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Spurgeon, C. H. 1834-1892.  
Sermons of the Rev. C.H.  
Spurgeon of London

# S E R M O N S

OF



REV. C. H. SPURGEON  
*of London*

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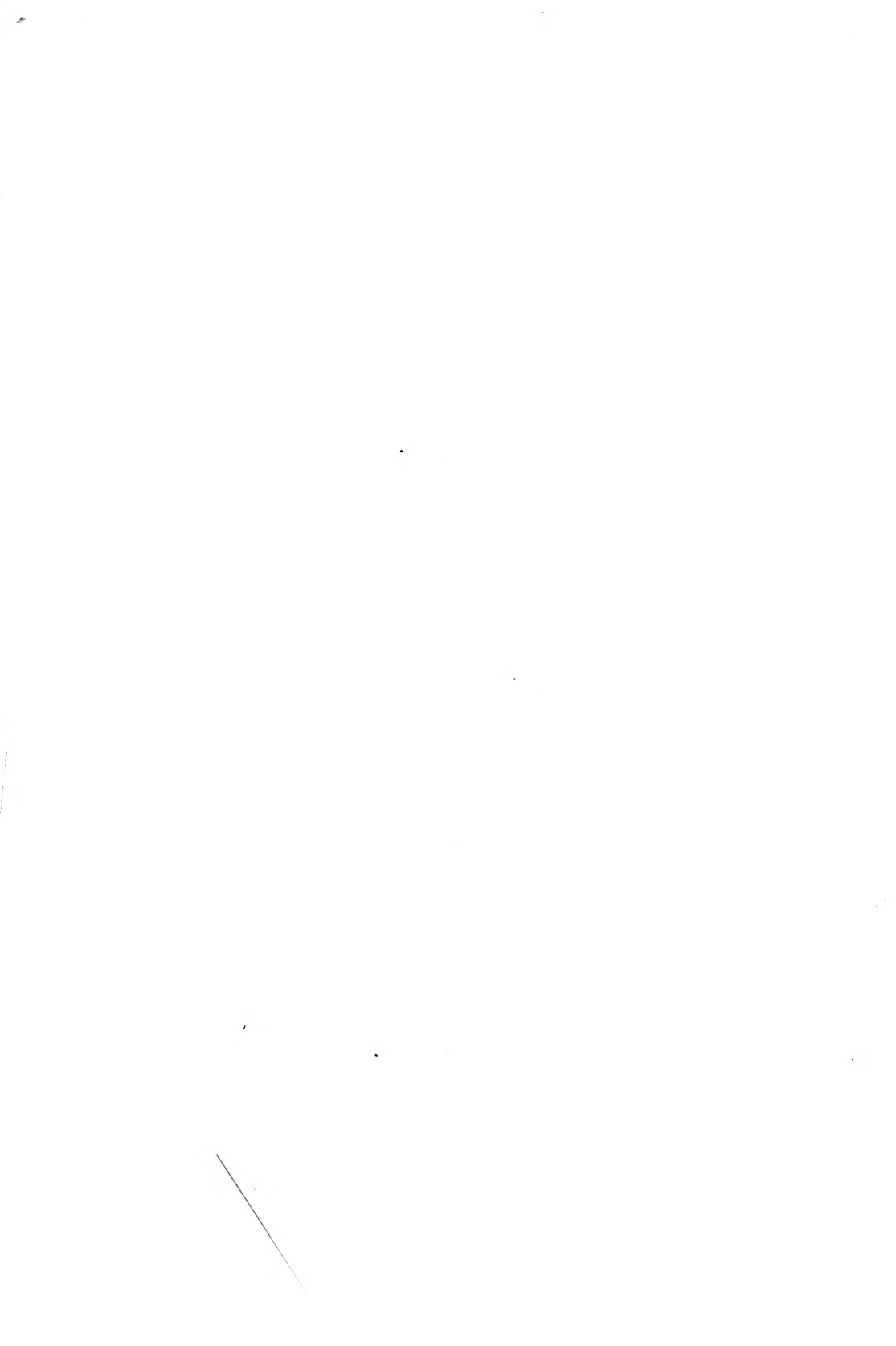
*Volume III.*

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Brethren in the land of the West, I am linked to your great republic by ties which daily multiply; fellowships with the great and holy are the silken bands which bind me to your nation. May the old faith of the men from whose loins ye sprang be ever nourished among you. Ye are unfettered; no State Church spreads its upas shade over your churches, and no reverence for antiquated errors checks your progress. Let a brother beseech you to maintain the faith, once delivered to the saints, whole and inviolable. In our land we have been favored with some blessed gleams of sunshine; but those who know the signs of the times are led very frequently to tremble for the ark of the Lord. Arminianism secretly lurks among us. Our ministers prune the truth, and conceal the great distinguishing doctrines of grace, in a manner much to be lamented. Antinomianism, through its perversions of the truth, has done much to check the advance of sound opinions, and has made many good men so cautious of being too high, that they have run into the opposite extremes of error. May the Lord restore unto us all a pure language, and may the time come when the Gospel of the Lord Jesus shall universally prevail.

May the perusal of these Sermons confirm the wavering, and, by the influence of the Holy Spirit, guide the anxious to joy and peace.

To the sacred name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be glory for ever, so prays

THE AUTHOR.

## P R E F A C E .

I PRAYERFULLY commit this volume to the blessing of Almighty God, with the earnest hope that its reception by the American public may be as hearty as that obtained by its predecessors, and that the good resulting from its circulation may be far more abundant. The sermons herein contained are not essays laboriously written and laboriously heard, they are the verbatim reports of the extemporaneous utterances of a very busy man. A few minutes of revision is all that I can afford them, and hence the reader must be lenient toward the errors of the book. Week by week the sermons are issued in haste, almost as soon as they are delivered, while I am continually running hither and thither preaching the Word, and am therefore frequently unable so much as to glance at the proof-sheets. The eighteen Sermons at the close of the volume were delivered to immense audiences in the Royal Surrey Music Hall, and are purposely made as simple and elementary as possible. Without eloquence or learning, these discourses have riveted the attention of ten thousand at once, and have attracted princes of every nation and nobles of every rank, some of whom have not been unprofitable hearers, but have brought forth fruits meet for repentance. It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes.

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## SERMON I.

### A FAITHFUL FRIEND.

There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."—PROVERBS, xviii. 24

CICERO has well said, "Friendship is the only thing in the world concerning the usefulness of which all mankind are agreed." Friendship seems as necessary an element of a comfortable existence in this world as fire or water, or even air itself. A man may drag along a miserable existence in proud solitary dignity, but his life is scarce life, it is nothing but an existence, the tree of life being stripped of the leaves of hope and the fruits of joy. He who would be happy here must have friends; and he who would be happy hereafter, must, above all things, find a friend in the world to come, in the person of God, the Father of his people.

Friendship, however, though very pleasing and exceedingly blessed, has been the cause of the greatest misery to men when it has been unworthy and unfaithful; for just in proportion as a good friend is sweet, a false friend is full of bitterness. "A faithless friend is sharper than an adder's tooth." It is sweet to repose in some one; but O! how bitter to have that support snapped, and to receive a grievous fall as the effect of your confidence. Fidelity is an absolute necessary in a true friend; we can not rejoice in men unless they will stand faithful to us. Solomon declares that "there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." That friend, I suppose, he never found in the pomps and vanities of the world. He had tried them all, but he found them empty; he passed through all their joys, but he found them "vanity of vanities." Poor Savage spoke from sad experience when he said,

“ You'll find the friendship of the world a show!  
 Mere outward show ! 'Tis like the harlot's tears,  
 The statesman's promise, or false patriot's zeal,  
 Full of fair seeming, but delusion all.”

And so for the most part they are. The world's friendship is ever brittle. Trust to it, and you have trusted a robber; rely upon it, and you have leaned upon a thorn; ay, worse than that, upon a spear which shall pierce you to the soul with agony. Yet Solomon says he had found “ a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.” Not in the haunts of his unbridled pleasures, nor in the wanderings of his unlimited resources, but in the pavilion of the Most High, the secret dwelling-place of God, in the person of Jesus, the Son of God, the Friend of sinners.

It is saying a great thing to affirm that “ there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother;” for the love of brotherhood has produced most valiant deeds. We have read stories of what brotherhood could do, which, we think, could hardly be excelled in the annals of friendship. Timoleon, with his shield, stood over the body of his slain brother, to defend him from the insults of the foe. It was reckoned a brave deed of brotherhood that he should dare the spears of an army in defense of his brother's corpse. And many such instances have there been, in ancient and modern warfare, of the attachment of brethren. There is a story told of a Highland regiment, who, while marching through the Highlands, lost their way; they were overtaken by one of the terrible storms which will sometimes come upon travelers unawares, and blinded by the snow, they lost their way upon the mountains. Well nigh frozen to death, it was with difficulty they could continue their march. One man after another dropped into the snow and disappeared. There were two brothers, however, of the name of Forsythe; one of them fell prostrate on the earth, and would have lain there to die, but his brother, though barely able to drag his own limbs across the white desert, took him on his back, and carried him along, and as others fell one by one, this brave, true-hearted brother carried his loved one on his back, until at last he himself fell down overcome with fatigue, and died. His brother, however, had received such

warmth from his body that he was enabled to reach the end of his journey in safety, and so lived. Here we have an instance of one brother sacrificing his life for another. I hope there are some brothers here who would be prepared to do the same if they should ever be brought into the same difficulty. It is saying a great thing, to declare that "there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." It is putting that friend first of all in the list of loving ones; for, surely, next to a mother's love, there is, and there ought to be, no higher affection in the world than the love of a brother to one begotten of the same father, and dandled on the same knee. Those who have "grown in beauty side by side, and filled one house with glee," ought to love one another. And we think there have been many glorious instances and mighty proofs of the love of brethren. Yet, says Solomon, "there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."

To repeat our assertion, we believe that this friend is the blessed Redeemer, Jesus Christ. It shall be ours, first, to *prove*, this morning, *the fact* that he sticks closer than a brother; then, as briefly as we can, to show you *why he sticks closer than a brother*; and then to finish up by giving you *some lessons which may be drawn from the doctrine*, that Jesus Christ is a faithful Friend.

I. First, then, beloved, we assert that CHRIST IS "A FRIEND THAT STICKETH CLOSER THAN A BROTHER." And in order to prove this from facts, we appeal to such of you as have had him for a friend. Will you not, each of you, at once give your verdict, that this is neither more nor less than an unexaggerated truth? He loved you before all worlds; long ere the day star flung his ray across the darkness, before the wing of angel had flapped the un navigated ether, before aught of creation had struggled from the womb of nothingness, God, even our God, had set his heart upon all his children. Since that time, has he once swerved, has he once turned aside, once changed? No; ye who have tasted of his love and know his grace, will bear me witness, that he has been a certain friend in uncertain circumstances.

"He, near your side hath always stood  
His loving-kindness. O! how good"



You fell in Adam; did he cease to love you? No; he became the second Adam to redeem you. You sinned in practice, and brought upon your head the condemnation of God; you deserved his wrath and his utter anger; did he then forsake you? No!

“He saw you ruined in the fall,  
Yet loved you notwithstanding all.”

He sent his minister after you: you despised him; he preached the gospel in your ears: you laughed at him; you broke God's Sabbath, you despised his Word. Did he then forsake you? No!

“Determined to save, he watched o'er your path,  
Whilst, Satan's blind slave, you sported with death.”

And at last he arrested you by his grace, he humbled you, he made you penitent, he brought you to his feet, and he forgave all your sins. Since then, has he left you? You have often left him; has he ever left you? You have had many trials and troubles; has he ever deserted you? Has he ever turned away his heart, and shut up his bowels of compassion? No, children of God, it is your solemn duty to say “No,” and bear witness to his faithfulness. You have been in severe afflictions and in dangerous circumstances; did your friend desert you then? Others have been faithless to you; he that eat bread with you has lifted up his heel against you; but has Christ ever forsaken you? Has there ever been a moment when you could go to him, and say, “Master, thou hast betrayed me?” Could you once, in the blackest hour of your grief, dare to impugn his fidelity? Could you dare to say of him, “Lord, thou hast promised what thou didst not perform?” Will you not bear witness now, “Not one good thing hath failed of all that the Lord God hath promised; all hath come to pass?” And do you fear he will yet forsake you? Ask, then, the bright ones before the throne—“Ye glorified spirits! did Christ forsake you? Ye have passed through Jordan's stream; did he leave you there? Ye have been baptized in the black flood of death; did he there forsake you? Ye have stood before the throne of God; did he then deny you?” And they answered, “No; through all

the troubles of our life, in all the bitterness of death, in all the agonies of our expiring moments, and in all the terrors of God's judgment, he hath been with us, 'a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.' " Out of all the millions of God's redeemed, there is not one he hath forsaken. Poor they have been, mean and distressed, but he hath never abhorred their prayer, never turned aside from doing them good. He hath been ever with them.

" For his mercy shall endure,  
Ever faithful; ever sure."

But I shall not longer stay, since I can not prove this to the ungodly, and to the godly it is already proven, for they know it by experience; therefore it is but little necessary that I should do more than just certify the fact that Christ is a faithful friend—a friend in every hour of need and every time of distress.

II. And now I have to tell you THE REASONS WHY WE MAY DEPEND UPON CHRIST AS BEING A FAITHFUL FRIEND.

There are some things in himself which render it certain that he will stick close to his people.

1. True friendship can only be made between true men. Hearts are the soul of honor. There can be no lasting friendship between bad men. Bad men may pretend to love each other, but their friendship is a rope of sand, which shall be broken at any convenient season; but if a man have a sincere heart within him, and be true and noble, then we may confide in him. Spenser sings in fine old English verse—

" Ne, certes can that friendship long endure,  
However gay and goodly be the style,  
That doth ill cause or evil end enure,  
For Vertue is the band that bindeth Harts most sure."

But who can find a stain in the character of Jesus, or who can tarnish his honor? Has there ever been a spot on his escutcheon? Has his flag ever been trampled in the dust? Does he not stand the true witness in heaven, the faithful and just? Is it not declared of him that he is God who can not lie? Have we not found him so up to this moment; and may we not, knowing that he is "Holy, holy, holy Lord," confide in

him, that he will stick closer to us than a brother? His goodness is the guaranty of his fidelity; he can not fail us.

