would you have me give to wicked people, who will go and abuse it? *Ans.* God gives to wicked people, who go and abuse it; yet that does not diminish his happiness. God makes the sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and pours down rain on the just and on the unjust. It is right to give most and best to the children of God; but give to the wicked also, if you would be like God. Give to the unthankful; give to the vile: "Give to him that asketh of thee; and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away, remembering the word of the Lord Jesus."

3. *Christ.* He was the eternal Son of God, equal with the Father in everything, therefore equal in happiness. He had glory with him before ever the world was. Yet his happiness also consisted in giving. He was far above all the angels, and therefore he gave far more than them all; "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." He was highest, therefore he stooped lowest. They gave their willing services, he gave himself; "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for our

sakes he became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be made rich. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ."

Now, dear Christians, some of you pray night and day to be branches of the true Vine; you pray to be made all over in the image of Christ. If so, you must be like him in giving. A branch bears the same kind of fruit as the tree. If you be branches at all, you must bear the same fruit. An old divine says well: "What would have become of us if Christ had been as saving of his blood as some men are of their money?"

Obj. 1. My money is my own. *Ans.* Christ might have said, My blood is my own, my life is my own; no man forceth it from me: then where should we have been?

Obj. 2. The poor are undeserving. *Ans.* Christ might have said the same thing. They are wicked rebels against my Father's law: shall I lay down my life for these? I will give to the good angels. But no, he left the ninety-nine, and came after the lost. He gave his blood for the undeserving.

Obj. 3. The poor may abuse it. *Ans.* Christ might have said the same; yea, with far greater truth. Christ knew that thousands would trample his blood under their feet; that most would despise it; that many would make it an excuse for sinning more; yet he gave his own blood.

Oh, my dear Christians! if you would be like Christ, give much, give often, give freely, to the vile and the poor, the thankless and the undeserving. Christ is glorious and happy, and so will you be. It is not your money I want, but your happiness. Remember his own word: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

II. *It is happier, because of the peculiar character of a Christian.*

1. *A Christian is a steward.* In every great house there is a steward, whose duty it is to manage his master's goods in such a way that every one may have his portion of meat in due season. Now you will see at once that the happiness of the steward does not consist in the receiving of more goods, but in the due distribution of what he has got. If there be any grieve or foreman hearing me, you will know quite well that your happiness consists not in the quantity of your master's goods which goes through your hands, but in the right distribution of it. The happiness of every steward consists in giving, not in receiving.

Now, dear Christians, you are only stewards of all you possess. You have not one halfpenny of your own. "Occupy till I come," is written upon everything. The reckoning-day is near; O that you would be wise stewards! You would be far happier. It is the devil that persuades you that it is better to hoard and lay up for yourself and your children. It is far happier to be an honest steward.

Obj. I am in very poor circumstances. *Ans.* Still you are a

steward. Use what you have as a steward for Christ, and you will do well. He that used his two talents did not lose his reward.

2. *Christians are members one of another.* When we are united to Christ, we are united to all the brethren. It is a closer relation than any other, for it outlasts every other. The wife of your bosom will one day be separated from you. Father and child, sister and brother, may be separated eternally; but not so Christian and Christian, they are for ever and for ever, branches of the same tree for eternity, stones of the same temple for ever. Now it must be the happiness of one member to help another. (1.) In the body, when one limb is hurt or is weakly, the others help it. It is their happiness to do so. When the left hand is wounded, the right hand will do everything for it, it supplies all its need. (2.) So it is in Christ's body. It is the happiness of one member to help another. It is just like helping one's self; yea, it is like helping Christ. If Christ were to come to your door poor, and clothed in rags, and shivering with cold, would you feel it an unhappy thing to supply all his need? Oh, then, you may do this whenever you see a poor Christian: "Inasmuch as ye do it to the least of these my brethren, ye do it unto me." Woe is me! how many of you turn Christ away from your door, with a rude and angry countenance. Are you not ashamed to call yourself a Christian?

Again: if Christ lived in some poor dwelling, with not enough of fire to keep away the cold, with not enough of clothes to make the bed warm, would you not seek him out? would you stay till he sought you? Ah, woe is me! in how many dwellings does Christ dwell thus? and yet, there are Christians hearing me that never have sought him out. Change your plan, I pray you. "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

III. *Because Christians will be no losers.*

1. *They shall be no losers in this world by what they give away:* "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth: there is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to penury." I am going to say now what the world will scoff at; but all that I ask of you is, to be like the Bereans. Search the Scriptures, and see if these things be not so. The whole Bible shows, then, that the best way to have plenty in this world is to give liberally. (1.) "Cast thy bread upon the waters, and thou shalt find it after many days." This refers to the sowing of rice. The rice in the East is always sown when the fields are flooded with water. The bread-corn is actually cast upon the water. After many days the waters dry up, and a rich crop of waving rice covers the plain. So it is in giving liberally to the poor out of love to Jesus. It is like throwing away your money, it is like casting seed upon the waters; yet fear not, you shall find a crop after many days, you shall have a return for your money in this world.

A word to Christians in humble life. You say, If I were a

rich Christian, how happy would I be to give ! but I am so poor, what can I give? Now, I just ask you to look at the man sowing seed. When he has but little, does he keep back from sowing that little? No; he sows all the more anxiously the little he has, in order to make more. Do you the same.

How little you believe God! He says: "He that giveth to the poor, lendeth to the Lord." Now, I believe there is not one in a hundred who would not rather lend to a rich man than lend to the Lord. You believe man—not God. In fact, it is but the other day I heard of a child of God who was in very reduced circumstances, her husband being blind, yet who contrived not only to live, but to give to others also. She wrought with her own hands, that she might have to give. She gave largely to the poor, largely also to missions abroad. This was sowing the seed, all the seed she had, for she had no hoard. And did the crop fail? No: it appeared in India, a distant relative died, leaving £20,000 to her alone. God is able to do this every day. "God is able to make all grace abound towards you, that ye always having all-sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work."

How easily God can give you, by the smallest turn of his providence, more than all you give away in a year! O trust the Lord! But the wicked cannot trust God. The world is an Infidel at heart.

Some will say: I will begin to-night; I will put your word to the test; I will give double what I ever gave, and see if I will get a return. *Ans.* No such thing; keep your money, I advise you. If you give, hoping for something again, you will get nothing. You must give as a Christian gives—cheerfully, liberally, and freely, hoping for nothing again; and then God will give you back good measure, pressed down: "Give, and it shall be given to you." He that giveth to the poor shall have no lack.

2. *Christians will be no losers in eternity.* The whole Bible shows that Christians will be rewarded in eternity just in proportion to the way they have made use of their talents. Now, money is one talent. If you use it right you will in no wise lose your reward. Christ plainly shows that he will reckon with men in the judgment according as they have dealt by his poor Christians. They that have done much for Christ shall have an abundant entrance; they that have done little shall have little reward.

I thank God that there are some among you to whom Christ will say: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Go on, dear Christians, live still for Christ. Never forget, day nor night, that you are yourselves bought with a price. Lay yourselves and your property all in his hand, and say: "What wilt thou have me to do? Here am I, send me;" and then I know you will feel, now and in eternity, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

I fear there are some Christians among you to whom Christ can say no such thing. Your haughty dwelling rises in the midst of thousands who have scarce a fire to warm themselves at, and have but little clothing to keep out the biting frost; and yet you never darkened their door. You heave a sigh, perhaps, at a distance; but you do not visit them. Ah! my dear friends! I am concerned for the poor; but more for you. I know not what Christ will say to you in the great day. You seem to be Christians, and yet you care not for his poor. Oh, what a change will pass upon you as you enter the gates of heaven! You will be saved, but that will be all. There will be no abundant entrance for you: "He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly."

I fear there are many hearing me who may know well that they are not Christians, because they do not love to give. To give largely and liberally, not grudging at all, requires a new heart; an old heart would rather part with its life-blood than its money. Oh, my friends! enjoy your money; make the most of it; give none away; enjoy it quickly; for I can tell you, you will be beggars throughout eternity.

Dundee, February 4, 1838

SERMON LXXXIII.

CHRIST'S SILENCE UNDER SUFFERING.

"He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth."—Isa. liii., 7.

When the Jewish priests used to lead the tender, fleecy lamb to be slain in the temple, it did not struggle, it did not complain. So when the shearer is clipping the snowy fleece from the sheep, it does not struggle, it does not complain. Even so when God gave his own Son up to the death for us all, he did not struggle, he did not complain. When that gentle Lamb of God was led to the slaughter, he murmured not. When the four soldiers parted his raiment among them, and for his vesture cast lots; when these cruel shearers robbed the Sheep of his snowy fleece, he was dumb, he opened not his mouth.

When he was oppressed and afflicted by man, he answered not a word. He was oppressed and afflicted by God—he murmured not. It pleased the Lord to bruise him. He put him to grief. He was stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. Yet he spoke not. He did not turn round and say: Righteous Father, this is

unjust. Why should I suffer for sins I did not do? Lord, thou knowest that I am without spot and blameless; thou knowest that I knew no sin, neither was guile found in my mouth. He was oppressed and afflicted both by God and by man, yet he opened not his mouth. "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth."

Doctrine.—Christ was silent under his sufferings.

1*st*, The fact that Christ was really silent under his sufferings; 2*d*, Why he was silent; and, 3*d*, How this is showed forth in the Lord's supper.

I. *The fact that Christ was silent under his sufferings.*

1. *He was silent before man.* He was oppressed and afflicted by the wicked hands of men; and yet he did not justify himself before man. (1.) This is true when he was taken prisoner. Jesus was in the garden of Gethsemane, and it was night, when a multitude came upon him with lanterns and torches, and swords and staves. Did Jesus flee away? No. Did he make resistance? No. His disciples said: "Shall we smite with the sword?" and Peter actually used the sword; but Jesus forbade them. He could have called down twelve legions of angels. He could have taken away their breath, that they should die. But no; he said, "This is your hour and the power of darkness." "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth."

(2.) This is true in his trial before Caiaphas. They had bound Jesus in the garden, and led him away to the Palace of Caiaphas, the high priest. Chief priests, and elders, and scribes, there sat in mock trial upon the Lamb of God. Many false tongues bare false witness against him. Did he answer them? No. He answered not a word. And the high priest stood up in the midst and said: "Answerest thou nothing?" but he held his peace, and answered nothing. He was led like a lamb; led to the slaughter, "and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth."