2. *Faithfulness to us in our faults* is a certain sign of fidelity in a friend. You may depend upon that man who will tell you of your faults in a kind and considerate manner. Fawning hypocrites, insidious flatterers, are the sweepings and offal of friendship. They are but the parasites upon that noble tree. But true friends put enough trust in you to tell you openly of your faults. Give me for a friend the man who will speak honestly of me before my face; who will not tell first one neighbor, and then another, but who will come straight to my house, and say, "Sir, I feel there is such-and-such a thing in you, which, as my brother, I must tell you of." That man is a true friend; he has proved himself to be so; for we never get any praise for telling people of their faults; we rather hazard their dislike; a man will sometimes thank you for it, but he does not often like you any the better. Praise is a thing we all love. I met with a man the other day who said he was impervious to flattery; I was walking with him at the time, and turning round rather sharply, I said, "At any rate, sir, you seem to have a high gift in flattering yourself, for you are really doing so, in saying you are impervious to flattery." "You can not flatter me," he said. I replied, "I can, if I like to try; and perhaps may do so before the day is out." I found I could not flatter him directly, so I began by saying what a fine child that was of his; and he drank it in as a precious draught; and when I praised this thing and that thing belonging to him, I could see that he was very easily flattered; not directly, but indirectly. We are all pervious to flattery; we like the soothing cordial, only it must not be labeled flattery; for we have a religious abhorrence of flattery if it be so called; call it by any other name, and we drink it in, even as the ox drinketh in water. Now, child of God, has Christ ever flattered you? Has he not told you of your faults right truly? Has he not pricked your conscience even upon what you thought to gloss over—your little secret sins? Has he not provoked conscience to thunder in your ears notes of terror, because of your misdeeds? Well, then, you may trust him, for he shows that faithfulness which renders a man right

trustworthy. Thus I have pointed out to you that there are reasons in himself for which we may trust him.

3. In the next place, *there are some things in his friendship which render us sure of not being deceived, when we put our confidence in him.* True friendship must not be of hasty growth. As quaint old Master Fuller says. "Let friendship creep gently to a height; if it rush to it, it may soon run itself out of breath." It is even so. I think it was Joanna Baillie said,

"Friendship is no plant of hasty growth,  
Though planted in esteem's deep fixed soil,  
The gradual culture of kind intercourse  
Must bring it to perfection."

In vain thou trustest the gourd over thy head, O Jonah; it will not be of much use to thee; it came up in a night, it may wither in a night. It is the strong stiff oak, of ages' growth, which shall abide the tempest; which shall alike put out its wings to shield thee from the sun, and shall afterward find thee a hovel in its heart, if necessary, in its grey old age, when its branches tremble in the blast. Friendship is true when it begins; but we must have a man's friendship long before we can say of him, that he will stick closer than a brother. And how long has Christ loved you? That you can not tell. When the ages were not born he loved you; when this world was an infant, wrapped in the swaddling clothes of mist, he loved you; when the old pyramids had not begun to be builded, his heart was set upon you; and ever since you have been born he has had a strong affection for you. He looked on you in your cradle, and he loved you then; he was affianced to you when you were an infant of a span long, and he has loved you ever since. Some of you I see with gray hairs, some with heads all bald with age; he has loved you up till now, and will he now forsake you? O! no, his friendship is so old that it must last; it has been matured by so many tempests, it has been rooted by so many winds of trouble, that it can not but endure; it must stand. Even as the granite peak of the mountain shall not be melted, because, unlike the snow, it has braved the blast, and borne the heat of the burning sun;

t has stood out always, catching in its face every blow from the face of nature, and yet been unmoved and uninjured. It shall last, for it has lasted. But when the elements shall melt, and in a stream of dissolving fire shall run away, then shall Christ's friendship still exist, for it is of older growth than they. He must be "a friend that sticketh closer than a brother;" for his friendship is a hoary friendship—hoary as his own head, of which it is said, "His head and his hair are white like snow, as white as wool."

4. But note, further, the *friendship which lasts does not take its rise in the chambers of mirth, nor is it fed and fattened there.* Young lady, you speak of a dear friend whom you acquired last night in a ball-room. Do not, I beseech you, misuse the word; he is not a friend if he was acquired merely there; friends are better things than those which grow in the hot-house of pleasure. Friendship is a more lasting plant than those. You have a friend, have you? Yes; and he keeps a pair of horses, and has a good establishment. Ah! but your best way to prove your friend is to know that he will be your friend when you have not so much as a mean cottage, and when, houseless and without clothing, you are driven to beg your bread. Thus you would make true proof of a friend. Give me a friend who was born in the winter time, whose cradle was rocked in the storm; he will last. Our fair weather friends shall flee away from us. I had rather have a robin for a friend than a swallow; for a swallow abides with us only in the summer time, but a robin cometh to us in the winter. Those are tight friends that will come the nearest to us when we are in the most distress; but those are not friends who speed themselves away when ill times come. Believer, hast thou reason to fear that Christ will leave you now? Has he not been with you in the house of mourning? You found your friend where men find pearls, "in caverns deep, where darkness dwells;" you found Jesus in your hour of trouble. It was on the bed of sickness that you first learned the value of his name; it was in the hour of mental anguish that you first did lay hold of the hem of his garment; and since then, your nearest and sweetest intercourse has been held with him in the hours of darkness. Well, then, such a friend, proved in

the house of sorrow—a friend who gave his heart's blood for you, and let his soul run out in one great river of gore—such a friend never can and never will forsake you; he sticketh closer than a brother.

5. Again, *a friend who is acquired by folly is never a lasting friend.* Do a foolish thing, and make a man your friend; 'tis but a confederacy in vice, and you will soon discover that his friendship is worthless; the friendships you acquire by doing wrong, you had better be without. O! how many silly friendships there are springing up, the mere fruit of a sentimentalism, having no root whatever, but like the plant of which our Saviour tells us, "It sprang up because it had no depth of earth." Jesus Christ's friendship is not like that; there is no ingredient of folly in it; he loves us discreetly, not winking or conniving at our follies, but instilling into us his wisdom. His love is wise; he hath chosen us according to the counsel of his wisdom; not blindly and rashly, but with all judgment and prudence.

Under this head I may likewise observe, that *the friendship of ignorance is not a very desirable one.* I desire no man to call himself my friend, if he doth not know me. Let him love me in proportion to his knowledge of me. If he loves me for the little he knows, when he knoweth more he may cast me aside. "That man," says one, "seems to be a very amiable man." "I am sure I can love him," says another, as he scans his features. Ay, but do not write "friend" yet; wait a wee bit, until you know more of him; just see him, examine him, try him, test him, and not till then enter him on the sacred list of friends. Be friendly to all, but make none your friends until they know you, and you know them. Many a friendship born in the darkness of ignorance, hath died suddenly in the light of a better acquaintance with each other. You supposed men to be different from what they were, and when you discovered their real character you disregarded them. I remember one saying to me, "I have great affection for you, sir," and he mentioned a certain reason. I replied, "My dear fellow, your reason is absolutely false; the very thing you love me for, I am not, and hope I never shall be." And so I said, "I really can not accept your friendship, if it

be founded upon a misunderstanding of what I may have said." But our Lord Jesus never can forsake those whom once he loves, because he can discover nothing in us worse than he knew, for he knew all about us beforehand. He saw our leprosy, and yet he loved us; he knew our deceitfulness and unbelief, and yet he did press us to his bosom; he knew what poor fools we were, and yet he said he would never leave us nor forsake us. He knew that we should rebel against him and despise his counsel often times; he knew that even when we loved him our love would be cold and languid—but he loved for his own sake. Surely, then, he will stick closer than a brother.

6. Yet again, *friendship and love, to be real, must not lie in words, but in deeds.* The friendship of bare compliment is the fashion of this age, because this age is the age of deceit. The world is the great house of sham. Go where you may in London, sham is staring you in the face; there are very few real things to be discovered. I allude not merely to tricks in business, adulterations in food, and such like. Deception is not confined to the tradesman's shop. It prevails throughout society; the sanctuary is not exempt. The preacher adopts a sham voice. You hardly ever hear a man speak in the pulpit in the same way he would speak in the parlor. Why, I hear my brethren, sometimes, when they are at tea or dinner, speak in a very comfortable decent sort of English voice, but when they get into their pulpits they adopt a sanctimonious tone, and fill their mouths with inflated utterance, or else whine most pitifully. They degrade the pulpit by pretending to honor it; speaking in a voice which God never intended any mortal to have. This is the great house of sham; and such little things show which way the wind blows. You leave your card at a friend's house; that is an act of friendship—the card! I wonder whether, if he were hard up for cash, you would leave your banker's book! You write "My dear sir," "Yours very truly;" it is a sham; you do not mean it. "Dear!" that is a sacred word; it ought to be used to none but those you regard with affection; but we tolerate falsehoods now, as if they were truths; and we call them courtesies. Courtesies they may be; but untruths they are in many



cases. Now, Christ's love lieth not in words, but in deeds. He saith not, "My dear people;" but he let his heart out, and we could see what that was. He doth not come to us, and say, "Dearly beloved" simply; but he hangs upon the cross, and there we read "Dearly beloved" in red letters. He does not come to us with the kisses of his lips first—he giveth us blessings with both his hands; he giveth himself *for* us, and then he giveth himself *to* us. Trust no complimentary friend; rely upon the man who giveth you real tokens worth your having, who does for you deeds to show the truthfulness of his heart. Such a friend—and such is Jesus—"sticketh closer than a brother."

7. Once more, and I shall not weary you, I trust. *A purchased friend will never last long.* Give to a man nineteen times, and deny him the twentieth, and he shall hate you; for his love sprang only from your gifts. The love which I could buy for gold I would sell for dross; the friendship that I could buy for pearls I would dispense with for pebbles; it were of no value, and therefore the sooner lost the better. But O believer, Christ's love was unpurchased love. Thou broughtest him no present. Jacob said, when his sons went to Egypt, "Take the man a present, a little oil, a little balm, a few nuts and almonds;" but you took Christ no presents. When you came to him you said,

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

You did not even promise that you would love him; for you had such a faithless heart, you durst not say so. You asked him to make you love him; that was the most you could do. He loved you for nothing at all—simply because he would love you. Well, that love which so lived on nothing but its own resources, will not starve through the scantiness of your returns; the love which grew in such a rocky heart as this, will not die for want of soil. That love which sprang up in the barren desert, in your unirrigated soul, will never, never die for want of moisture: it must live, it can not expire. Jesus must be "a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."

8. Shall I stay to urge more reasons? I may but mention one other, namely, this—that *there can not, by any possibility,*

*arise any cause which could make Christ love us less.* You say, how is this? One man loves his friend, but he on a sudden grows rich, and now he says, I am a greater man than I used to be, I forget my old acquaintances. But Christ can grow no richer; he is as rich as he can be, infinitely so. He loves you now; then it can not be possible that he will by reason of an increase in his own personal glory forsake you, for everlasting glories now crown his head: he can never be more glorious and great, and therefore he will love you still. Sometimes, on the other hand, one friend grows poorer, and then the other forsakes him; but you never can grow poorer than you are, for you are "a poor sinner and nothing at all" now; you have nothing of your own; all you have is borrowed, all given you by him. He can not love you, then, less, because you grow poorer; for poverty that hath nothing is at least as poor as it can be, and can never sink lower in the scale. Christ, therefore, must love thee for all thy nakedness and all thy poverty.

"But I may prove sinful," sayest thou. Yes, but thou canst not be more so than he foreknew thou wouldst be; and yet he loved thee with the foreknowledge of all thy sins. Surely, then, when it happens it will occasion no surprise to him; he knew it all beforehand, and he can not swerve from his love; no circumstance can possibly arise that ever will divide the Saviour from his love to his people, and the saint from his love to his Saviour. He is "a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."

III. Now, then, AN INFERENCE TO BE DERIVED FROM THIS. Lavater says, "The qualities of your friends will be those of your enemies: cold friends, cold enemies, half friends, half enemies; fervid enemies, warm friends." Knowing this to be a truth, I have often congratulated myself, when my enemies have spoken fiercely against me. Well, I have thought, "My friends love me hard and fast; let my enemies be as hot as they please; it only indicates that the friends are proportionately firm in affection. Then we draw this inference, that if Christ sticks close, and he is our friend, then our enemies will stick close, and never leave us till we die. O, Christian, because Christ sticks close, the devil will stick close too: he will

be at you and with you; the dog of hell will never cease his howlings, till you reach the other side of Jordan; no place in this world is out of bow-shot of that great enemy; till you have crossed the stream his arrows *can* reach you, and they will. If Christ gave himself for you, the devil will do all he can to destroy you; if Christ has been long-suffering to you, Satan will be persevering, in hopes that Christ may forget you; he will strive after you, and strive until he shall see you safely landed in heaven. But be not disappointed: the louder Satan roars, the more proof you shall have of Christ's love. "Give me," said old Rutherford, "give me a roaring devil rather than a sleeping one; for sleeping devils make me slumber, but roaring ones provoke me to run to my Master." O! be glad, then, if the world rant at thee, if thy foes attack thee fiercely. Christ is just as full of love to thee as they are of hatred. Therefore,

"Be firm and strong;  
Be grace thy shield and Christ thy song."

And now I have a question to ask: that question I ask of every man and every woman in this place, and of every child too—Is Jesus Christ your friend? Have you a friend at court—at heaven's court? Is the judge of quick and dead your friend? Can you say that you love him, and has he ever revealed himself in the way of love to you? Dear hearer, do not answer that question for thy neighbor; answer it for thyself. Peer or peasant, rich or poor, learned or illiterate, this question is for each of you; therefore, ask it: Is Christ my friend? Did you ever consider that question? Have you ever asked it? O! to be able to say "Christ is my friend," is one of the sweetest things in the world. A man who had lived much in sin, one day casually entered a place of worship. Before the sermon, this hymn was sung—

"Jesus, lover of my soul."