(3.) True in his trial before Pilate. 1*st*, From Caiaphas they led him away to the Roman governor, Pilate: "And there the chief priests stood and accused him of many things; but he answered nothing. And Pilate asked him, Answerest thou nothing? But Jesus yet answered nothing, so that Pilate marvelled greatly." Ah! the blind Roman did not know that he was the Lamb of God, bearing the sins of many. 2*d*, Again, Pilate sent him to Herod. Herod questioned him; the Jews vehemently accused him; Herod's men of war made a mock of him; yet it is written: "He answered him nothing;" he was still the silent Lamb. 3*d*, Again,

when Herod sent him back to Pilate, then Pilate sat down on the tribunal of justice,—he declared, "I have found no fault in him." "He washed his hands, and said, I am innocent of the blood of this just person." And yet he passed sentence on him that he should be crucified. Did Jesus cry, Unjust? Did he cry, I stand at Cæsar's judgment-seat, I appeal unto Cæsar? No. "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth."

Again, upon the cross he was oppressed and afflicted of man. The passers by wagged the head at him, and said: "Come down from the cross." The priests, too, mocked him, as an outcast from God. The very thieves cast the same in his teeth, for three dark hours. Did he complain? No. He felt it to be true that he was an outcast from his God. He answered not a word. "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth."

2. *But Christ was silent before God under his sufferings.* (1.) You remember him in the garden; you remember how he was bruised there, when "his sweat was as great drops of blood falling down to the ground." There God set down the cup of his wrath before him, to show him what he was going to drink. He might have said: This is no cup of mine; let them drink it that filled it by their sins. But no; he only cries that it may pass from him: "O my Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me." Prayer is the cry of one who feels no right to demand. If he had seen it to be unjust to give him such a cup, he would have said: Righteous Father, this is not for me to drink. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? But no; he acknowledges it to be just, if the Father wills it. The second time he prays, he says: "If this cup may not pass from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." He acquiesces in the justice of God in giving him such a cup to drink. He is the Lamb of God. "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth."

(2.) You remember him on the cross. There God hid his face from him. For three hours did the sun refuse to shine upon that cross—darkness brooded over the land. But deeper was the darkness brooding over the Redeemer's soul. God's face refused to shine upon his Son. Yet did he say it was unjust? No. He said: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." He said: "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." At the ninth hour he cried: "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani"—words not of murmuring, but of agony. Again he said: "I thirst." And again he cried: "It is finished. Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." These are all the words that Jesus spake upon the cross. He did not cry: Why am I here—I am the Lord of glory? Why should I hang between earth and heaven? Righteous Father, I never sinned—I was always holy, harmless, undefiled; why

should I suffer thus? But no; he was silent under his sufferings, both from God and man. "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth."

II. *Inquire the reasons why Christ was silent under his sufferings.*

1. *Because he knew his sufferings were all infinitely just.* When a person is undergoing a trial; when he is accused, borne witness against, and condemned—if he be really guilty of the crimes laid to his charge, he is dumb, and says: I deserve it all. If he has any sense of justice left in his bosom, he will be convinced and conscience-stricken—he will answer not a word; he feels that his condemnation is just and righteous, and therefore he is dumb. Just so it was with Christ. Christ had an infinite sense of justice; therefore, both in his accusations by men and bruisings under the wrath of God, he answered not a word. He was a silent Lamb. *Ques.* How was it just that Christ should suffer, when he had not committed the things laid to his charge? *Ans.* True, he was holy. He was the Son of God—infinitely holy. When he became man, still he was a "holy thing;" through life he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners; and in his death he was a Lamb without spot and blameless. But still he was a substitute in the room of sinners. "He who knew no sin was made sin for us." He that was the Son of the Blessed became a curse for us. The reproaches of them that reproached us fell upon him. He stood in the place of blasphemers, and gluttons, and wine-bibbers, and deceivers, and thieves, and murderers, and outcasts from God; therefore it was quite just that the sufferings due to these sinners should fall upon him; and so, when he was accused and condemned, he opened not his mouth: "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." Have you joined yourself to Christ? Then there is strong consolation for you. If it was just that Christ should suffer, then it is not just that you should suffer. He was silent and opened not his mouth, when wrath was poured out upon him. But, ah! he will cry aloud if wrath should be poured upon you. You have been condemned already, and buffeted, and spit upon already. You have been bruised under the wrath of God already. You will never suffer any more. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth—who shall condemn? It is Christ that died."

2. *Because he would keep his part of the covenant.* Before the world was, he entered into covenant with his Father, that he would stand as a substitute for sinners; and therefore when he did come to suffer, his very righteousness sustained him, and he set his face like a flint. When a feeble man undertakes some hard piece of service, very often he is loud and boastful

before he begins; but when he comes up to the point, his courage dies, and he goes away back from his word. Not so the Son of God. He had sworn that he would bear the curse that was hanging over sinners. He had struck hands with the eternal Father, he would be their Jonah, to lie down under their sea of wrath: "Take me up," he said, "and cast me into that sea of wrath." And so, when the waves and billows went over him, he did not cry nor murmur. He set his face steadfastly. He had sworn once by his holiness. and he would not turn from it. He would not alter the thing that had gone out of his lips. "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth."

Speak to awakened. Trust in Christ as a Saviour. He is worthy of all your confidence. If I had told you that the Son of God had undertaken to suffer in the room of sinners, surely that ought to give you peace; for if he undertakes it, he will perform it. But we are sent to tell you that he has finished what he undertook. He is a faithful and covenant-keeping Saviour. Come and look upon that silent Lamb. See him led from the garden to Caiaphas, from Caiaphas to Pilate, from Pilate to Herod, from Herod to Pilate again, from Pilate to Calvary. See him carrying that heavy cross upon his shoulders; see him carrying the wrath of God upon his head; and yet he murmurs not. He does not say: Father, these sins are not mine. No; he keeps truth for ever. "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb. so he opened not his mouth." And how do you requite all this? You say, I dare not believe it. Ah! does he deserve this at your hand, that you should call him liar? He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar.

3. *Because of his love.* It was love to perishing sinners that made the Son of God enter into covenant with his Father to bear wrath in their stead. It was the same love in his bosom that made him keep the covenant which he had made. Ah! it was love that tied his tongue. The cords with which the soldiers bound him were tight and strong; but, oh! his love bound him more firm than all. The nails that pierced his hands and feet held him firmly on the bloody cross; but, oh! his love was the strongest nail; it was stronger than death. When the Jews accused him, and he answered not a word, it was love to sinners which made him hold his peace. When Herod questioned him, and Pilate condemned him, his trembling humanity said: I am not guilty. But. oh! his love said: Yes; I am guilty of all. When his Father bruised him with weights of mysterious agony, in the garden, and on the cross—when the infinite wrath of the infinite God was all summed up in a three hours' agony—when all that bowed down his blessed head, his shrinking humanity said, inwardly: I never sinned—this wrath is not mine; I should not bear it. But, ah! his love said: Either I or my people must bear

it; I will bear it for them. Oh, believers! behold how he loved you. Surely this love was stronger than death. A deluge of wrath could not quench this love. Can you count the drops of the ocean? Then you may fathom the depths of his love to you. Can you measure the distance between the highest throne in heaven, and the lowest dungeon in hell? That is the measure of his love to you.

Some of you dare not believe in Jesus. Ah! is this the way you requite the love of the silent Lamb of God? He would not answer when he was accused. He would not murmur when condemned. When God poured wrath on him, he would not stand upon his Godhead purity, but consented to bear wrath, that every sinner looking to him may go free; and yet you will not look to this Lamb of God. Oh! you grieve him and crucify him afresh.

4. *He was silent, because he sought his Father's glory.* I have often tried to show you that it is more glorifying to God when sin is punished in his own Son, than when it is punished in the poor worms that committed it. If sinners bear their own sins, then they must suffer eternally, so that God's justice will never be satisfied. They will always have more to suffer, and God will never have full glory out of them. But when Christ suffers in the room of a sinner, then God is satisfied at once. He is infinitely glorified. Now, Christ knew this quite well. He came seeking his Father's glory: "I am come to do, not mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me." Therefore it was he was dumb, that God might have more glory from the finished sufferings of his own Son, than from the eternal sufferings of sinners. "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!" Therefore did he say: "I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart." Therefore did he hasten to go up to Jerusalem.

Speak to awakened. Some of you refuse to believe, lest you should tarnish the glory of God. You fear that it cannot be consistent with the glory of so pure and holy a God to receive you to pardon and peace. Are you wiser than Christ? Christ feared that God would lose some of his glory if sinners were allowed to bear their own sins, because infinite justice never could get enough of suffering out of them. Therefore was he dumb under the wrath of God, that justice might be fully satisfied out of his infinite sufferings. Be wise, I entreat of you; God is more glorified by your suffering in Christ, than by your own suffering in hell. It will be far more honoring to God if you will cleave to that bleeding, silent Lamb, than if you were to bear the wrath of God for ever and ever. Give glory to the Lord, before your feet stumble on the dark mountains.

III. *The broken bread represents the silent sufferings of Christ.*

This day, my friends, I set before you the plainest and simplest picture of the silent sufferings of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. In that night in which he was betrayed he took bread. Why bread? 1. Because of its plainness and commonness. He did not take silver, or gold, or jewels, to represent his body, but bread, plain bread, to show you that when he came to be a surety for sinners, he did not come in his original glory, with his Father's angels. He took not on him the nature of angels, he became man. 2. He chose bread, to show you that he was dumb, and opened not his mouth. When I break the bread it resists not, it complains not, it yields to my hand. So was it with Christ; he resisted not, complained not, he yielded to the hand of infinite justice. "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth."

Some of you believe not. You do not consent to take this silent Lamb as a sin-offering for your soul. Either you do not feel your need of him, or you have not faith to look to him. But if you do not truly look to him, be not so rash, so daring, so inconsistent as to take the bread and wine.

Some of you believe in the silent Lamb of God. You say, It was my sin that lay so heavy on his heart. My sins were the thorns that pierced his brow. My sins were the nails that pierced his hands and feet. My sins were the spear that pierced his heart. He loved me, and gave himself for me. Come, then, to the broken bread and poured-out wine, feed on them, appropriate Christ in them; and whilst you feed upon the emblems of the silent Lamb, do this in remembrance of Jesus.

Dundee, 1837.—(Action Sermon.)

SERMON LXXXIV.

AS THE HART PANTETH.

"As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God."—Ps. xlii., 1.

THESE are supposed to be the words of David when he fled from his son Absalom. He seems to have been wandering in some solitary wild on the side of Mount Hermon, the stream of Jordan flowing at his feet. David seems to have been full of pensive meditation, for his enemies reproached him daily, saying, "Where is thy God?" nay, even God seemed to forget him; all his waves and billows were going over him, when suddenly a deer bounded past him. It had been sore wounded by the archers, or pursued by some wild beast on the mountains of the leopards. Faint and

weary, he saw it rushing towards the flowing stream, and quenching its thirst in the water brook. His soul was quickened by the sight. Is not this just a picture of what I should be? Is not my God to me all that the flowing stream is to that wounded deer? "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God."

I do hope that many of you have come up this day with the same panting desire in your bosom. None but gracious souls can pant after God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent. As the loadstone attracts nothing but what is made of steel to itself, so an uplifted Saviour, God manifest in the flesh, draws nothing but what is awakened by his own Spirit to him. May God enable me to show you shortly some of the reasons why the believer pants after God!

I. *The burden of sin makes the soul pant after God.*

1. *Unawakened souls—those who feel no burden—do not pant after Christ.* (1.) "The full soul loathes the honeycomb." Christ is the honeycomb which God has provided for poor sinners. The sweetest honey is to be found in the clefts of that Rock; but unawakened persons are full; full of peace; full of business; full of pleasure. They have no desire after Christ; they loathe the honeycomb. (2.) Unawakened persons are "dead in trespasses and sins." They are as dead to Christ and eternal things as the dead in the churchyard are to the things of this world. The dead bodies in the churchyard are at present within reach of the preacher's voice. If they could look up out of their graves, they would see the table spread with the bread and wine; and yet when we speak they do not hear; they do not weep; their bosoms do not pant; they do not rise and come. Dear friends, the dead souls within the Church are just as dead as they. You too are within reach of the preacher's voice; you too can see Christ evidently set forth crucified; yet you have no desires after Christ. Your eyes weep not; your bosoms pant not; you have no heart-longings after Christ. (3.) When Israel was in the land of Egypt, they had leeks, and onions, and garlic; they sat by the fleshpots, and did eat bread to the full. They did not cry for manna; they did not seek water out of the flinty rock. So it is with those of you who are unawakened. You have got the leeks and the onions of this world's pleasures, and profits, and diversions; and you care not for Christ, the bread of life. You do not pant after forgiveness and a new birth; you have no heart-longings for the living water, of which if a man drink he shall never thirst again.

2. *Many awakened persons do not pant after Christ.* There are some who feel like the deer stricken by the archers; but they think they can pull out the arrows, and heal their own wounds. (1.) When Naaman the Syrian came to Elisha, he felt his loath-

some disease, and he longed to be cured; but when the prophet told him: "Go wash in Jordan seven times, and thou shalt be clean," he did not believe God's word: "Are not Abana and Pharphar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them, and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage." So do many awakened souls among you. You are made to feel your loathsome disease; you sometimes tremble for fear of hell; but when we tell you of Christ's blood cleansing from all sin, you go away in a rage. (2.) When the flood came upon the earth, when the rain fell forty days, and the bowels of the great deep were broken up, I doubt not there were great pantings of heart. Many fled from the wrath to come. Some fled to the top of snowy Lebanon; some to the peaks of Ararat; but Noah only believed God's word, and entered into the ark. So many of you tremble about your souls, who yet are not believing God's word, and not panting after Christ: "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." (3.) When Christ shall come in the clouds of heaven, it is said all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. There will not be one unawakened person in earth or in hell. Not the proudest and deadest of you will keep from trembling in that day. But, ah! it is only those who believe his word that will flee under his wings. Dear friends, it is not enough that you are anxious about your souls—you must be fleeing to Christ: yea, you must be in Christ, before you are safe.

3. *All who are taught of God long after Christ:* "Every one that hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me"—"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." When a sinner is convinced by God that his sins are a burden heavier than he can bear—that if he die they will crush him into an eternal hell; when convinced that God has provided a Lamb for a burnt-offering; that this Lamb is free to all; he rushes through the crowd. Others may keep back, but he cannot. He places both his hands on the head of the divine Lamb, and says: "My Lord, and my God."—"This God is my God for ever and ever; he will be my guide even unto death"—"As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God."

If there is any of you convinced that you are perishing; that heaven is like a great city with walls; that you are outside, and the storm of wrath about to fall on you; has God also convinced you that Christ is the only gate into the city; the strait gate, and yet wide enough to admit any sinner in all the world? Ah! then I know you will strive to enter it; you will agonize; you will not rest day nor night; "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God." If there is any of you convinced that sin is a mortal disease; that all other physicians are vain; that Christ is passing through the midst of us full of virtue, to heal; I know you will press forward, whatever others

do: "If I may but touch the hem of his garment I shall be healed" —"As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God."

I would now invite panting souls to close with Christ. It is a sad truth, that most of Christians in our day are rather *coming* to Christ than *come* to Christ. Most of you are like the manslayer running towards the city of refuge, rather than when he sits down within the gates. O if you feel condemned in yourself, and that God has provided a free Surety for sinners, why will you not rest your soul upon his finished work?—why will you go round and round the city of refuge, and not enter in? This holy ordinance is intended to teach you appropriating faith; no more to waver, but to put out the hand of faith and close with Jesus. You do not come to look at bread and wine, but to take it. Take, eat, O panting souls! May God give you light at the same moment to venture on Christ, and say: "This God is my God for ever and ever.

II. *Desire of holiness makes the soul pant after God.*

1. *Unconverted persons have no desire for holiness, and therefore they do not pant after God and Christ.* Indeed this is the chief reason why poor sinners do not come to Christ. They know that if they came to Christ they would get a new heart; they would bid an eternal farewell to their old companions and pleasures; but most people would rather go to hell than this. When a few Greenlanders were brought into this country, they saw no beauty in the rich corn fields, and woods, and plains; they asked for their fields of snow, and the mountains of ice glancing in the sun. When they came into our houses, they could not endure the cleanness of them; they greatly preferred their own smoky, filthy cabins. So it is with those of you who are unconverted. You have grown up with hearts frozen to God, and to divine things; and when you come to see the heart of a Christian like a garden, with the river of life flowing through it, and beautiful flowers of meekness, love, and holiness growing in it, you cannot bear the sight; you love your own frozen heart better. When you see the clean heart of a child of God, you say: I had rather have my own filthy one. Ah! this is the way with most. You do not long to be made holy: you have no panting after a new birth. It needs grace to desire grace. You do not desire to be made a new creature; you had rather remain in the image of the devil than be changed into the image of God. You are like Jerusalem: "Woe unto thee, O Jerusalem! Wilt thou not be made clean? when shall it once be?"

2. *But all saved souls pant after holiness:* "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God." (1.) When a soul comes to close with Christ, he is not made perfectly holy all at once: "The path of the just is as the shining

light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Just as you have seen the day struggling with the darkness, then with clouds, till the sun bursts forth in meridian splendor; so is it with the holiness of a Christian. Just as in the richest lands, after the deepest ploughing, weeds will still grow up among the corn; so, many roots of bitterness remain in the believer's heart. Paul thanked God for the grace that was given to the Corinthians, that they came behind in no gift; and yet he says they had strife, and envy, and divisions, so that he could not call them spiritual, but carnal. So is it with every Christian heart. Weeds grow up in the best cultivated gardens. There is enough in Christ to supply all our need. It is our own fault that we are not holy as God is holy. It is not in Christ, but in ourselves, that we are straitened. The shower of grace is plentiful enough, and more than enough; but we do not open our mouth wide. (2.) But every soul in Christ hates sin—pants after holiness. Nothing makes him pant more after God than corruption striving within. Paul never prayed more earnestly than when he had the thorn in his flesh. The thorn in the flesh makes us pant after God. When a vessel is left by the tide lying dry upon the sand, it cannot be moved—it is a helpless log. The mariners may try to draw it with ropes, but it only sinks deeper in the sand. They can do nothing but long for the tide, that it may again be lifted upon the waves, and sail into the harbor. So is it with a Christian. You are often like a vessel on the sand. You cannot move. You attempt duties, but it is heavy work. Without Christ you can do nothing. You wait and pant for Christ, for the full tide of the Spirit, to lift your soul above the waves, and carry you prosperously on towards the heavenly harbor.

Let me invite weary souls to come to Christ this day. Some of you are feeling the thorn in the flesh, and you are praying that it may depart from you. Some of you feel like the criminal who was chained to a dead body. You feel your loathsome body of sin; you cry, "O wretched man!" Some of you are like the deer that has been wounded by the lion, and trembles at his roaring. You have been wounded by Satan, and you tremble to hear his roar. Come you to Jesus. He will give you rest, O panting soul. Close with Christ, feed upon Christ. Without him you can do nothing. Through Christ strengthening you, you may do all things. This ordinance is intended to teach you to feed on Jesus. You do not only look on the bread, or handle it; you eat, you drink. So come into personal union with Christ, O longing soul, and he will be your strength: "God is our refuge and our strength."

III. *Desolateness makes the soul pant after God.*

1. Believers never should be desolate. It is contrary to the promise: "None of them that trust in him shall be desolate."

Christ is always the same. His righteousness is as perfect one day as another. If you are clothed in that righteousness, your peace shall be like a river. It is very dishonoring to Christ for believers to be going bowed down all the day long: "Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say, Rejoice."

2. Still I fear some of you can bear witness that the believer is sometimes very desolate. The moon does not always shine in a cloudless sky. The ships do not always sail on a waveless sea. The believer does not always walk in the smile of his Father. (1.) *Outward providences* sometimes cause it, when they come unexpectedly upon us; when we cannot see God's meaning in them; when we suspect his love, and fall into darkness. So Job: "Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, A man-child is conceived." (2.) Sin admitted into the heart is the most common cause. God is a jealous God. So Israel: "She said, I will go after my lovers that give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink."

3. The desolate soul pants after God. So it was with Job: "O that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat." So it was with the bride: "I will rise now and go about the city, in the streets and in the broad ways." So David: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God." When a child that has been tenderly brought up, that has been warmly clad and comfortably fed, and cared for by a gentle mother's hand, when that child is turned out on the cold world, O it is bitter indeed! O for my father's roof! O for my mother's smile! So it is with a child of light walking in darkness.