The next day the man was met by an acquaintance who asked him how he liked the sermon. Said he, "I do not know, but there were two or three words that took such a hold of me that I did not know what to do with myself. The minister

read that hymn, 'Jesus, lover of my soul.' Ah!" said he, though he was by no means a religious man, "to be able to say that, I would give up all I have got! But do you think," he asked "that Jesus ever will be the lover of such a man as I am? 'Jesus, lover of *my* soul?' O! could I say it." And then he buried his head in his hands and wept. I have every reason to fear that he went back to his sin, and was the same afterwards as before. But, you see, he had conscience enough to let him know how valuable it was to have Christ for his lover and his friend. Ah! rich man, thou hast many friends. There be some here who have learned the faithlessness of friends; there be some here who have toiled for their country's good, and deserve a meed of honor at their country's hands, who, for one mistake—or what, perhaps, was a mistake—have been neglected by too many who once appeared to be their most trusty adherents. O! put no confidence, ye great men and ye rich, in the adherence of your friends. David said in his haste, "All men are liars;" you may one day have to say it at your leisure. And O! ye kind and affectionate hearts, who are not rich in wealth, but who are rich in love—and that is the world's best wealth—put this golden coin among your silver ones, and it will sanctify them all. Get Christ's love shed abroad in your hearts, and your mother's love, your daughter's love, your husband's love, your wife's love, will become more sweet than ever. The love of Christ casts not out the love of relatives, but it sanctifies our loves, and makes them sweeter far. Remember, dear hearer, the love of men and women is very sweet; but all must pass away; and what will you do, if you have no wealth but the wealth that fadeth, and no love but the love which dies, when death shall come? O! to have the love of Christ! You can take that across the river of death with you; you can wear it as your bracelet in heaven, and set it up as a seal upon your hand; for his love is "strong as death and mightier than the grave." Good old Bishop Beveridge, I think it was, when dying, did not know his best friends. Said one, "Bishop Beveridge, do you know me?" Said he, "Who are you?" and when the name was mentioned, he said, "No." "But **don't** you know your wife, Bishop?" "What is her name?"

said he. Said she, "I am your wife." "I did not know I had got one," said he. Poor old man! his faculties all failed him. At last one stooped down and whispered, "Do you know the Lord Jesus Christ?" "Yes," said he, making an effort to speak, "I have known him these forty years, and I never can forget him." It is marvelous how memory will hold the place with Jesus, when it will with no one else; and it is equally marvelous, that,

"When all created things are dry,  
Christ's fullness is the same."

My dear hearers, do think of this matter. O that you might get Christ for your friend; he will never be your friend while you are self-righteous; he will never be your friend while you live in sin. But do you believe yourselves guilty? Do you desire to leave off sin? Do you want to be saved? Do you desire to be renewed? Then let me tell you, my Master loves you! Poor, weak, and helpless worms, my Master's heart is full of love to you; his eyes at this moment are looking down with pity on you. "O! Jerusalem, Jerusalem!" He now bids me tell you that he died for all of you who confess yourselves to be sinners, and feel it. He bids me say to you, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved." He tells me to proclaim salvation full and free; full, needing nothing of yours to help it; free, needing nothing of yours to buy it.

"Come, ye thirsty, come and welcome;  
God's free bounty glorify:  
True belief and true repentance,  
Every grace that brings us nigh—  
Without money,  
Come to Jesus Christ, and buy."

There is nothing I feel that I fail so much in as addressing sinners. O! I wish I could cry my heart out, and preach **my** heart out, to you and at you.

"Dear Saviour, draw reluctant hearts,  
To thee let sinners fly,  
And take the bliss thy love imparts;  
And drink, and never die."

Farewell, with this one thought—we shall never all of us meet together here again. It is a very solemn thought, but according to the course of nature and the number of deaths, if all of you were willing to come here next Sabbath morning, it is not at all likely that all of you would be alive; one out of this congregation will be sure to have gone the way of all flesh. Farewell, thou that are appointed to death; I know not where thou art—yon strong man, or yon tender maiden with the hectic flush of consumption on her cheek. I know not who is appointed to death; but I do now most solemnly take my farewell of such an one. Farewell, poor soul; and is it farewell for ever? Shall we meet in the land of the hereafter, in the home of the blessed; or do I bid you farewell now for ever? I do solemnly bid farewell to you for ever, if you live and die without Christ. But I can not bear that dreary thought; and I therefore say, poor sinner! stop and consider—consider thy ways, and now “turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?” “Why will ye *die*?” “Why will *ye* die?” “Why *will* ye die?” Ah! ye can not answer that question. May God help you to answer it in a better fashion, by saying, ‘Here, Lord!

Just as I am, without one plea,  
But that thy blood was shed for me,  
O Son of God I come to thee.”

trust my soul in thy kind hands.” The Lord bless you all for Christ’s sake! Amen.

## SERMON II.

### THE LEAFLESS TREE.

“But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and it shall be eaten as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves; so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof.”—ISAIAH, vi. 13.

Our first business to-night will be briefly to explain the metaphor employed in the text. The prophet was told that despite all the remonstrances he was instructed to deliver, and notwithstanding the eloquent earnestness of his lips, which had been just touched by a live coal from off the altar, still the people of Israel would persevere in their sins, and would therefore be certainly destroyed. He asked the question, “Lord, how long?” that is, How long will the people be thus impenitent? How long will thy sore judgment thus continue? and he was informed that God would waste and destroy the cities and their inhabitants, till the land should be utterly desolate. Then it was added, for his comfort, “Yet in it shall be a tenth.” And so it happened; for when “Nebuchadnezzar carried away all Jerusalem,” the historian gives this reservation—“none remained save the poorer sort of the people of the land.” They were left by the captain of the guard, “to be vine-dressers and husbandmen.” Thus in it there was a tenth; this small remnant of the people, however, was to be nearly destroyed too. “It shall return and shall be eaten;” the sense is, eaten up or consumed. The poor creatures left in the land, many of them fled into Egypt at the time of the conspiracy of Ishmael (not Ishmael, the son of Hagar, but an unworthy member of the royal family of Judah), and there in Egypt most of them were cut off and perished. “But,” says God, “although this tenth only shall be preserved, and then even this small part shall be subjected to many perils yet Israel



shall not be destroyed, for it shall be as a terebinth tree and as an oak ;” their “substance is in them, when they cast their leaves,” and so lose their verdure and their beauty ; thus, in like manner, a holy seed, a chosen remnant, shall still be the substance of the children of Israel, when the fruitful land is stripped of its foliage, and that fair garden of earth is barren as the desert.

The figure is taken, first of all, from the terebinth or turpentine tree—here translated the teil tree. That tree is an evergreen, with this exception, that in very severe and inclement weather it loses its leaves ; but even then the terebinth tree is not dead. And so of the oak ; it loses its leaves every year, of course, but even then it is not dead. “So,” says God, “you have seen the tree in winter, standing naked and bare, without any sign of life, its roots buried in the hard and frozen soil, and its naked branches exposed to every blast, without a bloom or a bud ; yet the substance is in the tree when the leaves are gone. It is still alive, and it shall, by and by, in due season, bud and bloom ; so,” says he, “Nebuchadnezzar shall cut off all the leaves of the tree of Israel—take away the inhabitants, only a tenth shall be left, and they shall well nigh be eaten up ; still the church of God and the Israel of God never shall be destroyed ; they shall be like the terebinth tree and the oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves ; so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof.”

I hope I have made the meaning of the passage as plain as words can make it. Now, then, for the application—first, *to the Jews* ; secondly, *to the Church* ; thirdly, *to each believer*.

#### I. First, TO THE JEWS.

What a history is the history of the Jew ! He has antiquity stamped upon his forehead. His is a lineage more noble than that of any knights or even kings of this our island, for he can trace his pedigree back to the very loins of Abraham, and through him to that patriarch who entered into the ark, and thence up to Adam himself. Our history is hidden in gloom and darkness ; but theirs, with certainty, may be read from the first moment even down till now. And what a checkered history has been the history of the Jewish nation .

Nebuchadnezzar seemed to have swept them all away with the huge broom of destruction; the tenth left was again given over to the slaughter; and one would have thought we should have heard no more of Israel; but in a little time they rose phoenix-like, from their ashes. A second temple was builded and the nation became strong once more, and though often swept with desolations in the mean time, yet it did not abide, and the scepter did not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh came. And, since then, how huge have been the waves that have rushed over the Jewish race! The Roman emperor razed the city to the ground, and left not a vestige standing; another emperor changed the name of Jerusalem into that of Eliah, and forbade a Jew to go within some miles of it, so that he might not even look upon his beloved city. It was plowed and left desolate. But is the Jew conquered? Is he a subjugated man? Is his country seized? No; he is still one of earth's nobles—distressed, insulted, spit upon; still it is written, "To the Jew first, and afterward to the Gentile." He claims a high dignity above us, and he has a history to come which will be greater and more splendid than the history of any nation that has yet existed. If we read the Scriptures aright, the Jews have a great deal to do with this world's history. They shall be gathered in; Messiah shall come, the Messiah they are looking for—the same Messiah who came once shall come again—shall come as they expected him to come the first time. They then thought he would come a prince to reign over them, and so he will when he comes again. He will come to be king of the Jews, and to reign over his people most gloriously; for when he comes, Jew and Gentile will have equal privileges, though there shall yet be some distinction afforded to that royal family from whose loins Jesus came; for he shall sit upon the throne of his father David, and unto him shall be gathered all nations. O!

"Ye chosen seed of Israel's race,  
A remnant weak and small,"

ye may indeed,

"Hail him who saves you by his grace,  
And crown him Lord of all;"

your church shall never die, and your race shall never become extinct. The Lord hath said it. "The race of Abraham shall endure for ever, and his seed as many generations."

But why is it that the Jewish race is preserved? We have our answer in the text: "The holy seed is the substance thereof." There is something within a tree mysterious, hidden, and unknown, which preserves life in it when every thing outward tends to kill it. So in the Jewish race there is a secret element which keeps it alive. We know what it is: it is the "remnant according to the election of grace:" in the worst of ages there has never been a day so black but there was a Hebrew found to hold the lamp of God. There has always been found a Jew who loved Jesus; and though the race now despise the great Redeemer, yet there are not a few of the Hebrew race who still love Jesus, the Saviour of the uncircumcised, and bow before him. It is these few, this holy seed, that are the substance of the nation; and for their sake, through their prayers, because of God's love to them, he still says of Israel to all nations, "Touch not these mine anointed, do my prophets no harm. These are the descendants of Abraham, my friend. I have sworn, and will not repent; I will show kindness unto them for their father's sake, and for the sake of the remnant I have chosen."

Let us think a little more of the Jews than we have been wont; let us pray oftener for them. "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love her." As truly as any great thing is done in this world for Christ's kingdom, the Jews will have more to do with it than any of us have dreamed. So much for the first point. The Jewish nation is like "a terebinth tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves; so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof."

II. And now, secondly, THE CHURCH OF CHRIST, whereof the Jewish people are but a dim shadow, and an emblem.

The church has had its trials; trials from without and trials within. It has had days of blood-red persecution, and of fiery trial; it has had times of sad apostacy, when an evil heart of unbelief and departing from the living God has broken out, and a root of bitterness springing up has troubled many, and

thereby they have been defiled. Yet, blessed be God, through all the winters of the church she still lived, and she gives signs now of a sweeter spring-tide, a fresher greenness and a healthier condition than she has shown before for many a day. Why is it that the church is still preserved, when she looks so dead? For this reason: that there is in the midst of her—though many are hypocrites and impostors—a “chosen seed,” who are “the substance thereof.” You might have looked back a hundred years ago upon the professing church of Christ in this land, and what a sad spectacle it would have exhibited! In the Church of England there was mere formality; in the Independent and Baptist denominations there was truth, but it was dead, cold, lifeless truth. Ministers dreamed on in their pulpits, and hearers snored in their pews; infidelity was triumphant; the house of God was neglected and desecrated. The church was like a tree that had lost its leaves: it was in a wintry state. But did it die? No; there was a holy seed within it. Six young men were expelled from Oxford for praying, reading the Bible, and talking to poor people about Christ; and these six young men, with many others whom the Lord had hidden by fifties in the eaves of the earth, secret and unknown—these young men, leaders of a glorious revival, came out, and though ridiculed and laughed at as Methodists, they brought forth a great and glorious revival, almost equaling the commencement of the gospel triumphs under Paul and the apostles, and very little inferior to the great Reformation of Luther, of Calvin, and Zwingli. And just now the church is to a great degree in a barren and lifeless state. But will she therefore die? You say that true doctrine is scarce, that zeal is rare, that there is little life and energy in the pulpit and true devotion in the pew, while formality and hypocrisy stalk over us, and we sleep in our cradles. But will the church die? No; she is like a teel tree and an oak; her substance is in her when she has lost her leaves; there is a holy seed in her still that is the substance thereof. Where these are we know not; some, I doubt not, are here in this church—some, I hope, are to be found in every church of professing Christians: and woe worth the day to the church that loses her holy seed; for she must die, like the oak blasted by the lightning, whose heart is

scorched out of it—broken down, because it has no substance in it.

Let me now draw your attention, as a church connected with this place, to this point—that the holy seed is the substance of the church. A great many of you might be compared to the bark of the tree; some of you are like the big limbs; others are like pieces of the trunk. Well, we should be very sorry to lose any of you; but we could afford to do so without any serious damage to the life of the tree. Yet there are some here—God knoweth who they are—who are the substance of the tree. By the word “substance” is meant the life, the inward principle. The inward principle is in the tree, when it has lost its leaves. Now, God discerns some men in this church, I doubt not, who are toward us like the inward principle of the oak; they are the substance of the church. I would feign hope that all the members of the church in some degree contribute to the substance; but I can not think so. I am obliged to say I doubt it; because when one hath fallen and another, it makes us remember that a church hath much in it that is not life. There be some branches on the vine that be cut off, because they do not draw sap from the heart of it, they are only branches bound on by profession, pretended graftings that have never struck root into the parent stock, and that must be cut off, and hewn down, and cast into the fire. But there is a holy seed in the church that is the substance of it.

Please to note here, that the life of a tree is not determined by the shape of the branches, nor by the way it grows, but it is the substance. The shape of a church is not its life. In one place I see a church formed in an Episcopalian shape; in another place I see one formed in a Presbyterian shape; then, again, I see one, like ours, formed on an Independent principle. Here I see one with sixteen ounces to the pound of doctrine; there I see one with eight, and some with very little clear doctrine at all. And yet I find life in all the churches, in some degree—some good men in all of them. How do I account for this? Why, just in this way—that the oak may be alive, whatever its shape, if it has got the substance. If there be but a holy seed in the church, the church will live; and it is

astounding how the church will live under a thousand errors, if there be but the vital principle in it. You will find good men among the denominations that you can not receive as being sound in faith. You say, "What! can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" and you go through, and find that there are even in them some true Nazarites of the right order. The very best of men found in the worst of churches! A church lives not because of its rubrics, and its canons, and its articles; it lives because of the holy seed that is in it as the substance. No church can die while it has a holy seed in it, and no church can live that has not the holy seed, for "the holy seed is the substance thereof."