Invite desolate souls to come to God, the living God. Some of you may be feeling like a ship tossed on a stormy sea. Deep calls unto deep, at the noise of God's waterspouts; all the waves and billows are breaking over you. Be persuaded to close with Christ, freely offered to you. Put away entirely the question as to whether you ever believed before. Believe now. This ordinance is peculiarly fitted for you. You say you cannot realize a Saviour; well, here he is set forth plainly in bread and wine: "This is my body broken for you." You say: But how shall I know he is a Saviour to me? See, here the bread is freely offered: "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." You say: But how do I know he is still offered to me? I answer, "Yet there is room." Here is bread enough and to spare. You say: But may I really close with him? I answer, "Take, eat." O panting soul, come under his wings. "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come."

Dundee, Nov. 4, 1838.—(Action Sermon.)

SERMON LXXXV.

THE FIGHT OF FAITH.

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."—2 Tim. iv., 7, 8.

How blessed it is to stand by the death-bed of God's children! How different from that of the wicked! The wicked sometimes die in anguish. Some have been known to cry out: "Lost, lost, lost! O eternity! O for half an hour, to pray!" Some die in blasphemy, cursing God for their pains and their sores. The greater number die like a beast, without any thought or care, except for the body: "They have no bands in their death, but their strength is firm. They are laid in their graves like sheep, and the upright have dominion over them in the morning."

How sweet, compared with these, is the departure of God's children! They fell asleep in Jesus: "I am ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand." Paul here compares it, 1. To the pouring out of a drink-offering: "Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all."—Phil. ii., 17. He felt so entirely dedicated and given away to God, that his death was like the pouring out of the wine-offering, which already belonged to God. 2. To the departure of a ship: "The hour of my departure is at hand." The things of time were like the cables that bound him to this world; but soon his bark was to be loosed from the shore, to sail forward to the shore of glory, to be moored for evermore.

In these words we have the secret of a joyful death-bed. 1. He looks back upon the life of pain. 2. He looks forward to the crown of glory.

1. *He looks back.* Threefold view.

He does not look back to his life before conversion at all. He often did so, but it was to condemn it: "I was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief."—1 Tim. i., 13. "For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God."—1. Cor. xv., 9. "Beyond measure I persecuted the Church of God, and wasted it."—Gal. i., "I am the chief." Paul never forgot his old life; but not one ray of comfort came from it, only condemnation. It was his life since conversion that he now looked to, not as his righteousness before God, but only as showing that he was really a sinner saved through Christ.

1. *I have fought a good fight.* Every day since his conversion

he had been fighting; he had been passing through an enemy's country, and had to fight his way. (1.) *With his corruptions.* "Warring."—Rom. viii. "Flesh lusting."—Gal. v. "A thorn in the flesh."—2 Cor. x. Paul knew what these inward fightings are. He probably experienced them more than any one here. (2.) *With the world.* As long as he was Saul the blasphemer, the world caressed him; but when he was made Paul the apostle, the world hated him. The more he loved, the more they hated. "I have fought with beasts at Ephesus." His only weapons were the word of God, and yet he fought on against a world lying in wickedness. (3.) *With the devil.* "A messenger of Satan." "We wrestle not against flesh and blood."—2 Cor. x. He had experienced much of this. "We are not ignorant of his devices."

Still it was "a good fight."—1 Tim. i., 18. "War a good warfare."—1 Tim. vi., 12. "Fight the good fight of faith." Often when we are in the midst of afflictions and temptations, we grow weary of the conflict. It is a hard lot. But when we look back from eternity, every redeemed soul will be able to say: *It was a good fight.* (1.) *Because we are sure to overcome.* "We are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us." In other battles we know not how it will go, until the battle is done; but in this we have a sure promise of victory. We have sweet glimpses of triumph even in the thickest of the battle, sweet confidence in Jesus. (2.) *It keeps us close to our Captain.* If we had no fight, we would not keep near to Jesus; but when we suffer such fearful attacks, we are glad to hide ourselves under Jesus's wings. (3.) *Because glorifying to God.* His glory is involved in it. Often we would wish no fight; but not so in glory. There we shall see that every trial was glorifying to God, bringing out some new feature of his grace, power, and love. Are you fighting this good fight? Soon we shall look back.

2. *I have finished my course.*—The moment a soul is brought to Christ, he has a course to run: "And as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think ye that I am? I am not he. But, behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of his feet I am not worthy to loose." Acts xiii., 25. Paul says: "But none of these things move me, 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." Acts xx., 24. "Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." Heb. xii., 1. Every one has a different course, like the planets. All do not shine in the same part of the sky, and so every believer has his course; a work to do. One has the course of a minister—another the course of a master—servant. The misery of inconsistencies; leaving the course. Each of us has a work to do for Christ; let

us do it diligently. "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me."

3. *I have kept the faith.*—I think the dying thief could say, I believe, and enter with joy into paradise; but he could not say, "I have kept the faith." This makes the difference between a peaceful and a triumphant death-bed. Paul "bought the truth, and sold it not." That good thing committed to him he kept, by the Holy Ghost given unto him. He held the beginning of his confidence steadfast unto the end.

Learn that perseverance in the faith is needful to a triumphant death-bed. It is Christ, and Christ alone, that is our peace in dying; yet the hand that has longest held him has the firmest hold. It is not our perseverance that is our righteousness before God, but the doing and dying of the Lord Jesus; and yet without perseverance in the faith ye cannot be saved. Alas! you that turn aside to folly, you are preparing clouds for your dying bed. Can you say you have kept the faith, poor backslider!

II. *What he looked forward to.*

1. *That day.*—"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." 2 Tim. i., 12. "The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day." 2 Tim. i., 18. A great day of Christ's appearing, and all his saints with him. It was not merely the day of death to which he looked forward; then he would immediately pass into glory; he would go to be in Paradise; he would be absent from the body, and present with the Lord; he would be blessed dying in the Lord; but he looked forward to that day, because it is the day of Christ's full glory; the day of the gladness of his heart. There is something selfish in merely desiring the day of death; but there is a heavenly joy in looking for the day of his appearing.

2. *The crown of righteousness.*—A crown of glory; a crown of life; an incorruptible crown, that will never die; nor shall the wearer die any more. A crown of righteousness; a crown waiting those that have put on the armor of God and the breastplate of righteousness: a crown laid up. It is ready from all eternity. It is ready now when we are fighting. Your crown is laid up.

3. *The Lord shall give it me.*—How sweet it will be, when Christ puts on the crown on a sinner's brow! The just God and Saviour! Angels will shout for joy when they see the righteous Jesus crowning the sinners for whom he died. He will finish our redemption. He was crowned with thorns; he has been an advocate crowned with glory and majesty; but another step, he is to put on the crown of righteousness. All heaven and earth and hell own him faithful and true, and righteous in all his ways. Oh! how sweet to be crowned by Jesus.

4. *Along with all that love his appearing.*—One thing would

make us sad: Am I only to be crowned? No, no; "not to me only." Paul could not be happy in heaven without seeing others saved along with him. It gave him joy on his death-bed, to think that myriads and myriads besides him would wear the crown, many whom he had been the means of saving.

Dundee, 1842.

SERMON LXXXVI.

INTO THINE HAND I COMMIT MY SPIRIT.

"Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth."—Ps. xxxi., 5.

THERE is something peculiarly sweet in these words, because they are the words used by the Lord Jesus in his agony. For six long hours he hung upon the accursed tree, bearing the sins of many. No thought of man can imagine the load he bore: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" The vinegar mingled with gall was bitter, but it was nothing to the cup of wrath; the pain of his mangled body was terrible, but it was nothing to the intense agony of the sword of justice that pierced him. This was his last solemn cry: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit;" and he bowed his head and gave up the ghost. It is sweet to an afflicted sufferer to use the same words as Jesus. It is sweet to use the words of a departed friend. We treasure them in our memory, and embalm them in our hearts. But what friend is like Jesus, whose words were all gracious words?

It is sweet to a heavy-laden convinced sinner to take up the words of Jesus in the 40th Psalm: "Innumerable evils have compassed me about, and mine iniquities have taken such hold upon me that I am not able to look up." It is sweet to a believing soul to take up his words in Isa. l., 8: "He is near that justifieth me; who is he that will contend with me?"

And so it is sweet for a poor afflicted, dying worm to take up these sweet words: "Into thine hand I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth."

Observe three things:—

1. *The person who speaks*—a tempted, afflicted soul. Such was David: "Pull me out of the net."—Verse 4. Satan and the world had cast a net around his soul. Snare after snare, like the meshes of a net, enclosed him. He felt himself helpless: "I am forgotten as a dead man, out of mind; I am like a broken vessel." Nowhere can he go, but to his redeeming God: "Into thine hand

I commit my spirit: thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth."

Such was the Lord Jesus: "Many bulls have compassed me; strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round. They gaped upon me with their mouths as a ravening and a roaring lion."—Ps. xxii., 12. Where could he go but to his God? "Into thy hands I commend my spirit." So there may be some tempted, afflicted here, enclosed in the net of Satan—beset by bulls of Bashan; let him take up his sweet word: "Into thy hands I commend my spirit."

2. *The person to whom he speaks*—The Redeemer. On the one side there is a worm; on the other, a redeeming God. When the Lord Jesus took up this word he put in *Father:* for the Father was his Redeemer. When he had finished the work which the Father gave him to do; when he had drunk the last dregs of infinite suffering; he could look up and claim full deliverance: "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." When Stephen took up this saying, he said: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." The Redeemer seems to be chiefly meant; he that bore our sins in his own body on the tree, not excluding the other persons of the Godhead. It is a poor, guilty, helpless worm looking up to him that died for us: Into thine hand I commit my spirit, O Lord God, faithful and true.

3. *The thing committed*—"My spirit." The soul of man is the most precious part. I do not mean to speak lightly of the body—far from it. It is the creation of God, and though frail, and about to crumble in dust, yet it is a dear companion, and will be raised again incorruptible. But the spirit is the precious part. "What shall it profit a man to gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" The soul was made in the image of God. It is this which the poor tempted soul commits to the great Redeemer's hands; the part where sin commences, and bursts forth in action; where guilt lies heavy; where the blood of Jesus giveth peace; where Satan tempts the spirit. It is this the man gives in charge to the great Redeemer of souls.

I. *The times when we should do this.*

1. *The time of conversion.* This seems to be the meaning of Paul: "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." Sometimes conversion is described in the Bible from God's part in it: Jesus finding the lost sheep; Jesus passing by, and spreading his skirt over the soul; the Father drawing the soul to Jesus. At other times it is described from the creature's part: Coming to Jesus, beholding the Lamb, cleaving to Christ; or as here, committing the spirit to his hands. O it is a happy day, when a poor sinner discovers that his spirit is wholly lost and undone; that his soul is like the leper's body, unclean, unclean; that

his sins are infinite, and his heart a rock; a fountain of pollution, unsearchable, uncontrollable, insufferable; and when he discovers Jesus an almighty and all-loving Redeemer, divine and glorious in his person, and yet wounded and broken under the wrath of God, borne for us; when the sinner commits his poor, guilty, helpless, polluted soul into the hands of the Lord Jesus! Heavy-laden sinner, commit thy soul to Jesus. It is in great danger. The law condemns thee. Thy sins are many—thy deserved hell is beyond thought terrible. Satan is resisting thee; tempting thee; beguiling thee. Jesus alone can save: "Into thine hand I commit my spirit."

2. *Time of temptation.* This seems to have been peculiarly the time alluded to in the Psalm: "Pull me out of the net." Verse 4. The temptations of God's children are very dreadful. Often a child of God goes on a long time without temptation. He is like Naphtali, "satisfied with favor, and full with the blessing of the Lord." Perhaps he laughs at temptation, and thinks it will never come near him. Suddenly the sky is overcast, a strong current of temptation is allowed to set upon his heart.

> "Instead of this, He made me feel
> The hidden evils of my heart;
> And let the angry powers of hell
> Assault my soul in every part."

The world concurs. Satan stirs up all his malice. What horrors now surround the tempted soul! He flies to his knees; but he is afraid to pray. He flies to his Bible; but it is a sealed book. Sin darkens the mind, and scares him away from prayer. All the while God's people admire and praise, though their words are like gall; what can help the tempted man? None but Jesus. O to discover Jesus in such an hour!—the Redeemer—that died—that lives—the Advocate with the Father! O to be enabled to commit one tempted soul into his hands! Poor tempted soul! give thyself away to Jesus; he can blot out the sin, and change the heart.

3. *In time of affliction.* Some Christians have little affliction. They sail on a smooth sea; they enjoy health of body for years together; they never knew what it was to want a comfortable meal. Death has perhaps not once entered their dwelling. They think it will be always thus. But a change comes. The "harp of thousand strings" becomes out of tune. The "clay cottage" gives tokens of decay, or grim Want invades their dwelling, or Death comes up into the window. Ah! it is hard to bear. No affliction for the present seems to be joyous. but grievous. Who can comfort? None but Jesus. He knew all sorrow—deeper sorrows than we have ever known, or ever will. His heart is not of stone. He feels along with us. Afflicts not willingly. Seeks to bring us more to himself. O afflicted believer, commit thy

weeping, suffering, pining, trembling soul to Jesus: "Into thine hand I commit my spirit."

4. *In time of duty.* Often at first the convert thinks only of enjoyment, of hearing sermons, enjoying sacraments, and Christian converse. I have often been struck how often the inquiry is made, Did you enjoy that sacrament, or that sermon? How seldom did you improve it! What change has it wrought in your life? But when God stirs up the soul, a path of duty is seen stretching before it. Often perplexed and intricate, often steep and slippery, often dangerous and terrible. Oh! what shall I do? How difficult to know the right way; and when I know it, how hard to follow it! Commit thy soul to Jesus. "In him are hid treasures of wisdom and knowledge." His grace is sufficient for thee. "He brings the blind by a way which they know not." He has light to guide thee, strength to uphold, and grace to give thee courage: "Into thine hand I commit my spirit."

5. *In time of death.* Few ever think of dying till dying comes. The last enemy that shall be overcome is Death; and an awful enemy he is. We go alone. No earthly friend goes with us. We never went the way before. It is all strange and new. The results are eternal. If we have not rightly believed, it is too late to mend. These are some of the solemn thoughts that overshadow the soul. What can give peace? None but Jesus; the sight of Jesus as a Redeemer; the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; the same sight we got when first we knew the Lord; when first he chose us, and we chose him; when first he said, Seek ye my face, and we said to him, Thy face, Lord, shall we seek? To see him as a God of truth; the Lord that changes not; the unchanging One; the same Jesus; thus to see him and to cry, "Into thy hands I commit my spirit;" this is peace.

Dundee, 1842.

SERMON LXXXVII.

GREY HAIRS ARE UPON HIM.

"Grey hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not."—Hos. vii., 9.

These words describe a state of secret backsliding, the most dangerous, perhaps, of any. It is a common thing for persons grown up in years to turn old and grey-headed without observing it. Most people are unwilling to be thought old. They do not love to notice the progress of decay, and the marks of old age are allowed to steal upon them unobserved. The teeth drop out one by one, the hand loses its steadiness, the limbs lose their elasticity,

the eye becomes dim, and grey hairs are here and there upon the head, and we are in old age before we are aware. So is it in the decay of the soul in divine things.

It is a solemn and most affecting truth, that the life of God in the soul is subject to wither and decay. It cannot really die. If God has once given spiritual life to the soul, I know he will maintain it to eternal glory. "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me. Have respect unto the work of thine own hands."—Ps. cxxxviii., 8. But still it is liable to many and sad decays. This is plain from Scripture. God says: "Yet I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how, then, art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me?"—Jer. ii., 21. "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord, for I am married unto you."—Jer. iii., 14. "My people are bent to backsliding from me."—Hos. xi., 7. Nevertheless I have this against thee, that thou hast left my first love."—Rev. ii., 4.

Alas! my friends, it is plain from ourselves. Though I praise God he seems to be adding to the Church among you still "such as shall be saved," though some of you appear to be going from strength to strength, yet of how many it may be said: "Grey hairs are here and there upon you, and you know it not." How many have lost their relish for the house of God! It is not with you as in months past. The Thursday evening is not so prized as it once was; the private prayer-meeting is seldom if ever visited; the company of the world is more sought after; the company of Christ more lightly esteemed. Is there not less zeal for the conversion of others, less prayer, less praise, less liberality? Ah! brethren, we as a congregation are a monument that there is such a thing as spiritual decay.

How earnest you once were in hearing the Word of God! You would not miss an opportunity, week-day or Sabbath-day. You heard as for your life. Your praises were fuller and more fervent once than they are now. How careful you were in treasuring up the Word; repeating it to yourselves, and your children, and your companions! How fervent in your prayers! On many of your hearts I fear we must write, "Ichabod—The glory is departed."

Another solemn fact is, that this decay is always secret and unnoticed. It is like the approach of old age. "Grey hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not." Old people never observe the gradual advance of old age. In general, they do not like to think of their getting older. So it is in the decay of a believer's soul. It goes on secretly and silently; the eye of faith becomes dimmer and dimmer; the hand loses its firm hold of Jesus; the soul loses its fresh delight in Immanuel's finished work: and yet he knows it not. Sinful compliances steal upon the soul. "Grey hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not."

I. *Marks—some of the "grey hairs."*

1. *The Bible neglected.* When a soul is first brought to Christ, he delights in the word of God; he has *appetite* for it "as a new-born babe." Just as an infant has a constant, steadily-recurring appetite for its mother's milk, so has the soul for the Word. He has *spiritual understanding* of the Word. It seems all sweet and easy; it all testifies of Jesus. The soul grasps the meaning—earnestly inquires from ministers and others the meaning of difficult passages. He has *growth:* "That ye may grow thereby." It is felt to be the daily nourishment of the soul—the sword to ward off temptation. What a difference in decay! No relish for the Word. It may be read as a duty, or as a burdensome task; it is not delighted in. Other books are preferred to the Bible. There is no growing in the knowledge of the Word; no self-application; no receiving it with meekness; no frequent recurrence of the mind to the chapter read in the morning; no answering Satan by "Thus it is written," and "Thus saith the Lord." Ah! my friends, how is the gold become dim! "Grey hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not."

2. *Prayer neglected.* "Behold he prayeth," was the first mark that Paul was brought from death to life. The soul enjoys great nearness to God, enters within the veil, lies down at the feet of Jesus, and pours out its groans and tears there. The believer rises, like his Lord, a great while before day—waking in the night—cries in secret to God; before entering any company, or meeting a friend, or answering a proposal, the heart would wing its way to the mercy-seat; so that he prayed without ceasing. He poured forth earnest cries for deliverance from sin—the sins he was most tempted to, he prayed most against. His intercessions for others were deep, constant, wide. Once it was sweet and easy to pray for others: "Forbid that I should sin against God by ceasing to pray for you." All this secretly changes. The soul is far from God—no putting prayers into the golden censer—entering within the veil—drawing near. No early rising now to pray, no cries in the night—no prayer on sudden emergencies. We now frequently answer proposals in our own spirit, without asking counsel of the Lord. Little praying against sin now! We dare not pray against some sin, or only feebly, and without resolving to forsake it. Little intercession now—little bearing unconverted friends on our heart before God—little prayer for the Church, for the Jews, and the Heathen. Ah! these are some of the grey hairs.

3. *Christ little esteemed.* When first we know the Lord, Christ is all in all. He is the Fountain for sin, where we are continually washing our souls from sin and uncleanness. Under his white-shining robes we are continually hiding our naked souls. He is the Rock, giving out living water, which ever follows us. He is the compassionate Husband and elder Brother on whom we

lean, coming up from the wilderness. He is our King, at whose feet our heart is laid down, that he may reign over it for ever and ever. When we decay it is not so. There is much guilt on the conscience, but little travelling to the Fountain; there is a doubt and dislike of the way of Salvation by Christ. There is little hiding beneath the righteousness without works. There is little drinking out of the Rock—it seems dry, or we are removed from it There is no leaning upon Christ—no sense of his presence by night and by day. Ah! this is a sad mark of grey hairs.

4. *Sin not hated.* When first we knew the Lord, how did sin appear? We had awful discoveries of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. It appeared evil and bitter; the load that had crushed the Lord Jesus to the lowest hell; we could not bear it—we fled from temptation with our whole heart—we were quick-scented (Isa. xi., 3—margin) in the fear of the Lord. Like those animals that quickly scent game, so the new creature easily discovered the approach of sin, and fled from it. Now we have little conviction of sin. Dry eyes in confession—little confession, or none at all; no time set apart for the confession of sin. Temptation little feared, the soul becomes bolder and bolder in its approaches to sin.