Observe, again, that the substance of the oak is a hidden thing; you can not see it. When the oak or the terebinth is standing destitute of leaves, you know that life is there somewhere. But you can not see it. And very likely you can not and do not know the men that are the holy seed, the substance of the church. Perhaps you imagine the substance of the church lies in the pulpit. Nay, friend! Let us pray to God that such of us as are in the pulpit may be a part of that substance; but much of the substance of the church lies where you don't know any thing of it. There is a mine near Plymouth, where the men who work in it, two hundred and fifty feet below the surface, have a little shelf for their Bibles and hymn-books, and a little place where every morning, when they go down in the black darkness, they bow before God, and praise him whose tender mercies are over all his works. You never heard of these miners, perhaps, and do not know of them; but perhaps some of them are the very substance of the church. There sits Mr. Somebody in that pew; O! what a support he is to the church. Yes, in money matters, perhaps; but do you know, there is poor old Mrs. Nobody in the aisle that is most likely a greater pillar to the church than he, for she is a holier Christian, one who lives nearer to her God and serves him better, and she is "the substance thereof." Ah! that old woman in the garret who is often in prayer; that old man on his bed who spends days and nights in supplication; such people as these are the substance of the church. O! you may take away your prelates, your orators, and the

best and greatest of those who stand among earth's mighty men, and their place could be supplied; but take away our intercessors; take away the men and women that breathe out prayer by night and day, and like the priests of old offer the morning and evening lamb as a perpetual sacrifice, and you kill the church at once. What are the ministers? They are but the arms of the church, and the lips of it. A man may be both dumb and armless, and yet live. But these, the heavenly seed, the chosen men and women who live near their God, and serve him with sacred fervent piety—these are the heart of the church; we can not do without them. If we lose them we must die. "The holy seed is the substance thereof."

Then, my hearer, thou art a church member. Let me ask thee—art thou one of the holy seed? Hast thou been begotten again to a lively hope? Has God made thee holy by the sanctifying influence of his Spirit, and by the justifying righteousness of Christ, and by the application to thy conscience of the blood of Jesus? If so, then thou art the substance of the church. They may pass by thee and not notice thee, for thou art little; but the substance is little; the life-germ within the grain of barley is too small for us, perhaps, to detect; the life within the egg is almost an animalcula—you can scarcely see it; and so the life of the church is among the little ones, where we can scarcely find it out. Rejoice, if you are much in prayer; you are the life of the church. But you, O you proud man, pull down your grand thoughts of yourself; you may give to the church, you may speak for the church, and act for the church, but unless you are a holy seed you are not the substance thereof, and it is the substance which is in reality of the greatest value.

But here let me say one thing before I leave this point. Some of you will say, "How is it that good men are the means of preserving the visible church?" I answer, the holy seed doth this, because it derives its life from Christ. If the holy seed had to preserve the church by its own purity and its own strength, the church would go to ruin to-morrow; but it is because these holy ones draw fresh life from Christ continually that they are able to be, as it were, the salvation of the body, and by their influence, direct and indirect, shed life



over the whole visible church. The prayers of those living ones in Zion bring down many a blessing upon us; the groans and cries of these earnest intercessors prevail with heaven, and bring down very argosies of mercy from the gates of paradise. And besides, their holy example tends to check us and preserve us in purity; they walk among us like God's own favored ones, wrapped in white, reflecting his image wherever they go, and tending, under God, to the sanctifying of believers, not through their vaunting any self-righteousness, but by stirring up believers to do more for Christ, and to be more like him. "The holy seed shall be the substance thereof."

III. And now I come to the third point. This is true of EVERY INDIVIDUAL BELIEVER: his substance is in him when he has lost his leaves.

The Arminian says that when a Christian loses his leaves he is dead. "No," says God's Word, "he is not; he may look as if he were dead, and not have so much as here and there a leaf upon the topmost bough; but he is not dead. Their substance is in them even when they lose their leaves."

By losing their leaves allow me to understand two things. Christian men lose their leaves when they lose their comforts, when they lose the sensible enjoyment of their Master's presence, and when their full assurance is turned into doubting. You have had many such a time as that, have you not? Ah! you were one day in such a state of joy, that you said you could

"Sit and sing yourself away  
To everlasting bliss."

But a wintry state came, and your joy all departed, and you stood like a bare tree, after the wind had swept it in the time of winter, with just perhaps one sere leaf hanging by a thread on the topmost bough. But you were not dead then; no, your substance was in you, when you had lost your leaves. You could not see that substance, and good reason why, because your life was hid with Christ in God; you saw not your signs, but you had your substance still, though you could not discover it. There were no heavings of faith, but faith was there; there were no lookings out of hope, but though hope's

eyelids were shut, the eyes were there, to be opened afterwards; there was no lifting, perhaps, of the hand of ardent prayer, but the hands and arms were there, though they hung powerless by the side. God said, afterwards, "Strengthen the feeble knees, and lift up the hands that hang down." Your substance was in you when you had lost your leaves. Good Baxter says—"We do not see graces, except when they are in exercise; and yet they are as much there when they are not in exercise as when they are." Saith he, "Let a man take a walk into a wood; there lieth a hare or a rabbit asleep under the leaves; but he can not see the creature until it is frightened, and it runneth out, and then he seeth it to be there." So if faith be in exercise you will perceive your evidence, but if faith be slumbering and still, you will be led to doubt its existence; and yet it is there all the while.

"Mountains when in darkness hidden,  
Are as real as in day,"

said one; and truly the faith of the Christian, when shrouded by doubts and fears, is just as much there as when he rejoiceth devoutly in the display of it.

It is a common error of young converts that they attempt to live by their experience, instead of tracing their life up to its precious source. I have known persons rejoicing in the fullest assurance one day, and sinking into the deepest despondency the next. The Lord will sometimes strip you of the leaves of evidence to teach you to live by faith, as John Kent says—

'If to-day he deigns to bless us  
With a sense of pardoned sin;  
He to-morrow may distress us,  
Make us feel the plague within;  
All to make us  
Sick of self and fond of him.'

But, ah! there is a worse phase to the subject than this. Some Christians lose their leaves not by doubts, but by sin. This is a tender topic—one which needs a tender hand to touch. O! there are some in our churches that have lost their leaves by lust and sin. Fair professors once they were;

they stood green among the church, like the very leaves of paradise; but in an evil hour they fell, the slaves of temptation. They were God's own people by many infallible marks and signs; and if they were so, though it is grievous that they should have lost their leaves, yet there is the sweet consolation, their substance is in them still: they are still the Lord's, still his living children, though they have fallen into the coma of sin, and are now in a fainting fit, having gone astray from him, and having their animation suspended, while life is still there. Some, as soon as they see a Christian do any thing inconsistent with his profession, say, "That man is no child of God; he can not be; it is impossible." Ay, but, sir, remember what he thought who once said—"If a brother err, ye that are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." It is a fact, deny it who will, and abuse it, if you please, to your own wicked purposes; I can not help it—it is a fact that some living children of God have been allowed—and an awful allowance it is—to go into the very blackest sins. Do you think David was not a child of God, even when he sinned? It is a hard subject to touch; but it is not to be denied. He had the life of God within him before; and though he sinned—O! horrid and awful was the crime!—yet his substance was in him when he lost his leaves. And many a child of God has gone far away from his Master; but his substance is in him. And how know we this? Because a dead tree never lives again; if the substance be really gone, it never lives; and God's holy Word assures us, that if the real life of grace could die out in any one, it could never come again; for saith the apostle, "it is impossible, if they have been once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost"—if these fall away—"it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance." Their tree is "dead, plucked up by the roots." And the apostle Peter says—"For if, after they have escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust, they are again turned back, their last end shall be worse than the first." But now take David, or take Peter; which you please. Peter we will have. O! how foully did he curse his Master! With many an oath he

denied him. But had not Peter the life of God in him then? Yes; and how do we know? Because when his Master looked upon him, he "went out and wept bitterly." Ah! if he had been a dead man, hardened and without the substance in him, his Master might have looked to all eternity, and he would not have wept bitterly. How know I that David was yet alive? Why, by this—that although there was a long long winter, and there were many prickings of conscience, like the workings of the sap within a tree, abortive attempts to thrust forward here and there a shoot before its time, yet when the hour was come, and Nathan came to him and said, "Thou art the man," had David been dead, without the life of God, he would have spurned Nathan from him, and might have done what Manasseh did with Isaiah, cut him in pieces in his anger; but instead of that he bowed his head and wept before God; and still it is written, "The Lord hath put away thy sin, thou shalt not die." His substance was in him, when he lost his leaves. O! have pity upon poor fallen brethren. O! burn them not; they are not dead logs; though their leaves are gone their substance is in them. God can see grace in their hearts when you can not see it; he has put a life there that can never expire, for he has said, "I give unto my sheep *eternal* life," and that means a life that lives for ever; "the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into *everlasting* life." You may choke the well up with big stones, but the water will find its way out yet, and well up notwithstanding. And so the heir of heaven may, to the grief of the church and to the injury of himself, most grievously transgress—and weep, my eyes, O weep for any that have done so, and O bleed, my heart, and thou hast bled, for any that have so sinned—but yet their "substance is in them, when they cast their leaves: so the holy seed"—that is, Christ within them, the Holy Ghost within them, the new creature within them—"the holy seed shall be the substance thereof." Poor backslider! here is a word of comfort for you. I would not comfort you in your sins; God forbid! But if you know your sins and hate them, let me comfort you. Thou art not dead! As Jesus said of the damsel, "She is not dead, but sleepeth," so let me say of

thee, "Thou art not dead; thou shalt yet live." Dost thou repent? Dost thou grieve over thy sin? That is the bud that shows that there is life within. When a common sinner sins he repents not, or if he doth repent it is with a legal repentance. His conscience pricks him, but he hushes it. He does not leave his sin and turn from it.

But did you ever see a child of God after he had been washed from a foul sin? He was a changed man. I know such an one, who used to carry a merry countenance, and many were the jokes he made in company; but when I met him after an awful sin, there was a solemnity about his countenance that was unusual to him. He looked, I should say, something like Dante, the poet, of whom the boys said, "There is the man that has been in hell;" because he had written of hell, and looked like it—he looked so terrible. And when we spoke of sin there was such a solemnity about him; and when we spoke of going astray the tears ran down his cheeks, as much as to say, "I have been astray too." He seemed like good Christian, after he had been in Giant Despair's castle. Do you not remember, beloved, the guide who took the pilgrims up to the top of a hill called Clear, and he showed them from the top of the hill a lot of men with their eyes put out, groping among the tombs, and Christian asked what it meant. Said the guide, "These are pilgrims that were caught in Giant Despair's castle; the giant had their eyes put out, and they are left to wander among the tombs to die, and their bones are to be left in the court-yard." Whereupon John Bunyan very naïvely says, "I looked, and saw their eyes full of water, for they remembered they might have been there too." Just as the man talked and spoke that I once knew. He seemed to wonder why God had not left him to be an apostate for ever, as the lot of Judas or Demas. He seemed to think it such a startling thing that while many had gone aside altogether from God's way, he should still have had his substance in him, when he had lost his leaves, and that God should still have loved him. Perhaps, beloved, God allows some such men to live, and sin, and afterward repent, for this reason. You know there are some voices needed in music that are very rare, and when, now and then, such a voice is to

be heard, every one will go to hear it. I have thought that perhaps some of these men in heaven will sing soprano notes before the throne—choice, wondrous notes of grace, because they have gone into the depths of sin after profession; and yet he hath loved them when their feet made haste to perdition, and fetched them up, because he “loved them well.” There are but few such; for most men will go foully into sin; they will go out from us because they are not of us, for if they had been of us they would doubtless have continued with us. But there have been a few such—great saints, then great backsliding sinners, and then great saints again. Their substance was in them when they had lost their leaves. O! you that have gone far astray, sit and weep. You can not weep too much, though you should cry with Herbert—

“O, who will give me tears? Come, all ye springs,  
Dwell in my head and eyes; come, clouds and rain!  
My grief hath need of all the watery things  
That nature hath produced.”

You might well say,

“Let every vein  
Suck up a river to supply mine eyes,  
My weary, weeping eyes; too dry for me,  
Unless they get new conduits, new supplies,  
To bear them out, and with my state agree.”

But yet remember, “He hath not forsaken his people, neither hath he cut them off”; for still he says,

“Return, O wanderer, return,  
And seek an injured father’s heart.”

Return! return! return! Thy Father’s bowels still move for thee. He speaks through the written oracles at this moment, saying, “How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, O Israel? How can I make thee as Admah? How can I set thee as Zeboim?” My bowels are moved; my repentings are kindled together; for I will heal their backslidings, I will receive them graciously, I will love them freely, for they are mine still. As the terebinth and as the oak, whose substance is in them when they cast their leaves, even so the holy seed within the elect and called vessels of mercy, is still the substance thereof.

And now, what have I to say to some of you that live in black sin, and yet excuse yourselves on account of the recorded falls of God's people? Sir, know this! Inasmuch as you do this, you wrest the Scriptures to your own destruction. If one man has taken poison, and there has been a physician by his side so skillful that he has saved his life by a heavenly antidote, is that any reason why thou, who hast no physician and no antidote, should yet think that the poison will not kill thee? Why, man, the sin that does not damn a Christian, because Christ washes him in his blood, will damn you. Said Brookes—and I will repeat his words and have done—"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, said the apostle, be his sins never so many; but he that believeth not shall be damned, be his sins never so few." Truly your sins may be little; but you are lost for them without Christ. Your sins may be great; but if Christ shall pardon them, then you shall be saved. The one question, then, I have to ask of thee, is—Hast thou Christ? For if thou hast not, then thou hast not the holy seed; thou art a dead tree, and in due time thou shalt be tinder for hell. Thou art a rotten-hearted tree, all touch-wood, ready to be broken in pieces; eaten by the worms of lust; and ah! when the fire shall take hold of thee, what a blazing and a burning! O! that thou hadst life! O! that God would give it to thee! O! that thou wouldst now repent! O! that thou wouldst cast thyself on Jesus! O! that thou wouldst turn to him with full purpose of heart! For then, remember, thou wouldst be saved—saved now, and saved for ever; for "the holy seed" would be "the substance thereof."

## SERMON III.

### THE SNARE OF THE FOWLER.

“Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler.”—PSALM xci. 3

IF Moses wrote this Psalm he might represent the fowler as being in his case the king of Egypt, who sought to slay him, or the Amalekites, who pounced upon Israel in the plain, when they little expected it. If David penned it, he might have compared Saul to the fowler, for he himself says, he was hunted like a partridge upon the mountains. But we believe, if the verse be applicable to either of those cases, it was intended by the Psalmist not to have a private interpretation, but to be applicable to all time; and we believe it is spoken concerning that arch-enemy of souls, the great deceiver, Satan, of whom we just now sang,

“Satan, the fowler, who betrays  
Unguarded souls a thousand ways.”

“The prince of the power of this world, the spirit which still worketh in the children of disobedience,” is like a fowler, always attempting to destroy us. It was once said by a talented writer, that the old devil was dead, and that there was a new devil now; by which he meant to say, that the devil of old times was a rather different devil from the deceiver of these times. We believe that it is the same evil spirit; but there is a difference in his mode of attack. The devil of five hundred years ago was a black and grimy thing well portrayed in our old pictures of that evil spirit. He was a persecutor, who cast men into the furnace, and put them to death for serving Christ. The devil of this day is a well-spoken gentleman: he does not persecute—he rather attempts to persuade and to beguile. He is not now so much the



turious Romanist, so much as the insinuating unbeliever, attempting to overturn our religion, while at the same time he pretends he would make it more rational, and so more triumphant. He would only link worldliness with religion; and so he would really make religion void, under the cover of developing the great power of the gospel, and bringing out secrets which our forefathers had never discovered. Satan is always a fowler. Whatever his tactics may be, his object is still the same—to catch men in his net. Men are here compared to silly, weak birds, that have not skill enough to avoid the snare, and have not strength enough to escape from it. Satan is the fowler; he has been so and is so still; and if he does not now attack us as the roaring lion, roaring against us in persecution, he attacks us as the adder, creeping silently along the path, endeavoring to bite our heel with his poisoned fangs, and weaken the power of grace and ruin the life of godliness within us. Our text is a very comforting one to all believers, when they are beset by temptation. “Surely he shall deliver them from the snare of the fowler.”

First, *a few words concerning the snare of the fowler*; secondly, *the deliverance*; and, thirdly, *the certainty of it*; dwelling upon that word *surely*, for it seems to be the diamond wherewith this precious golden promise is embellished. “*Surely* he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler.”

I. First, then, THE SNARE OF THE FOWLER. It is an illustration too suggestive for me thoroughly to unravel. I must leave it for your meditations at home to enumerate the divers ways in which a fowler attempts to take his birds, and then you will have suggested to you the divers means which the evil spirit employs for the destruction of souls. Allow me, however, just to begin, and pass over two or three points connected with the fowler and with the evil one.

1. First, *the fowler's snare is intimately connected with secrecy*. “Surely in vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird.” Therefore the fowler carefully covers up his trap; or, if the trap itself be uncovered he doth well beguile the bird, so that it is utterly ignorant of his intention to take it in the trap, little thinking that the food laid there for its banqueting is really placed there for its enticement and destruction. The

fowler, when he goes after his birds, is very careful lest they should discover him. We hear, for instance, that in the taking of wild ducks, in Lincolnshire, a man will hold before his mouth a piece of turf, in order that the smell of his breath may not be perceived by the birds, who are exceedingly wary. The temptations of the world are of this secret sort to a Christian, though not to the wicked man, for the wicked man sins with his eyes wide open; dashing into the net knowing it is a net, laying hold of iniquity with both his hands, even when destruction stareth him in the face. He will commit a sin that he knows is condemned even by the law of the land; he will rush into a crime, concerning the guilt of which no doubt can be entertained. Not so the Christian: he is taken by secrecy. "Ah!" says one, "if I thought such-and-such a thing were really wrong; if I were perfectly convinced of its wrongfulness, I would give it up." It is just there the difficulty lies. So would the bird say: "If I thought that really were a trap, I would not enter it; if I were perfectly persuaded that net would entangle me, I would not fly to such-and-such a spot; I would not approach there at all, if I were sure it would be my destruction." How many a professor there is who asks the question, "May I go to this place? May I go to that place?" and some of us answer "No," and we are called Puritans for it; but let those who have attempted to keep their godliness intact, while they pursued the pleasures of this world, stand up and make the mournful confession, that the healthiness of the two things can never exist together. We must either serve God wholly, or serve the evil one wholly. "If God be God, serve him; if Baal be God serve him." One, or else the other. Many a man has been entrapped into sin by Satan; not knowing that it was evil! Some one has hinted to him in business, for instance—"You may very safely do such-and-such a thing; all the shopkeepers in the street have done it; it is not actually dishonest; it improves the article, it really does; and although you can thus sell an article at a dearer rate than you ought to sell it, yet you need not tell the public; and if the article is all the better for it, it is quite fair and safe that you should adulterate it." And so the good easy man, not opening both his eyes, I

think, but shutting one of them a little, lest he should see too well to be able to fill his pockets in the dark, is a little taken aside; and by-and-by he is led to discover that the act which he has done is the taking of him in the snare of the fowler, for he has been sinning against his God, and his God therefore punishes him for it with many stripes, and lays his rod upon him. I do not think that a Christian is so often betrayed into a sin that is palpable and known, as he is into a sin that is secret. If the devil comes to my door with his horns visible, I will never let him in; but if he comes with his hat on as a respectable gentleman, he is at once admitted. The metaphor may be very quaint, but it is quite true. Many a man has taken in an evil thing, because it has been varnished and glossed over, and not apparently an evil; and he has thought in his heart, there is not much harm in it; so he has let in the little thing, and it has been like the breaking forth of water—the first drop has brought after it a torrent. The beginning has been but the beginning of a fearful end. Take care, Christian, of things that are secret; take care of the common doings of the world, which are well enough for them, perhaps. We would not deny them their pleasures, for they have no others; but they are not good for you, for you have a finer life—a life of a finer texture and order than can exist in the haunts of ungodly persons. Remember, you are not to be a judge for others. Some men, especially those who are unconverted, can, without being led into sin, indulge in many gayeties and merriments; but the Christian is like the Englishman, who can not hope to survive long where the jungle fever reigns. The native can live there, but he can not. And so you who are twice-born men will find your piety ruined, by that which, to a worldly man, does not lead him into greater evil than that which he would naturally commit. You are to have a stricter rule on yourselves than others, and are to be more stern in your piety than the world would have you be; for sin is usually hidden, and the snare is not often made apparent. “Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler.”

2. In the second place, *the snare of the fowler is generally noted for its adaptation.* You do not find a fowler setting

the same snare for one bird as for another; he knows his bird and he adapts his bait to it. He would be an unwise fowler who should go to work with the same machinery to catch the lark that flies on high as the duck that swims along the stream. The fowler is wiser than that: he adapts his snare to the condition of the bird which he desires to take. Satan the fowler does just the same. There is one man here; he tempts him to drunkenness. Perhaps that would naturally be his sin, if left without grace in his heart; and Satan, knowing it to be his weak point, attempts to overcome him by surfeiting, gluttony, and drunkenness. Another man is utterly impervious to any temptation to that bestial habit; but, it may be, he is easily taken in another snare—the snare of lust; therefore Satan adapts his temptation to the hot blood of the man who naturally would be inclined to live a life of sin. Another one perhaps eschews every lascivious and sensual habit; then Satan comes to him, and adapts his temptation to the shape of pride. The man is naturally a melancholy man, full of solitude. Satan gets him, if he can, to wrap himself up in a solitary dignity, to say, “I am holy.” “Lord, I thank thee, I am not as other men are.” Or if a man is not naturally inclined to a very high degree of pride, Satan takes him with sloth. The man likes an easy life; Satan therefore adapts his bait to him by letting him sit still, fold his arms, and so perish by slothfulness: and mark this, he who sitteth still in the frost, when the snow is on the ground, in the depths of the wild regions of the frozen zone, must as surely perish by his idleness as if he drove a dagger to his heart. Satan knows that, and so adapts his bait accordingly. O! how often it happens, beloved, that you and I condemn a thing in another person which we allow in ourselves, perhaps without knowing it. We say of such a one, How proud he is! Well, our pride is not exactly of that shape; we have got another shaped pride, but the same article; labeled differently, but the same thing. Satan adapts the pride to each particular case. We are rich: he does not perhaps tempt us to the pride of riches, but he tempts us to the pride of mastership, and makes us harsh masters to our servants. Or if he does not tempt us to that pride, he perhaps enchants us with the pride of generosity,

and we are apt to boast of our kindness and of what we have given away. He will always adapt his trap to his man, and his bait to his bird. He will not tempt you all with the same temptation he would tempt me with; nor me with the temptation with which he would naturally assail another. "The snare of the fowler." A cunning enemy we have to deal with. He knows our weak points; he has been dealing with men for these last six thousand years; he knows all about them. He is possessed of a gigantic intellect; though he be a fallen spirit and he is easily able to discover where our sore places are, and there it is he immediately attacks us. If we be like Achilles, and can not be wounded anywhere but in our heel, then at the heel he will send his dart, and nowhere else. He will find out our easily besetting sin, and there, if he can, he will attempt to work our ruin and our destruction. Let us bless God that it is written, "Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler."

3. In the next place, *the fowler's snare is frequently connected with pleasure, profit, and advantage.* In the bird's case it is for the seed scattered on the ground that he flies to the snare. It is some tempting bait which allures him to his death. And usually Satan, the fowler, uses a temptation wherewith to beguile us. "O!" says one, "I can not give up such-and-such a thing, it is so pleasant. Sir, you never knew the charms of such-and-such a pursuit, otherwise you could never advise me to relinquish it." Yes, my friend, but it is just the sweetness of it to you that makes it the more dangerous. Satan never sells his poisons naked; he always gilds them before he vends them. He knows very well that men will buy them and swallow them, if he does but gild them beforehand. Take care of pleasures; mind what you are at when you are at them. Many of them are innocent and healthful, but many of them are destructive. It is said that where the most beautiful cacti grow, there the most venomous serpents are to be found at the root of every plant. And it is so with sin. Your fairest pleasures will harbor your grossest sins. Take care; take care of your pleasures. Cicopatra's asp was introduced in a basket of flowers; so are our sins often brought to us in the flowers of our pleasures.

Satan offers to the drunkard the sweetness of the intoxicating cup, which rejoices him, when his brain is rioting in frolic, and when his soul is lifted up within him. He offers to the lustful man the scenes and pleasures of carnal mirth, and merriment, and delight, and so he leadeth him astray with the bait, concealing the hook which afterwards shall pain him. He gives to you and to me, each of us, the offer of our peculiar joy; he tickleth us with pleasures, that he may lay hold upon us, and so have us in his power. I would have every Christian be especially on his guard against the very thing that is most pleasing to his human nature. I would not have him avoid every thing that pleases him, but I would have him be on his guard against it. Just like Job, when his sons had been feasting in their houses. He did not forbid them doing it, but he said, "I will offer a sacrifice, lest my sons should have sinned in their hearts, and should have cursed God foolishly." He was more careful over them at the time of their feasting than at any other season. Let us be the same. Let us remember that the snare of the fowler is generally connected with some pretended pleasure or profit, but that Satan's end is not our pleasing, but our destruction.

4. In the next place, *sometimes the fowler very wisely employs the force of example.* We all know the influence of the decoy-duck, in endeavoring to bring others into the snare. How very often Satan, the fowler, employs a decoy to lead God's people into sin! You get with a man; you think him to be a true Christian; you have some respect for his character; he is a high professor, can talk religion by the yard, and can give you any quantity of theology you like to ask for. You see him commit a sin; ten to one but you will do the same, if you have much respect for him; and so he will lead you on. And mark, Satan is very careful in the men whom he chooses to be decoys. He never employs a wicked man to be a decoy for a good man. It is very seldom, when Satan would decoy a Christian into a snare, that he makes use of an open reprobate. No; he makes use of a man who is pretendedly religious, and who looks to be of the same quality as yourself, and therefore entices you astray. Let a bad man meet me in the street, and ask me to commit sin! The devil

knows better than to set him at any such work as that, because he knows I should pass by directly. If he wants his errand well done, he sends one to me whom I call brother; and so through the brotherhood of profession I am apt to give him credence and pay him respect; and then if he goeth astray, the force of example is very powerful, and so I may easily be led into the net too. Take care of your best friends; be careful of your companions. Choose the best you can; then follow them no further than they follow Christ. Let your course be entirely independent of every one else. Say with Joshua, let others do what they will, "As for me and my house we will serve the Lord."

5. Note, once more, that *sometimes the forster, when he faileth to take his bird by deceit and craft, will go a hawking after it*—will send his hawk into the air, to bring down his prey. It often happens, when the devil can not ruin a man by getting him to commit a sin, he attempts to slander him; he sends a hawk after him, and tries to bring him down by slandering his good name. I will give you a piece of advice. I know a good minister, now in venerable old age, who was once most villainously lied against and slandered by a man who had hated him only for the truth's sake. The good man was grieved; he threatened the slanderer with a lawsuit, unless he apologized. He did apologize. The slander was printed in the papers in a public apology; and you know what was the consequence. The slander was more believed than if he had said nothing about it. And I have learned this lesson—to do with the slanderous hawk what the little birds do, *just fly up*. The hawk can not do them any hurt while they can keep above him—it is only when they come down that he can injure them. It is only when by mounting he gets above the birds, that the hawk comes sweeping down upon them, and destroys them. If any slander you, do not come down to them; let them slander on. Say, as David said concerning Shimei, "If the Lord hath given him commandment to curse, let him curse;" and if the sons of Zeruiah say, "Let us go and take this dead dog's head," you say, "Nay, let him curse;" and in that way you will live down slander. If some of us turned aside to notice every bit of a sparrow that began

chirping at us, we should have nothing to do but to answer them. If I were to fight people on every doctrine I preach, I should do nothing else but just amuse the devil, and indulge the combative principles of certain religionists who like nothing better than quarreling. By the grace of God, say what you please against me, I will never answer you, but go straight on. All shall end well, if the character be but kept clean; the more dirt that is thrown on it by slander, the more it shall glisten, and the more brightly it shall shine. Have you never felt your fingers itch sometimes to be at a man who slanders you? I have. I have sometimes thought, "I can not hold my tongue now; I must answer that fellow;" but I have asked of God grace to imitate Jesus, who, "when he was reviled reviled not again," and by his strength let them go straight on. The surest way in the world to get rid of a slander is just to let it alone and say nothing about it, for if you prosecute the rascal who utters it, or if you threaten him with an action, and he has to apologize, you will be no better off—some fools will still believe it. Let it alone—let it keep as it is; and so God will help you to fulfill by your wisdom his own promise, "Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler."

And now, ere I close this point, let me observe once more, the fowler, when he is determined to take his birds, uses all these arts at once, perhaps, and *besets the bird on every side*. So, you will remember, beloved, it is with you. Satan will not leave a stone unturned to ruin your soul for ever.

"Amidst a thousand snares I stand,  
Upheld and guarded by thy hand."