5. *Christians lightly esteemed.* Once we loved all that loved the Lord; all our delight was in them—the mark that Christ left as the mark of a true disciple applied to us: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."—John xiii., 35. We had all things in common with them, so that none of them could be in want; we exhorted one another daily, as iron sharpeneth iron; we would not suffer sin upon our brother; we spoke with such love, and frankness, and humility, that they could not be offended. Now we look on them with coldness; we are not so intimate with them—we fear lest they see our guilt. We are not so careful of the poor saints as once we were; we have sworn to our own hurt, and we begin to change; we do not exhort one another daily; when they reprove us, we turn angry, and we do not reprove in love, but with a bitter spirit, or we speak evil of them behind their back.

6. *The ungodly not warned.* Once we wept over them in secret—pleaded with God night and day for their conversion—abhorred their ways: "I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me."—Ps. ci., 3. Now our bowels do not yearn over them—little or no prayer for their conversion; we now, perhaps, guiltily smile on their wicked ways. If we do not partake, at least we do not reprove them.

II. *Causes of decay.*

1. *A lust allowed to prevail.* So with Israel: "They are all adulterers, as an oven heated by the baker,"—Hos. vii., 4. This was the cause of Israel's decay. So it will be with you and

me. A lust for money—a sensual lust—a lust for praise or pleasure, if tampered with, and suffered to prevail, will make the whole soul wither. For a time you begin to fight against it; then your opposition grows weaker; then you make excuses for it; then you hide it from yourself, but still obey its power. This brings guilt on the conscience; takes away your relish of the Bible; makes you weary of the mercy-seat. This makes the holy Saviour little prized; this makes sin little hated, Christians avoided, and the ungodly not pitied. O my brethren! we must either be enemies of *all sin*, or we shall be decaying, withering branches. One lust nourished in your heart will be a viper in your bosom.

2. *Worldly company.* "Ephraim, he hath mixed himself among the people."—Hos. vii., 8. This was the peculiar character of the Jews: "The people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations;" but when they mixed themselves among the nations, then grey hairs began to appear. So it is with Christians—they are a peculiar people. Jesus said of them: "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." We are as completely separated from the world as Christ was; we have got blood upon us, and the Holy Spirit in us; we have peculiar joys and peculiar sorrows; we are a praying people—a praising people. But the moment we begin to mix with the ungodly, grey hairs begin to appear: our souls wither.

Do not mistake me. If God has cast your lot in an ungodly family, where God is not worshipped; where his holy name is blasphemed; where his word is not read; where your ears are vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked; be not cast down. This is your peculiar trial; and God, who suits the back to the burden, will give grace according to your day. But if you choose a place where God is not; if you choose companions who have no fear of God; if you venture into companies where the god of this world reigns, where the Bible is a jest-book, and God's ministers are the song of the drunkard; then your soul will and must begin to wither.

You retire to your closet, and open your Bible; but its holy, pure words, are not sweet to your taste. You kneel and fold the hands; but prayer is a burden: you have no spiritual desires. You name the name of Christ; but he does not appear altogether lovely. Sin has lost its frightful look. Lively Christians are now too exact and precise for you. Alas! it is not with you as in months past. The crown has fallen from your head. Woe unto you, because you have sinned!

III. *Cure.*

1. *You may be cured.* "O Ephraim, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thine help. Thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet return again to me, saith the Lord." Satan will

tempt you to say, There is no hope—no, for I have loved strangers ; but this is a lie. Remember, in Christ there is hope.

2. *Search out the cause.* Your heart will be most unwilling to find it out, but you must find it out. If you were in a sinking ship, the first thing is to find the leak ; so you must find the leak in your soul. Is it an idol ?—lay it bare. Trace back your feelings till you find it out. Is it some lust you indulge ?—make it out. Is it worldly company ?—note it—put your finger on it. Say, This is the Achan in my heart—this is the troubler.

3. *Get forgiveness of it.* Confess it over the head of the Scapegoat : plunge it into the Fountain opened for sin. Jesus is crying : " Return unto me, for I have redeemed thee."

5. *Slay the Troubler.* Do with it as they did with Achan. Seek the Holy Spirit's indwelling power to slay the troubler, that it never rise up any more. O my friends ! if we would thus seek reformation, we would be the better of our falls ; we would get honey out of the lion's carcass. Awake ! awake, my friends ! hell is as deep as ever it was ; Christ as free ; your souls as precious ; your eternity is nearer and nearer. O how foolish to deny, instead of, like Caleb, following the Lord fully ! " Be ye steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor shall not be in vain in the Lord."

SERMON LXXXVIII.

GRIEVE NOT THE HOLY SPIRIT.

" Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."—Eph. iv., 30

I. *The holy familiarity of the Spirit in a believing soul.*

1. He dwells in it. John xiv., 17 ; Ezek. xxxvi., 26 ; 1 Cor. vi., 19 ; 2 Cor. vi., 16. 2. He teaches there. John xvi., 13 ; 1 John ii., 20. 3. He prays there. Jude 20 ; Rom. viii., 26. 4. He seals.

II. *How he may be grieved.*

Something analogous to grief, anger, desire, in God. Take away all imperfection from these passions. When God was manifest in the flesh, he was angry at sin, grieved, wept, longed. So the Spirit is grieved. The same effect as in a grieved person —withdraws. 1. Putting his work for Christ's work. 2. Not leaning all on him. 3. Not following his leadings. 4. Despising ordinances.

When we become Christians, we become acquainted with the persons of the Godhead. An unconverted soul knows nothing,

and thinks nothing about the Holy Spirit. How strange and foolish must such a command as this appear to many of you! Paul is dissuading from filthy, corrupt talking, and the argument he uses is, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God." You would understand, Grieve not your minister, or father, or godly friend; but what can you make of this, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God?"

III. *Application.*

1. Because it is so ungrateful. 2. You will lose your peace with God. 3. You will fall deeper into sin.

I. *The holy friendship of the Spirit in the believing soul.*

The very words, "Grieve not." show this. It is the part of a friend to be grieved when we do wrong. An enemy would rejoice, or an unfeeling person might be angry, but the Holy Spirit is *grieved.* This shows his holy, tender friendship for the justified soul. It is true, it is not possible for God the Holy Spirit to suffer grief in exactly the same sense in which we do, for that would imply that he was not unchangeably happy; but there is no doubt all that is holy, excellent, and perfect in our grief at the sin of another, everything except what would imply imperfection. Accordingly, when God was manifest in the flesh, these emotions of the Godhead showed themselves in the tears and groans of the Lord Jesus.

1. *He dwells in the soul:* "I will put my Spirit within you."—Ezek. xxxvi., 26. "The Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive, he dwelleth in you."—John xiv., 17. "What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you?"—1 Cor. vi., 19. "I will dwell in them, and walk in them."—2 Cor. vi., 16. Can there be imagined a more intimate friendship than this? Other friends may live in the same house with us, mingle tears and prayers together, take sweet counsel together; but he, the blessed Comforter, dwells in our body; dwells in us and walks in us. Can there be a more condescending friendship? It was amazing condescension when the Son of God was made flesh, and dwelt among us. It is hardly less wonderful that the Holy Spirit of God should come down and dwell in a clay cottage beside such a wicked heart.

2 *He teaches there:* "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." There is no greater kindness than to teach the ignorant, to bear with a dull scholar, to teach as the scholar is able to bear. It is great condescension, when a man of gigantic powers, who might guide the councils of nations, or wield the sceptre of the world, sits down to teach the alphabet, like John Eliot, to a child. This is what the Spirit does. It was amazing love in the Lord Jesus to come as a teacher, to open his mouth in parables, and to explain all things so simply, with such majesty, authority, simplicity, love and long-suffering; but, ah! surely it is no less amazing love in the Spirit, to come and teach sinners by his own secret breathings; to open their

understandings; to take of the things of Jesus and show them unto us; so that we have an unction from the Holy One, and know all things.—1 John ii., 20. Ah, how the Spirit bears with our backwardness in learning the divine lesson, strives to remove our ignorance; strives in our heart and upon the page of the Bible! How this shows the holy friendship and familiarity of the Spirit in the believing soul!

3. *He prays there:* "We have not received the Spirit of bondage again to fear, but we have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities; for we know not what to pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered."—Rom. viii., 15, 26. "Praying in the Holy Ghost."—Jude 20. It is an act of pure friendship to teach one to pray. It is often the believing mother's part to lead her child in prayer, teaching it to lisp after her desires for divine things; but ah! how much more than a mother's tenderness does the Spirit show, when he puts the very desires into our hearts—groans within us! It is an act of intimate friendship to pray with one another! what must it be to pray in another? This is the Spirit's friendship.

4. *He seals:* "Whereby ye are sealed to the day of redemption." "After ye believed ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." Eph. i. A friend who is much with you, leaves a pleasing impression behind; his words, his sentiments, have an effect on your mind. When you have a holy friend, he leaves a fragrance behind that abides with you. This is one of the happy effects of sanctified friendship. Such was the impression which David made on Jonathan. But how much more wonderful, blessed, and indelible, is the impression made by the Holy Spirit dwelling in the heart! It is compared to the impression made by a seal on wax, and it is to the day of redemption. Ah, my friends! does this Friend dwell in you? Is your body a temple of the Holy Ghost? Are you sealed to the day of redemption? "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

II. *Ways of grieving the Spirit.*

I have already shown you that the grief the Holy Spirit feels is the same as ours, only without any of the sin or imperfection. Jesus "looked round on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts." What the divine nature of Jesus then felt, the Holy Spirit feels at the sight of sin. "Jesus turned and looked upon Peter." We are not told what kind of look it was, but I have no doubt it was one of grief; as if he had said, Did I not tell thee, Peter, what thy boasting would come to? What passed in the divine mind of the Lord Jesus at that moment, is what the Holy Spirit feels at sin in believers.

1. *Putting the Spirit's work in the place of Christ's.* The principal office of the Spirit is to glorify Christ. "He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine and shall show it unto you."—John xvi., 14. When the three thousand were brought to receive Christ gladly on the day of Pentecost, it was the Spirit who opened their hearts and eyes. He loves this work. It is sweet, God-glorifying work, to reveal Jesus to sinners as all their righteousness. But many look in for righteousness; they begin to look to their sanctification for peace; they begin to look to the work of the Spirit in them for righteousness, instead of the work of the Son for them. This grieves the Spirit. This is quite contrary to the divine plan of salvation—dishonors the law—makes Christ dead in vain.