Master Quarles says,

The close pursuer's busy hands do plant  
Snares in thy substance; snares attend thy want;  
Snares in thy credit; snares in thy disgrace;  
Snares in thy high estate; snares in thy base;  
Snares tuck thy bed; and snares surround thy board;  
Snares watch thy thoughts; and snares attach thy word  
Snares in thy quiet; snares in thy commotion;  
Snares in thy diet; snares in thy devotion;  
Snares lurk in thy resolves, snares in thy doubt  
Snares lie within thy heart, and snares without;  
Snares are above thy head, and snares beneath;  
Snares in thy sickness, snares are in thy death."



There is not a place beneath which a believer walks that free from snares. Behind every tree there is the Indian with his barbed arrow; behind every bush there is the lion seeking to devour; under every piece of grass there lieth the adder. Everywhere they are. Let us be careful; let us gird ourselves with the might of God's omnipotence, and then shall his Holy Spirit keep us, so that we shall tread on the lion and the adder, the young lion and the dragon shall we trample under our feet, and we shall be "delivered from the snare of the fowler."

II. Now we pass to the second point—THE DELIVERANCE God delivers his people from the snare of the fowler. Two thoughts here: *from—out of*. First, he delivers them *from* the snare—does not let them get in it; secondly, when they do get in it, he delivers them *out of* it. The first promise is the most precious to some of us; the second is the best to others.

He shall deliver thee from the snare. How does he do that?

Very often by *trouble*. Trouble is often the means whereby God delivers us from snares. You have all heard the old story of the celebrated painter who was painting in St. Paul's, and who, looking at his work, went gradually back, inch by inch, to get a view of it, so that he might see the excellence of its proportions, until his feet were just on the edge of the platform upon which he stood; and he would have fallen down and been dashed in pieces upon the pavement beneath, but just at that moment a workman who stood there, desirous to save his life, and not knowing how to do it, hit upon an expedient which proved to be a very wise one. Instead of shouting out to his master, "Sir, you are in danger," which would most certainly have sent him backward, he took up a brush, and dipping it in a pot of paint, dashed it at the picture. The good man rushed forward in anger to chastise him; but when it was explained, he clearly saw that he had acted wisely. Just so with God. You and I have often painted a fine picture, and we have been walking backward admiring it. God knows that our backsliding will soon end in our destruction and he, by a sad providence, blasts our prospect, takes away

our child from us, buries our wife, removes some darling object of our pleasures; and we rush forward and say, "Lord, why is this?"—utterly unconscious that if it had not been for trouble we might have been dashed in pieces, and our lives would have been ended in destruction. I doubt not, many of you have been saved from ruin by your sorrows, your griefs, your troubles, your woes, your losses, and your crosses. All these have been the breaking of the net that set you free from the snare of the fowler.

At other times God keeps his people from the sin of the fowler *by giving them great spiritual strength, a spirit of great courage*; so that when they are tempted to do evil they say, with decision, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" O! that was a noble escape of Joseph, when his mistress laid hold of his garment; that was a noble escape of his, when his soul escaped like a bird out of the snare of the fowler; and I doubt not there are many here who have done deeds almost as noble as that of Joseph, who have had grace within their hearts, so that they have turned away their eyes from beholding folly, and when they have been tempted to evil they have put their foot upon it, and said, "I can not, I can not; I am a child of God; I can not and I must not;" and though the thing was pleasing to themselves yet they abjured it. You remember the case of Mr. Standfast in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. Madame Bubble had greatly enticed poor Mr. Standfast with her offers. He says, "There was one in very pleasant attire, but old, who presented herself to me, and offered me three things, to wit, her body, her purse, and her bed. Now the truth is, I was both weary and sleepy: I am also as poor as an owlet, and that perhaps the witch knew. Well, I repulsed her once and again, but she put by my repulses and smiled. Then I began to be angry; but she mattered that nothing at all. Then she made offers again, and said if I would be ruled by her, she would make me great and happy; for, said she, I am the mistress of the world, and men are made happy by me. Then I asked her her name, and she told me it was Madame Bubble. This set me farther from her; but she still followed me with enticements. Then I besook me, as you saw, to my knees, and with hands lifted up, and

eries, I prayed to him that had said he would help. So just as you came up the gentlewoman went her way. Then I continued to give thanks for this my great deliverance; for I verily believe she intended no good, but rather sought to make stop of me in my journey." Thus God delivers his people from the snares of the fowler, by giving them the spirit of prayer as well as the spirit of courage, so that they call upon God in the day of trouble, and he delivers them.

And I have noticed one more very singular thing. Sometimes I, myself, have been saved from the snare of the fowler (I can not tell you how exactly), in this way. I have felt that if the temptation had come a week before, my mind was in that peculiar condition, that I should almost inevitably have been led away by it; but when it came, the mind, by passing through some process, had become in such a condition that the temptation was no temptation at all. We were just brought to such a state, that what might have ruined us before, we would not then look at. "No," we have said, "if you had offered me this some time ago it might have been accepted; but now God has, by some mysterious influence of his Spirit, turned my heart in another direction, and it is not even a temptation to me at all—not worthy of a moment's thought." So God delivers his people from the snare of the fowler.

But the second thought was, that *God delivers his people, even when they get into the snare.* Alas! my hearer, you and I know something about the net; we have been inside it, we have; we have not only seen it spread, we have been in its folds. We know something about the cage, for we have, unfortunately, been in the cage ourselves, even since we have known the Lord. The fowler's hand has been upon our neck—it has only been the sovereign grace of God that has prevented him from utterly destroying us. What a blessed thing it is, that if the believer shall, in an evil hour, come into the net, yet God will bring him out of it! Poor Christian and Hopeful got into the fowler's net when they entered into the castle of Giant Despair; but the key of promise picked the lock, and they escaped. They were in the fowler's net, too, when Flatterer cast a net over them, and left them in the lane; but there came one who, after he had beaten them full sore, took

the net off, and then they went on their way, better men than they were before they were in the net. I know one who is in the net now. Some bird, one of God's own ones too, has been taken in the snare, and is now groaning and crying out, because, alas! alas! he has sinned. I have a person here, a good man, a professor of religion, and a truly worthy one! but alas! he has sinned, and at this hour the tears are in his eyes, and he is saying,

“The tumult of my thoughts  
Doth but increase my woe;  
My spirit languishes, my heart  
Is desolate and low.

“Turn, turn thee to my soul;  
Bring thy salvation near;  
When will thy hand release my feet  
Out of the deadly snare?”

O backslider, be cast down, but do not despair; God will restore thee yet. Wanderer though thou hast been, hear what he says! “Return, O backsliding children; I will have mercy upon you.” But you say you can not return. Then here is still a promise—“Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler.” Thou shalt yet be brought out from all the evil into which thou hast fallen, and though thou shalt never cease to repent thy ways even to thy dying day, yet he that hath loved thee will not cast thee away; he will receive thee; he will admit thee into his dwelling-place, and will even now restore thee to the number of his people, and give thee joy and gladness, that the bones which he has broken may rejoice. “Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler.”

There have been very remarkable instances of God delivering his people out of the snare of the fowler, as the following illustration will show:

“A young lady, who belonged to a church in the city of New York, married a young man who was not a Christian. He was a merchant, engaged in a lucrative business, and the golden stream of wealth flowed in upon him till he had amassed a large fortune. He accordingly retired from business, and went into the country. He purchased a splendid

residence; fine trees waved their luxuriant foliage around it; here was a lake filled with fish, and there a garden full of rare shrubbery and flowers. Their house was fashionably and expensively furnished; and they seemed to possess all of earth that mortal could desire. Thus prospered, and plied with an interchange of civilities among her gay and fashionable neighbors, the piety of the lady declined, and her heart became wedded to the world. And it is not to be wondered at, that her three children, as they grew up, imbibed her spirit and copied her example. 'A severe disease,' it is said, 'demands a severe remedy;' and that God soon applied. One morning intelligence came that her little son had fallen into the fish-*lake*, and was drowned. The mother's heart was pierced with the affliction, and she wept and murmured against the providence of God. Soon afterwards, her only daughter, a blooming girl of sixteen, was taken sick of a fever and died. It seemed then as if the mother's heart would have broken. But this new stroke of the rod of a chastening Father seemed but to increase her displeasure against his will. The only remaining child, her eldest son, who had come home from college to attend his sister's funeral, went out into the fields soon afterwards, for the purpose of hunting. In getting over a fence, he put his gun over first to assist himself in springing to the ground, when it accidentally discharged itself and killed him! What then were that mother's feelings? In the extravagance of her grief, she fell down, tore her hair, and raved like a maniac against the providence of God. The father, whose grief was already almost insupportable, when he looked upon the shocking spectacle, and heard her frenzied ravings, could endure his misery no longer. The iron entered into his soul and he fell a speedy victim to his accumulated afflictions. From the wife and mother, her husband and all her children were now taken away. Reason returned, and she was led to reflection. She saw her dreadful backslidings, her pride, her rebellion; and she wept with the tears of a deep repentance. Peace was restored to her soul. Then could she lift up her hands to heaven, exclaiming, 'I thank thee, O Father!—the Lord hath given, the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord.' Thus did her

afflictions yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness, and her Heavenly Father chasten her, 'not for his pleasure, but for her profit, that she might become partaker of his holiness.' "

So God delivered her soul out of the snare of the fowler. She started afresh in the ways of righteousness, serving God with diligence and zeal, and growing up in his fear. By trouble and trial, by some means or another, God will surely deliver his people out of the snare of the fowler, even when they are in it.

III. And now, to conclude, I am to dwell for a moment or two upon that word "SURELY." The assurance of every truth of Scripture is just the beauty of it. If it were not sure, it were not precious; and it is precious just because it is sure.

Now, it says, "surely he shall deliver thee." Why? First, because he has promised to do it; and God's promises are bonds that never yet were dishonored. If he hath said he will, he will. Secondly, because Christ Jesus hath taken an oath that he will do it. In ages long gone by Christ Jesus became the shepherd of the sheep, and the surety of them too. "If any of them perish," said he, "at my hand, thou shalt require it;" and, therefore, because Christ is responsible, because he is the heavenly sponsor for all God's people, they must be kept: for otherwise Christ's bond were forfeited, and his oath were null and void. They must be kept, again, because otherwise the union that there is between all of them and Christ would not be a real one. Christ and his church are one—one body; but if any of the members of my body were cut off, I should be maimed, and if Christ could lose one of his children he would be a maimed Christ. "We are his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all." If, then, the whole church were not gathered in, Christ would be an incomplete Christ, seeing he would want his fullness. They must all be saved, for God the Father has determined that they shall be; nay, the Son has sworn they shall be; and God the Holy Spirit vouches for it they shall be. None of God's people shall be cast away, or else the Bible is not true. The whole stability of the covenant rests on their final perseverance. The whole covenant of grace is set on this—

“ He shall present our souls,  
 Unblemished and complete,  
 Before the glory of his face,  
 With joys divinely great.”

And therefore they must be preserved out of the snare of the fowler, because otherwise the covenant would be null and void. If one should perish the oath would be broken; if one should be cast away the covenant would be void; and therefore they must be kept secure.

“ His honor is engaged to save  
 The meanest of his sheep;  
 All that his heavenly Father gave,  
 His hands securely keep.”

I have no time to enlarge upon that subject, which is big with glory, and might afford a topic for many discourses. I now close up by saying, Men and brethren, is this promise yours? “Surely he shall deliver thee.” Are you the men? “How can I tell?” you say. Do you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ? Do you, as a guilty sinner, cast yourself wholly on the blood and righteousness of the immaculate Redeemer? I do not ask you whether you are a Wesleyan, a Churchman, a Baptist, an Independent, or a Presbyterian; my only question is, Are you born again? Have you passed from death unto life? Are you “a new creature in Christ Jesus?” Is all your trust put in the Lord Jesus Christ? Has his life become your model, and does his Spirit dwell in your mortal body? If so, peace be unto you: this promise is yours. You may have been the worst of men; but if you have faith in Christ those sins are all forgiven, and you may take this promise to be yours for ever. But if you are self-righteous, self-sufficient, ungodly, careless, worldly, there is no such promise for you; you are in the snare, you shall be there, and you shall perish, unless you repent; for it is written, “Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish.” May God save you from perishing, by giving you an interest in the blood of Christ; and to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be glory for ever and ever.

## SERMON IV.

### THE FRUITLESS VINE.

“And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, What is the vine-tree more than any tree, or than a branch which is among the trees of the forest?”—EZEKIEL, XV. 1, 2.

THE Jewish nation had arrogant ideas of themselves; when they sinned against God, they supposed that on account of the superior sanctity of their forefathers, or by reason of some special sanctity in themselves, they would be delivered, sin as they pleased. In consequence of the infinite mercy of Jehovah, which he had displayed toward them, in delivering them out of so many distresses, they gradually came to imagine that they were the favorite children of Providence, and that God could by no means ever cast them away. God, therefore, in order to humble their pride, tells them that they in themselves were nothing more than any other nation; and he asks them what there was about them to recommend them? “I have often called you a vine; I have planted you, and nurtured you in a very fruitful hill, but now you bring forth no fruit; what is there in you why I should continue you in my favor? If you imagine there is any thing about you more than about any other nation, you are mightily mistaken.” “What is the vine-tree more than any tree, or than a branch which is among the trees of the forest?”

Let us remember that these things might be said without implying that God in the least degree alters his eternal purpose toward any chosen vessel of mercy; for the Israelitish nation was not chosen to eternal salvation, as a nation, but chosen to special privileges; a type and shadow of that eternal personal election which Christ has given to his church. From his own elect church God will never withdraw his love;



but from the outward and visible church he sometimes may. From his own people he never will take away his affection, but from professors, from those who merely stand in his people's external condition, and are not his children, he may, yea and he will, withdraw every token of his favor. God humbles Israel, by reminding them that they had nothing which other nations had not; that, in fact, they were a contemptible nation, not worthy to be set side by side with the cedar of Babylon, or with the oak of Samaria; they were of no use, they were worthless, unless they brought forth fruit to him. He checks their pride and humbles them, with the parable we have here before us.

Beloved, we shall, by God's help, use this parable for ourselves, and learn two lessons from it. The first shall be *a lesson of humility for saints*; and the second, *a lesson of searching for all who are professors*.

I. First, here is A LESSON OF HUMILITY for all you who have "tasted that the Lord is gracious." "What is the vine-tree more than any tree, or than a branch which is among the trees of the forest?"

In looking upon all the various trees, we observe that the vine is distinguished among them; so that, in the old parable of Jotham, the trees waited upon the vine-tree, and said unto it, "Come thou and reign over us." But merely looking at the vine, without regard to its fruitfulness, we should not see any kingship in it over other trees. In size, form, beauty, or utility, it has not the slightest advantage. We can do nothing with the wood of the vine. "Shall wood be taken thereof to do any work? or will men make a pin of it to hang any vessel thereon?" It is a useless plant apart from its fruitfulness. We sometimes see it in beauty, trained up by the side of our walls, and in the East it might be seen in all its luxuriance, and great care is bestowed in its training; but leave the vine to itself, and consider it apart from its fruitfulness, it is the most insignificant and despicable of all things that bear the name of trees. Now, beloved, this is for the numbing of God's people. They are called God's vine; but what are they by nature more than others? Others are as good as they; yea, some others are even greater and better than they. They,

by God's goodness, have become fruitful, have been planted in a good soil; the Lord hath trained them upon the walls of the sanctuary, and they bring forth fruit to his glory. But what are they without their God? What are they without the continual influence of the Spirit, begetting fruitfulness in them? Are they not the least among the sons of men, and the most to be despised of those that have been brought forth of women? Look upon this, believer.

"What was there in thee to merit esteem,  
Or give the Creator delight?"

Yea, look upon thyself as thou art now. Doth not thy conscience reproach thee? Do not thy thousand wanderings stand before thee, and tell thee that thou art unworthy to be called his son? Does not the weakness of thy mental power, the frailty of thy moral power, thy continual unbelief, and thy perpetual backsliding from God, tell thee that thou art less than the least of all saints? And if he hath made thee any thing, art thou not thereby taught that it is grace, free, sovereign grace, which hath made thee to differ? Should any here, supposing themselves to be the children of God, imagine that there is some reason in them why they should have been chosen, let them know, that as yet they are in the dark concerning the first principles of grace, and have not yet learned the gospel. If ever they had known the gospel, they would, on the other hand, confess that they were less than the least—the offscouring of all things—unworthy, ill-deserving, undeserving, and hell-deserving, and ascribe it all to distinguishing grace, which has made them to differ; and to discriminating love, which has chosen them out from the rest of the world. Great Christian, thou wouldst have been a great sinner if God had not made thee to differ. O! thou who art valiant for truth, thou wouldst have been as valiant for the devil if grace had not laid hold of thee. A seat in heaven shall one day be thine; but a chain in hell would have been thine if grace had not changed thee. Thou canst now sing his love; but a licentious song might have been on thy lips, if grace had not washed thee in the blood of Jesus. Thou art now sanctified, thou art quickened, thou art justified; but what wouldst thou

have been to-day if it had not been for the interposition of the divine hand? There is not a crime thou mightest not have committed; there is not a folly into which thou mightest not have run. Even murder itself thou mightest have committed if grace had not kept thee. Thou shalt be like the angels; but thou wouldst have been like the devil if thou hadst not been changed by grace. Therefore, never be proud; all thy garments thou hast from above; rags were thine only heritage. Be not proud, though thou hast a large estate, a wide domain of grace; thou hadst once not a single thing to call thine own, except thy sin and misery. Thou art now wrapped up in the golden righteousness of the Saviour, and accepted in the garments of the beloved; but thou wouldst have been buried under the black mountain of sin, and clothed with the filthy rags of unrighteousness, if he had not changed thee. And art thou proud? Dost thou exalt thyself? O! strange mystery, that thou, who hast borrowed every thing, should exalt thyself; that thou, who hast nothing of thine own, but hast still to draw upon grace, shouldst be proud; a poor dependent pensioner upon the bounty of thy Saviour, and yet proud; one who hath a life which can only live by fresh streams of life from Jesus, and yet proud! Go, hang thy pride upon the gallows, as high as Haman; hang it there to rot, and stand thou beneath, and execrate it to all eternity; for sure of all things most to be cursed and despised is the pride of a Christian. He, of all men, has ten thousand times more reason than any other to be humble, and walk lowly with his God, and kindly and humbly toward his fellow-creatures. Let this, then, humble thee, Christian, that the vine-tree is nothing more than any other tree, save only for the fruitfulness which God has given it.

II. But now here comes A LESSON OF SEARCH. As the vine without its fruit is useless and worthless; so, too, the professor, without fruit, is useless and worthless; yea, he is the most useless thing in the wide world.

Now, let us dwell upon this point. *A fruitless profession.* And while I am preaching on it, let the words go round to each one, and let the minister, and let his deacons, and let his hearers all try their hearts and search their reins, and see whether they have a fruitless profession.

1. First, a fruitless professor. *How do we know him? what is his character?* Secondly, *What is the reason he is fruitless?* Thirdly, *What is the estimation God holds him in?* He is good for nothing at all. And, then, fourthly, *What will be his end?* He is to be burned with fire.

First, *Where are we to find fruitless professors?* Every-where, dear friends, everywhere—down here, up there, every-where; in pulpits and in pews. False professors are to be found in every church. Let us leave other denominations alone, then. They are to be found in this church; they are to be found in this present assembly. To whatever denomination you may belong, there are some false and fruitless professors in it. How know you that you may not belong to those who bring forth no fruit? There are fruitless professors to be found in every position of the church, and in every part of society. You may find the false professor among the rich; he hath much wealth, and he is hailed with gladness by the church. God hath given him much of this world's good; and therefore, the church, forgetful that God hath chosen the poor, giveth him honor, and what doth she get from him? She getteth but little to help her. Her poor are still neglected, and her means not in the least recruited by his riches. Or if she gain a portion of his riches, yet she getteth none of his prayers; nor is she in the least supported by his holy living, for he that hath riches often liveth in sin, and rolleth in uncleanness; and, then, wareth his profession as a uniform, wherewith to cover his guilt. Rich men have sometimes been false professors; and they are to be found among poor men too. Full many a poor man has entered into the church, and been cordially received. He has been poor, and they have thought it a good thing that poverty and grace should go together—that grace should cheer his hovel, and make his poverty-stricken home a glad one. But then, this poor man hath turned aside to follies, and hath degraded himself with drunkenness, hath sworn, and by unworthy conduct dishonored his God; or, if not, he hath been idle, and sat still, and been of little service to the church; and so he hath been false and fruitless in his profession.

False professors are to be found in the men that lead the

vanguard of God's army; the men who preach eloquently, whose opinion is law, who speak like prophets, and whose language seems to be inspired. They have brought forth the fruit of popularity, ay, and the fruit of philanthropy too, but their heart has not been right with God, therefore, the fruit, good in itself, was not fruit unto holiness; the moral benefit of their labors does not extend to everlasting life. They have not brought forth the fruits of the Spirit, seeing that they were not living branches of the living vine. Then there have been false professors in obscurity; modest people, who have said nothing, and seldom been heard of; they have glided into their pews on the Sunday morning, taken their seats, gone out, and satisfied themselves that by their presence they had fulfilled a religious duty. They have been so silent, quiet, and retired. Lazy fellows, doing nothing. You may think that all the fruitless trees grow in the hedge outside of the garden. No they don't. There are some fruitless trees in the inside of it in the very center of it. There are some false professors to be found in obscurity as well as in publicity; some among the poor as well as among the rich.

And there are false professors to be found among men that doubt a great deal. They are always afraid they do not love Jesus, and always saying, "Ah, if I did but know I were his!

" 'Tis a point I long to know,  
Oft it causes anxious thought."

Yes, and it ought to cause them anxious thought, too, if they are bringing forth no fruit and giving no "diligence to make their calling and election sure." Fruitless professors are to be found, on the other hand, among the confident men, who say, without a blush, "I know whom I have believed; I know I am a Christian, let who will doubt. I am sure and certain my sins can not destroy me, and my righteousness can not save me. I may do what I like; I know I am one of the Lord's." Ah! fruitless professor again; just as fruitless as the other man, who had all doubts and no faith, and did nothing for his Master.

And then there is the fruitless professor, who, when he is asked to pray at the prayer meeting, never does so; and who

neglects family prayer. We will not say any thing about private devotion; no doubt he neglects that too: he is a fruitless one. Ah! but there may be another, who stands up and prays such an eloquent prayer for a quarter of an hour, perhaps, just as fruitless a professor as the silent one; with plenty of words, but no realities; many leaves, but no fruits; great gifts of utterance, but no gifts of consistency; able to talk well, but not to walk well; to speak piously, but not to walk humbly with his God, and serve him with gladness. I do not know your individual characters; but I know enough of you to say that your position, however honorable in the church, and your character, however fair before men, is not enough to warrant any of you in concluding at once that you are not a fruitless professor. For fruitless professors are of every character and every rank, from the highest to the lowest, from the most talented to the most illiterate, from the richest to the poorest, from the most retiring to the most conspicuous. Fruitless professors there are in every part of the church.

Now, shall I tell you who is a fruitless professor? The man who neglects private prayer, and does not walk with his God in public; that man whose carriage and conversation before God are hypocritical; who cheats in trade and robs in business, yet wraps it up, and comes out with a fair face, like the hypocrite with a widow's house sticking in his throat, and says, "Lord, I thank thee I am not as other men are!" There is a man for you, who brings forth no fruit to perfection. Another one is he who lives right morally and excellently, and depends upon his works, and hopes to be saved by his righteousness; who comes before God, and asks for pardon, with a lie in his right hand, for he has brought his own self-righteousness with him. Such a man is a fruitless professor; he has brought forth no fruit. That man, again, is a fruitless professor who talks big words about high doctrine, and likes sound truth, but he does not like sound living; his pretensions are high, but not his practice. He can bear to hear it said,

"Once in Christ, in Christ for ever."

But as for himself, he never was in Christ at all, for he neither

loves nor serves his Master, but lives in sin that grace may abound. There is another fruitless vine for you.

But why need I stop to pick you out? May the Lord find you out to-night! There are many of you here, concerning whom the curse of Meroz might be uttered. "Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof, because they came not to the help of the Lord; to the help of the Lord against the mighty." Many of you are content to eat the fat and drink the sweet, and bring forth no fruit to God; nor do you serve him—lazy Issachars, crouching down like a strong ass between two burdens; neither speaking for Christ, nor praying for Christ, nor giving to Christ, nor living to Christ; but having a name to live, while you are dead; wrapping yourselves up in a profession, while you are not living to Christ, nor consecrating your being to him. Judge ye what I say; if ye were put into the sieve this night, how many of you would come out clean in this matter? Are there not many high-flying professors here, who fly high, but who do nothing; who can talk fast, but live as slowly as you like; who, perhaps, delight in hearing the truth, but who never practice the truth in serving their God, nor living to his honor? Such as you, sirs, are the most useless and worthless of all creatures in the world! For, like the vine, you would be honorable if you were fruitful; but without fruit, as the vine is despicable, so are you good for nothing but to be cast out and burned.

2. And now I come to the second question—*Why is it that these men are fruitless, and must be cast away?* The reason is, because they have no roots. Many, many professors have no roots; fine professors they are, beautiful to look at, but they have no roots whatever. Don't you remember your childish freak, when you had a little garden of your own; when you plucked some flowers, and put them in the ground, and said that was your garden; and when you went the next day, and found that all the flowers were withered and dead? Such are many professors—pretty flowers, plucked off without roots; having no adherence to the soil, drawing no sap and no nourishment from it. And therefore it is they die, and bring forth no fruit. You come to us; and say, "I wish to join

the church." We question you as far as we are able; you solemnly tell us that your hearts are right with God. We baptize you, receive you into our number; but then there was no root in many of you, and after a while you die; when the sun has risen with a burning heat you perish; or if you maintain a tolerably fair profession, yet there is never any fruit upon you, because you did not get the root first; you got the notion first, and then thought you would get the root afterward. I do tremble for many young people in my church—I will not exclude my own church. They get an idea into their heads that they are converted: the work was not true, not genuine, not real; it was an excitement; it was a stir in the conscience for a while, and it will not last. . . . But the worst of it is, that though it does not last, they last as professors. When they have been received into the church, they say, "I am sure enough!" Preach about them as long as you please, you can not get at them. They are church members, they are baptized persons, they have passed the Rubicon; what do they want more? You can do little for them. I do tremble for these. For my most hard-hearted hearers I weep before God; but for these people I need to have four eyes to weep with. For who can make an impression upon them, when they are firmly persuaded that they are right, and have had the seal of the church that they are right, though they are deceiving themselves and others, and are still "in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity." My young friends, I do not want to check any of you in joining a church; but I do say to you, make sure work before you make a profession. I would say to as many of you as love the Lord, come forward and unite with God's people; but, I beseech you, do be sure; do "search your hearts and try your reins." Many have thought themselves converted when they were not; hundreds of thousands have had an impression, a kind of conversion, not real, which for a while endured, but afterward it passed away as summer's dream. It was but a little while ago that I had in my house a gentleman, an excellent man, and I believe a true child of God, who told me he had been brought seriously under impression, on account of sin, through hearing a sermon of late. "But," said he, "I was baptized in my childhood



When I was but young, there was a revival in our village, in New England. Mine was the hardest heart in the village; but I was found out at last. There was scarcely a girl or boy that did not join the church, and I was at last brought under deep impression. I used to weep before God, and pray to him. I went to the minister and told him I was converted, deceived him, and was baptized." And then he went on to tell me that he had dived into the blackest crimes, and gone far away, even from the profession of religion; that after going to college he had been struck off the church-roll on account of wickedness, and that up to this time he had been an infidel, and had not so much as thought of the things of the kingdom. Take heed, many of you, that you do not get a sham religion. Many jump into godliness as they would into a bath; but they are very glad to jump out of it again, when they find the world pays them better. And many there are who will just come and say they are the Lord's, and they think they are, but there is no root in them, and therefore by-and-by their impressions pass away. O we have many fruitless professors in our midst, because they do not look well to their beginnings; they did not take heed at their starting point, they did not watch well the first dawn; they thought the little farthing rushlight of their own hopes was the dawning of the Sun of righteousness; they thought the bleeding of their own conscience was a killing by the hand of God, whereas it was a deeper, and better and surer, and more entire work that they needed, than that which they received. Let us take heed, my brethren, that we do not put too much trust in our experiences, and take too much for granted while it is not yet proved in our beginnings; let us often go back and begin again; let us often go to Christ with the old cry,

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

for remember that these bad beginnings have had a great effect in making a man fruitless.