2. *Not leaning all on Him.* Another main part of the Spirit's work is to uphold the believer in holy living. "Uphold me with thy free Spirit"—"I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk"—"Thy Spirit is good, lead me"—"Without me ye can do nothing." This is the sanctifying work of the Lord the Spirit, which none can do but he; and he is able to do it. But often a believer dare not trust the Spirit. He says: I perish; I know not what to do; my lusts are too strong; I shall surely fall. O ye of little faith, where is your faith? This grieves your indwelling Friend. Did not I say I would not leave thee? Did not I say I would uphold thee? Lean on me; fear not. Often we lean on something else; on promises; resolutions; good principles; past experiences. Ah! this is not leaning on the simple promise of Jesus and the power of the unseen Spirit. This is grieving your Friend.

3. *Not following his leadings.* When Jesus was on earth, he led his disciples from place to place, and they followed the Lamb. "Let us go into Judea again—let us depart to the other side." Had they refused, this would have grieved him; it would have shown want of confidence. In like manner, when the apostles set out on their mission to the Heathen, they were forbidden by the Spirit to enter one country. "Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them." Had they neglected the command of the Spirit, this would have grieved him. So, now, when believers are led by the Spirit, when the Spirit cries "Abba" within them—when a spirit of supplication is given; a yearning in prayer over others; if we do not take heed, if we restrain prayer, this is grieving the Spirit. If we were going into unlawful company; some feast where Jesus is not; if a godly companion were to pull us back, and say, "Ah! do not go, you will hurt your soul"—would it not grieve him if we were to thrust him aside, and quench his warnings, and rush into the place of sin? This is what many of you do to the Holy Spirit. He warns—pricks the heart—you persevere in your sin. Ah! grieve not—quench not.

4. *Despising ordinances.* These are the meeting-places with the Spirit, the wells of salvation. If you break appointment with a dear friend, you slight and grieve him; he goes away; so with the Spirit.

III. *Application.*

1. *Because it is ungrateful.* When Peter met the eye of Jesus, and saw the grief he had occasioned him, he went out and wept bitterly. This is what you should do who have grieved the Spirit. It is he that brought you to Christ. Do you thus requite the Lord the Spirit? Has he deserved this at your hands?

2. *You will lose your peace with God.* The grieved Spirit withdraws; the seal becomes dim, and disappears; guilt, confusion, unbelief, doubt, fear, crowd upon the soul. O the misery that you procure to your own soul! "Thine own wickedness shall correct thee."

3. *You will fall into deeper sin.* The grieved Spirit withdraws, but without him you can do nothing; you cannot pray, you cannot walk towards the land of uprightness; you sink deeper and deeper. Ah! my brethren, you who have grieved the Spirit, and are sinking deeper and deeper into sin, let this very thought awaken you, that you know not where your sin will stop, unless you now turn back to Jesus.

Dear believers, walk tenderly with this dear Friend. Do not grieve him in anything. Let him reign in you and over you. Lean on him, follow his leadings, often pray for him. Soon we shall be his entirely.

SERMON LXXXIX.

YE WILL NOT COME TO ME.

'Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."—John v., 40.

THERE is nothing more affecting in the Gospel narratives than to read of the vast multitudes who heard the words of the Lord Jesus, and remained unsaved. He stood in the midst of them, the Saviour of the world, willing and able to save them to the very uttermost; he stretched out his hands all the day. Each one of that crowd needed him; he was the only one who could save them, the only hiding-place for their souls; and yet they were not saved. Oh! why was this? Hear. "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." The same affecting scene is still before you: Jesus is in the midst; you all need him; but ye will not come to him that ye might have life.

I. *What is in the hand of Jesus?—Life.*

Jesus standing in the midst of a crowd of poor hell-deserving sinners, declares that in his hand there is life. He here implied that all around were dead, void of life, and that in his hand alone they could find life.

This life is of three kinds.

1. *Life judicial*—that is, pardon; so verse 24: "Is passed from death unto life." "He that hath the Son hath life."—1 John v., 12. "Believing, ye might have life through his name."—John xx., 31. Every one of that crowd was lying under sentence of death on account of sin; there was none righteous, no, not one. All were ready to perish. Some of them knew it, and had dark forebodings; most of them did not know it, and did not care about it. Still it was true of all; all were under sin, all condemned to die the second death, poor condemned criminals; the sentence of the law had gone out against them, and any one moment might be put in execution. In Jesus's hand there was life—a way of pardon open and free to them all. "In him was life." He came into the world, and died in such a way that he could honestly and truly offer himself to every creature as their Surety and Saviour. This is still the same; you all need life judicial; you are underlying the curse of a broken law. All in this assembly who have not come to Christ, are under sentence of eternal death. But there is life in the hand of Jesus; the Lord Jesus offers himself to each of you as your complete surety. O how sad that the most will not come to Christ that they may have life!

2. *Life Spiritual*—that is, inward holiness, spoken of in verse 25, "The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." He had been telling them that the Father had given him authority to quicken whom he will. It is a hidden life.—Col. iii., 3. It is Christ living in the soul.—Gal. ii., 20. All the crowd around him were dead in trespasses and sins, like the dry bones, very many and very dry. But here was the Fountain of living water, the Rock smitten, and the life-giving stream gushing forth: enough to quicken ten thousand worlds. The same scene is still here, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." He is the Unseen present; in his hand is the fountain of a new life. Your souls are dead, your will dead, heart dead, mind dead to God and divine things. O that you would come to him and find life! You need your eye quickened, to see him; your ear, to hear him; your heart, to receive him; your whole soul, to close with him. There is a fulness of spiritual life in Christ: "If thou knewest the gift of God, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water."—John iv., 10.

3. *Life of glory*—called in the Word "eternal life" and "everlasting life:" "The righteous into life eternal."—Matt. xxv., 46. "I give unto them eternal life."—John x. "Whoso believeth in

him should have everlasting life."—John iii., 16. "He that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."—Gal. vi., 8. All around were on the way to the second death. "Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death," standing over the lake of fire. Jesus had eternal life in his hand, ready to give the right to it, the foretaste of it, and itself in due time. No wonder he cried so earnestly. So now every unpardoned soul is on the way to death, over the lake of fire. Jesus has everlasting life.

II. *The witnesses.*

1. *John:* "Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness to the truth."—Verse 33. Compare John i., 7: "The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light." God raised up John, on purpose that he might point men to Jesus; and so he did. He was a burning and a shining light, and they were willing for a season to rejoice in his light. When he told them of the life to be had in Jesus, they were glad for a season; and yet they did not come to Christ to have life. So with you; a standing ministry is still in the midst of you. However weak and dim the light, still it points to Jesus: and I may add, you have been willing for a season to rejoice in the light. Ye seem to love to hear, and yet ye will not come.

2. *The works.* (1.) *The miracles of Christ.* He had just been healing a man thirty-eight years impotent. He healed all that came, cleansed lepers, turned water into wine, raised the dead: all these bare witness of him that he was the Son of God with power. (2.) *The quickening of dead souls:* "The Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth: and he will show him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will."—Verses 20, 21. Greater works than these! The quickening of a dead soul is a far greater miracle than raising a dead body; both are beyond man, but the latter is most divine. Jesus had quickened some, his own few disciples, the Samaritans. These works bore witness of him. So still, saved souls in the midst of you are Christ's witnesses, showing you that there is a way of pardon, and yet ye will not come.

3. *The Father:* "The Father himself which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me."—Verse 37. At Christ's baptism and transfiguration: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The inward teaching and drawing of the Father.—John vi., 45. The Father had no doubt striven with many of them; and so with many of you, yet ye will not come.

4. *The Scriptures.* The whole Bible is the record concerning Jesus.—Luke xxiv. The Law of Moses speaks of Jesus in type; the Prophets tell of Jesus in prophecy; the Psalms, the

inward workings of his heart; the Gospels, the narrative of his outward life; the Epistles, the scheme of salvation by him; the Revelation, his future glorious coming. All, all tell of Jesus; Jesus pervades the Bible; it is the standing witness to Jesus. There may be no faithful ministry in the land, no works of conversion going on; the Father's drawings may be awanting; still the Bible is God's faithful witness to Jesus. The written Word testifies of the living Word. Hence Moses will accuse you to the Father; so it is now, and yet ye will not come.

III. *The reason why men are not saved.*

It is very remarkable that the only reason Christ dwells on here is, "Ye will not come unto me." He does not say, There is no pardon for you; no grace for you in my hand. On the contrary, he says to those who were probably reprobates: "Ye will not come unto me." Christ could have mentioned other reasons. 1. He could have spoken of *the decrees of God.* "Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep." John x., 26. "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed." Every thinking man must know and feel that none will ever come to Christ but those who were given him by the Father from all eternity. 2. Christ could have spoken of their *dead souls*, dead in trespasses and sins. He could have shown them that their hearts were dead, wills dead, souls dead. He could have shown them that unless he made them willing in the day of his power, they never would come. But he does not touch on these things. 3. The only reason he dwells on is this: "Ye will not come unto me." Why? Because he thus brings them in guilty of wilful rejection of him.

Some of you may not be able to reconcile these things. If I am decreed to be lost, how can I be blamable? Christ could reconcile them, and therefore said, "Ye will not come unto me."

And why will ye not?

1. *Some ignorant;* ignorant of God's righteousness. I believe there are many of you quite ignorant of the way of life in the hand of Jesus. "If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge."

2. *Some do not feel pressing need.* The winter's cold drives the little birds near the houses; want makes them bold; so if you felt your pressing need, you would draw near by the blood of Jesus.

3. *Love of lusts.* "How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?" Verse 44. Many love life judicial, and life eternal, but not life spiritual. They do not wish to be sanctified. "He shall save his people from their sins." But you love your lust; you love the darkness, and come not to the light.

1. Think how you will meet Jesus in the judgment-day. He will say, "I would often have gathered you, and you would not. I sent unto you all my witnesses, rising up early and sending them,

and you would not. I pleaded with you in affliction, showed you the vanity of all the creatures, but you would not come to me.

2. Think how you will bear the reflection in eternity. When you have tasted all the realities of hell for a thousand years, this will add bitterness to all; I might have been in heaven this day, but only I would not come to Jesus that I might have life. O cursed folly, cursed pride, cursed ignorance, that kept me back from the Saviour of the world! Arise, plead thine own cause.

October 8, 1842.

SERMON XC.

NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL.

"So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness."—Rom. i., 15–18.

1. *Where Paul desired to preach:* "I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome also." Rome was at that time the mightiest city in the whole world. Daniel compared it to a beast with iron teeth stamping other kingdoms with its feet. It was called the mistress of the world. Yet there Paul was willing to preach the Gospel. It was the most learned city of the world. Its poets, painters, orators, historians of the Augustan age, were famed over the whole world. Some of the most perfect specimens of human composition that ever were produced were published at Rome at that very time. It was the most wicked city of the world. The pollutions that flowed through its streets were equal to those of Sodom and Gomorrah. The emperor was one of the most cruel monsters that ever appeared in the form of a man. That was the place where Paul burned with a flame of desire to be allowed to preach the Gospel.

2. *What Paul desired to preach:* "The Gospel, the Gospel of Christ." It was not to see Rome that Paul longed to be there; not to see its temples, and theatres, and statues, the wonders of the world. It was not to show off his own eloquence, not to publish some new work to gain the esteem and applause of the Roman people. It was to preach the Gospel, the way of salvation by the righteousness of God. "I am determined to know nothing among you but Christ, and him crucified."

3. *What Paul felt:* "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ." More is meant in these words than is expressed. He does not mean only that he was not ashamed of the Gospel, but he gloried in it. It is very similar to Gal. vi., 14: "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Two things are implied. (1.) That he was not ashamed of it before God. He had ventured his own soul on this way of salvation. He could say, like David, "This is all my salvation, this is all my desire." The way of salvation by Jehovah our Righteousness was sweet to Paul. His soul rested there with great delight. He came thus to God in secret, thus in public, thus in dying. He hoped to stand before God through all eternity clothed in this divine righteousness. (2.) That he was not ashamed of it before men. Though all the world had been against him, Paul would have gloried in this way of salvation. He had a burning desire to make it known to other men. He felt it so sweet, he saw it to be so glorious, that he could have desired a voice so loud that all men might hear at one moment the way of salvation by Christ.

Men would laugh at the idea of a poor worm like Paul going to subdue mighty Rome with a few words of his lips; but Paul saw such a divine power in the Gospel that he was not ashamed of it. He knew it could break the hardest heart, and bind up the most broken. The learned men of Rome would smile at the words of this babbler; but Paul saw such wisdom in the Gospel, that all human wisdom appeared utter folly beside it. The wickedness of Rome reached up to heaven, it was a continual smoke in God's nostrils, a fire that burned all the day; but Paul knew that the righteousness of God could cover the sin of a thousand Romes. He saw it to be so vast, so immense, so free, so surpassingly glorious, so divine, that it could flow over and cover the sins of the greatest sinner in Rome.

I. *Reasons why worldly men are ashamed of the Gospel.*

1. *Because it is foolishness:* "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness."—1 Cor. i., 23. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."—1 Cor. ii., 14. Unregenerate men cannot comprehend the way of salvation by the righteousness of another. It appears a foolish scheme. They do not believe it is in the Bible at all. That a man should enter heaven by his good works they can understand; this is agreeable to the pride of the natural heart; or that God should forget to punish sin, and admit bad and good into heaven, they can understand this: "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself." But that a sinner should be covered with the righteousness of another, that he should have the sufferings and holy life of another person laid to his account, so as to cover all

his sins, this is utter folly to worldly men. Therefore so many of you are ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. You are ashamed to hear it preached: when it is clearly set before you, you despise it in your heart. You are ashamed of it before God. You do not go to the Father this way. You do not enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. You do not enter guilty and loathsome in yourself, wearing only the obedience of One. You are ashamed of it before men, ashamed to state it to your children and servants as the only way of pardon and acceptance.

2. *Because of the messenger.* Once when Jesus was preaching in his own country they said: "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him."—Mark vi., 3. When Peter and John were before the Jewish Council, it is said: "They perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men."—Acts iv., 13. When Paul preached at Athens, they said: "What will this babbler say?" At Corinth they said: "His bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible."—2 Cor. x., 10. So it is still. We have this treasure in earthen vessels. Every minister I know has got some painful defect about him. Ungodly men always stumble at this, and are ashamed of the Gospel because of the weakness of those who carry it.

3. *Because they hate its holiness.* Here is the main reason why unregenerate men are ashamed of the Gospel—because it is a holy-making Gospel. It will not allow men to live on in their sins If Christ had come to save men in their sins; to pluck them from hell, and let them enjoy their lusts; unregenerate men would hail the Gospel. But Jesus is a holy Saviour. "He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify us unto himself"—"He shall save his people from their sins." He first covers the soul with his white raiment, then makes the soul glorious within; restores the lost image of God, and fills the soul with pure, heavenly holiness. Unregenerate men among you cannot bear this. The drunkard among you says: Oh! he will take me away from the tavern; the swearer: Oh! he will take away my darling oaths; the sensualist: he will make me chaste and pure. Hence your malignity against the Redeemer; hence you see no form nor comeliness in Him who is altogether lovely. You are ashamed of the Gospel of Christ.

II. *Reasons why believers glory in the Gospel of Christ.*

1. *Because of its power:* "It is the power of God unto salvation." To ungodly men nothing appears more weak and powerless than the Gospel. They regard it as Lot's sons-in-law did his solemn warning: "He seemed as one that mocked to his sons-in-law." It appears an idle tale; an old wife's fable; but it is in reality "the power of God unto salvation." The Gospel is an amazing weapon when God wields it: "The weapons of our war-

fare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds." When God wields the Gospel it is mighty to awaken the hardest hearts. Paul felt this in his own experience. He was a proud blasphemer, persecutor, and injurious; a proud, self-righteous Pharisee. You would have said: Nothing in the world can awaken that man. Jesus revealed himself to him, and he fell to the ground, trembling and astonished. So he had seen it in the case of others; in Lydia, and the jailer; in Sergius Paulus, the deputy of Cyprus: "He believed being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord."—Acts xiii., 12. "The power of God unto salvation!" not God's mighty arm to destroy, but his mighty arm to save. He knew it would have the same power on every one that believed, whether Jew or Greek. The obstinate heart of the Jew, and the proud heart of the Greek, would both be broken under the sharp blade of the Gospel.

No wonder Paul went so boldly to Rome, when he had such a weapon in his hand. He knew that the hearts of the Romans were hard as adamant, proud as Lucifer, and full of lusts as hell is full of foul spirits; he knew that Satan held that proud city in his arms; yet still here was a power—the simple truth as it is in Jesus—by which God could bring low the proudest and hardest, to sit at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in their right mind. This is what enables us to continue preaching among you. I have now some experience of the hardness of your hearts, and that it is easier to create a world than to convert one of your souls; but the Gospel is "the power of God," and I do not despair of the conversion of any one of you. God is able to do it through this mighty Gospel; "for with God nothing shall be impossible."

O brethren! have you felt the power of the Gospel? Has the Gospel come to you not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance? Has it broken your heart, and bound it up? Mighty Gospel! it alone can save. Awakened sinner! the Gospel is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Though you may have the sins of the Jew and the Greek, there is enough in Jesus to cover all. Though your heart is hard, God is able, through this mighty Gospel, to subdue it.

2. *Because of the righteousness of God revealed in it.* This reason springs out of the preceding. It is the power of God: "for therein is the righteousness of God revealed." It is this righteousness which gives it all its power; makes it so attractive to sinners—so pacifying to the troubled conscience. "The righteousness of God" is just the sufferings and obedience of the Lord Jesus, who was God, freely offered to cover sinners. The sufferings of Christ, from the manger in Bethlehem to the cross of Calvary, were all sufferings of one who was God: "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 the Wonderful,

Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace"—"Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts." The blood of Christ is called the blood of God.—Acts xx., 28. It was this that gave infinite value to the sufferings of Christ. The dying of one holy man might have stood for the dying of one sinner, if God had so pleased; but it needed the dying of one who was God, to stand for the dying of many sinners. The obedience of Christ, from infancy to death, was all the obedience of one who was God. His divine will agreed with his holy human will in every act of obedience. His obedience to parents is the obedience of God; his prayers were the prayers of God; his tears the tears of God; his holy thoughts, the thoughts of God; his holy actions, the actions of God—his whole obedience is divine. It has divine perfection in it. It has a divine fulness and excellence which no other obedience ever had, or can have: it is "the righteousness of God." This is what is revealed in the Gospel—offered freely to every creature, to cover sin, and justify before God.

This was what nerved the arm of Paul. He knew that he was carrying this glorious righteousness into the view of sinners. What though the men of Rome were covered up to heaven with innumerable sins; he knew that this glorious righteousness was enough to cover all.

O brethren! it is this we come to offer you this day; a righteousness so vast that it is able to cover you divinely. For every sin of yours here is a stripe in Jesus. For the sins of infancy, here are the sufferings of his infancy; for the sins of youth, here are the sufferings of his youth; for the sins of manhood, here are the sufferings of his manhood. For your infinite dishonor done to the law of God, here is infinite honor done to the law. His obedience is divine obedience. For your unholy life, here is his divinely holy life to cover you. Here are his divinely holy thoughts to cover your unholy thoughts; here are his holy words, to cover your unholy words; his holy actions, to cover your unholy actions. There is something infinitely vast and glorious in the righteousness of God. When the deluge covered the earth, it covered the highest mountains. Looking down from above, not one mountain-top could be seen, but a vast world of waters; a vast plain reflecting the beams of the sun. So if you this day lie down under the righteousness of God, the mountains of your sins will not be seen, but only the vast, deep, glorious righteousness of your God and Saviour. If you were to cast a stone into the deepest part of the ocean, it would be lost and swallowed up by the deep waves of ocean; so when a sinner is cast down under the righteousness of God, he is as it were lost and swallowed up in Christ.

A righteousness so free—"from faith to faith!" The meaning of this is, that it is received by faith alone. If a man would give

all the substance of his house for this righteousness of God, it would be utterly contemned. It is "without money and without price." Christ offers himself freely to each of you, to be Jehovah your righteousness.

St. Peter's, Oct. 16, 1842 —(Action Sermon.)

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