3. And again, thirdly—*What is God's estimation of fruitless professors?* I shall not ask you their own; for there are many men who are professors of religion, with whom you

might make your fortune very speedily if you could buy them at your price and sell them at their own. There are many, too, that have a very good opinion of themselves, which they have gained from the church. The minister thinks well of them; the church thinks well of them; they are respectable people; it is so nice to have them come, it helps the cause so, to see such respectable people sitting in the pews! Really, I do think he would do for a deacon! Everybody thinks well of him; everybody praises him. Now we have nothing to do with this kind of opinion to-night; our business is with God's opinion of such a man. And God's opinion of a man who makes a profession without being sincere, is this—that he is the most useless thing in the world. And now let me try to prove it. Is there any one that will prove that this man is of any use at all? I will ask the church—Here is a man that brings forth no fruit, and has only a profession. Members of the church, what is the use of this man? Will he comfort any of you in your distress? Will he hold up the pastor's hands in prayer, when he is weary? Will he lead the troops to battle? Will he be of any service to you? I see you unanimously lift up your hands, and say, "The man is of no use to us whatever, if he brings forth no fruit; if his life be not consistent with his profession; strike his name off the church-roll let him go; he is of no use." Where has he gone to? He has gone to the world. Bring the worldling up. What do you think of this man? He makes a profession of religion. Is he of any use to you? "No," they say, "we do not want such a fellow as that. The man is Jack-of-both-sides; he is sometimes a professor of religion, and sometimes a sinner in the world. We will have nothing to do with him; turn him out of our company." Where shall we sell him then? How shall we dispose of him? He seems to be of no use either to the church or the world. Is he of any use to his family? Ask his eldest son. "John, is your father any good to you?" "No, sir; none at all. He used to pray the Lord to save us with seeming earnestness, and rise from his knees to give vent to his temper. Many a violent blow has he given me without any reasonable provocation. He was always a passionate man. He used to go to chapel on Sunday and take us with him

and then we know what he used to do on Monday—he would get drunk, or swear. A deal of use he was ever to me! He made me an infidel, sir!” And his wife, “Well, what do you think of this good husband of yours? He has long made a profession of religion.” “Ah! sir, it is not for me to say a word about my husband; but he has made me a miserable woman. I think I should have joined your church long ago, if it had not been for his miserable inconsistencies. But really he has grieved my heart; he has always been a stumbling-block to me; and what to do with him I do not know.” Well, Jane, we will have you out of the kitchen. “What think you of your master; he makes a profession of religion, yet does not live a right life. What do you think of him?” “Well, I did think that Christians were a good sort of people, and that I should like to live with them; but if this be Christianity, sir, I will take five pounds a year less to live with a worldly man; that’s all I can say.” Well, what is the use of him? I suppose he does something in business. He is a grand professor. He keeps a shop; everybody thinks him a most respectable man. Has he not given a hundred pounds just now to the building of a new church? Is he not always known to subscribe liberally to ragged schools? We will ask his men. “What do you think of your master?” “What do we think of him? Why, we would think a great deal more of him if he would give us a half-crown a week more wages; for he is the worst paymaster in the parish.” “That is nothing, perhaps. But what do you think of him?” “Why, that he is an unutterable cant! Some of us did go to a place of worship, but we are honest, and we would rather stay away than go with such a miserable hypocrite.” I am describing real cases and not fictions. I need not to go further than between this and London Bridge to knock at the door and wake them up, some of them. What is the good of such professors? If they would speak fairly out, and say, “I am no Christian,” there would be some sense in it. For if Baal be God, let Baal be served; and if the world be worth serving, let a man serve it out and out; and let him get the credit of candor—not cheating the devil. But if God be God, and a man live in sin, and talk about grace, then of what use is he? God himself

will disown him. Ask him if this man has been of any use, and he replies, "No, of no use whatever." The vine is of no use unless it bring forth fruit; and this man, making a profession, is worse than worthless, because he does not live up to it. My dear friends, I would not say an extravagant thing, but I will say this very coolly—if any of you, who make a profession of religion, are deceiving others, by not living up to it, I do request you—and I say it advisedly—I do request you to give up your profession, unless God give you grace to live up to it. Do not, I beseech you, halt between two opinions; if God be God, serve him, and do it thoroughly; do not tell lies about it. If Baal be God; if he be a nice master; if you would like to serve him, and win his wages, serve him; but do not mix the two together; be one thing, or else the other. Renounce your profession, and serve the devil thoroughly, or else keep your profession, and serve God with your heart—one thing, or else the other. I solemnly exhort you to choose which you will have, but never think that you can keep both; for "no man can serve two masters." "Ye can not serve God and mammon."

4. And now let me close up by mentioning *what is to become of this fruitless tree?* We are told it is to be devoured in the fire. When an old vine is pulled off the wall, after having brought forth no fruit, what becomes of it? You know there is a lot of weeds raked up in the corner of the garden, and the gardener, without taking any notice of it, just throws the vine on the heap of weeds, and it is burned up. If it were any other kind of a tree he would at least reserve it for chopping up to make a fire within the master's house; but this is much an ignominious thing, he throws it away in the corner and burns it up with the weeds. If it were a stout old oak, it might have the funeral of the yule log, with honor in its burning, and brightness in its flame; but the fruitless vine is treated with contempt, and left to smoulder with the weeds, the refuse, and rubbish. It is a miserable thing. Just so with professors; all men that love not God must perish. But those who profess to love him, and do not, shall perish with singular ignominy. "They shall not come into the sepulchres of the kings." Something like that ancient king, of whom it was

said, "He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem." The damnation of a professor will be the most horrible and ignominious sight that ever hell itself has seen! When Satan fell from heaven, with his black Satanic malice against God, there was a kind of grandeur in his devilry; there was an awful, terrific sublimity in his damnation; and when a great blasphemer and a hard swearer shall be sent at last to perdition, there shall be something of sublimity in it, because he has been consistent with his profession. But when a professor of religion finds himself in hell, it shall be the most miserable, contemptible, and yet terrible mode of damnation wherewith men were ever damned. I think I see honest blasphemers lifting themselves from their chains of fire, and hissing between their teeth at the minister who comes there, after having been a deceiver—'Aha! aha! aha! art thou here with us? Thou didst warn us of our drunkenness, and tell us of our curse; ah! art thou come into the drunkard's hell thyself?' "Pshaw!" says another, "that is your strict Pharisee. Ah! I remember how he told me one night that I should perish, unless I made a profession of religion. Take that, sir!" and he spits upon him. "Thou art a loathsome thing. I perished; but I served my master well. Thou—thou didst pretend to serve God, and yet thou art a sneaking hypocrite!" Says another, yelling from the corner of the pit, "Let us have a Methodist hymn, sir; quote a promise from the Bible; tell us about election. Let us have a little of your fine preaching now." And round hell there goes the hiss, and the "aha! aha! aha!" and the yell of spitefulness and scorn upon the man who professed to be a Christian, but became a castaway, because his heart was not right in the matter. I confess, I should dread above all things the unutterable hell of hells of hypocritical apostates, of men that stand in the ranks, profess to love God, prate godliness, that sit in the pews and uphold Christianity, that take the sacrament, and speak about communion, that stand up to pray, and talk about being heard for their faith, who are all the while committing abominations, and under cover of their professions are cheating the poor, robbing the fatherless, and doing all kinds of iniquity. I confess, I as much dread the

excess of their damnation, above the damnation of others, as I dread to be damned at all. It is as if in hell another hell had been made, to damn those that sin above others, to damn them after being damned—for hypocrites, for men who have been with us, and not of us; who professed to be Christ's, and yet have been mean deceivers after all. O! sirs, if ye would not make your chains more heavy, if ye would not stir the fire to a more furious heat, if ye would not make your yells more hideous, quit your professions this night, if ye are not worthy of them. Go out of this place, and send in your resignation to the church; or else, sirs, be honest, and bend your knee before God, and ask him to search you, and try you, and make you sincere and upright before him. Be one thing, or else the other; do not cloak yourself in the robes of sanctity to hide the corruptions that all the while fester beneath. Stand out, bold, brave sinners; and do not be mean, sneaking sinners, that wear the masks of saints. "What is the vine more than any other tree?" Without fruit it is worse than any other. It must perish more dolefully, more horribly than any other, if there be on it no fruit brought to perfection. Does not this shake us? Ah! it will shake you, very likely, that do not want the shaking; but the men that want aousing will keep just as they were. It will go into the hearts of some of you, like the cry, "Howl, Moab, howl, Moab!" but alas! Moab will not howl. You will weep for Kirhareth, but Kirhareth will not weep for herself. You will weep for your hypocritical friends; but they will rub their eyes, and say, "A strong sermon; but it has nothing to do with me." And they will go out with cool presumption; sin with one hand, and take the sacramental cup with the other; sing the lascivious song one night, and then sing,

"Jesus, lover of my soul,"

the day after. Meet Christ here, and take the devil yonder, and bid him God speed in all his freaks of devilry. Ah! sirs, sirs, sirs, take heed, take heed, I beseech you, of this matter. Let us each search our hearts, lest we should have been deceived. And may God bring us to a right understanding in this matter, that we may be clear before him. "Search me,

O God, and know my ways ; try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked thing in me ; and lead me in the way everlasting.”

And, now, I must not send you away until I have had a word with my friend in the aisle there. He says, “I like that, I like that ; I am no professor, I am not ; I am all right. No one can call me a hypocrite.” Well, my dear friend, I am very glad you are not, because you say you are no Christian. But let me tell you, you must not expect to be a wonderful deal the better off for that. Suppose two men are brought up before the Lord Mayor, and one says, “Your worship, I am an honest man and not guilty ;” and he blushes that an imputation should be cast on his character. Well, he is proved to be guilty, and gets committed to prison for three months. Up comes the other one, and says, “Your worship, I am a guilty man ; I always was a rogue, and I always shall be ; I don’t make a profession at all.” “I think I must give you six months,” says his worship, “for really I think you must be the more determined rascal of the two.” So if any of you say, “I do not make a profession, I shall be all right,” let me tell you, that to make a lying profession is a very fearful thing ; but for you to think of getting off because you make no profession at all, is equally bad. Take heed you do not deceive yourselves ; it must be the new heart and the right spirit with God, or else, profession or no profession, we must perish. O that God would give us grace to go to our houses, and cry to him for mercy, and would help us to repent of our sins, and bring us to put our trust simply and wholly upon the Lord Jesus Christ ! So should we be saved now, and saved for ever.

## SERMON V.

### SPIRITUAL REVIVAL THE WANT OF THE CHURCH.

“O Lord, revive thy work.”—HAB., iii. 2.

ALL true religion is the work of God: it is pre-eminently so. If he should select out of his works that which he esteems most of all, he would select true religion. He regards the work of grace as being even more glorious than the works of nature; and he is, therefore, especially careful that it shall always be known, so that if any one dare to deny it, they shall do so in the teeth of repeated testimonies to the contrary, that God is indeed the author of salvation in the world and in the hearts of men, and that religion is the effect of grace, and is the work of God. I believe the Eternal might sooner forgive the sin of ascribing the creation of the heavens and of the earth to an idol, than that of ascribing the works of grace to the efforts of the flesh, or to any thing else but God. It is a sin of the greatest magnitude to suppose that there is aught in the heart which can be acceptable unto God, save that which God himself has first created there. When I deny God's work in creating the sun, I deny one truth; but when I deny that he works grace in the heart, I deny a hundred truths in one; for in the denial of that one great truth, that God is the author of good in the souls of men, I have denied all the doctrines which make up the great articles of faith, and have run in the very teeth of the whole testimony of sacred Scripture. I trust, beloved, that many of us have been taught, that if there be any thing in our souls which can carry us to heaven, it is God's work, and, moreover, that if there be aught that is good and excellent found in his church, it is entirely God's work, from first to last. We firmly believe that it is God who quickens the soul which was dead, positively “dead in tres-



passes and sins ;” that it is God who maintains the life of that soul, and God who consummates and perfects that life in the home of the blessed, in the land of the hereafter. We ascribe nothing to man, but all to God. We dare not for a moment think that the conversion of the soul is effected either by its own effort or by the efforts of others ; we conceive that there are means and agencies employed, but that the work is, both alpha and omega, wholly the Lord’s. We think, therefore, that we are right in applying the text to the work of divine grace, both in the heart and in the church at large ; and we think we can have no subject more appropriate for our consideration than the text. “ O Lord, revive thy work !”

First, beloved, trusting that the Spirit of God will help me I shall endeavor to apply the text *to our own souls personally*, and then *to the state of the church at large*, for it well needs that the Lord should revive his work in its midst.

I. First, then, to OURSELVES. We should begin at home. We too often flog the church, when the whip should be laid on our own shoulders. We drag the church, like a colossal culprit, to the altar ; we bind her, and try to execute her at once ; we bind her hands fast, and tear off thongfull after thongfull of her quivering flesh—finding fault with her where there is none, and magnifying her little errors ; while we too often forget ourselves. Let us, therefore, commence with ourselves, remembering that we are part of the church, and that our own want of revival is in some measure the cause of that want in the church at large.

Now, I directly charge the great majority of professing Christians—and I take the charge to myself also—with a need of a revival of piety in these days. I shall lay the charge before you very peremptorily, because I think I have abundant grounds to prove it. I believe that the mass of Christian men in this age need a revival, and my reasons are these :

In the first place, look at *the conduct and conversation* of too many who profess to be the children of God. It ill becomes any man who occupies the sacred place of a pulpit to flatter his hearers, and I shall not attempt to do so. The evil lies with too many of you who unite yourselves with Christian churches, and in practically protesting against your profession

It has become very common now-a-days to join a church ; go where you may you find professing Christians who sit down at some Lord's table or another ; but are there fewer cheats than there used to be ? Are there less frauds committed ? Do we find morality more extensive ? Do we find vice entirely at an end ? No, we do not. The age is as immoral as any that preceded it ; there is still as much sin, although it is more cloaked and hidden. The outside of the sepulcher may be whiter ; but within, the bones are just as rotten as before. Society is not one whit improved. Those men who, in our popular magazines, give us a true picture of the state of London life, are to be believed and credited, for they do not stretch the truth—they have no motive for so doing ; and the picture which they give of the morality of this great city is certainly appalling. It is a huge criminal, full of sin ; and I say this, that if all the profession in London were true profession, it would not be nearly such a wicked place as it is ; it could not be, by any manner of means. My brethren, it is well known—and who dares deny it that is not too partial, and who will not speak willful falsehood ?—it is well known that it is not in these days a sufficient guaranty even of a man's honesty, that he is a member of a church. It is a hard thing for Christian ministers to say, but we must say it, and if friends say it not, enemies will ; and better that the truth should be spoken in our own midst, that men may see that we are ashamed of it, than that they should hear us impudently deny what we must confess to be true ! O sirs, the lives of too many members of Christian churches give us grave cause to suspect that there is none of the life of godliness in them all ! Why that reaching after money, why that covetousness, why that following of the crafts and devices of a wicked world, why that clutching here and clutching there, that grinding of the faces of the poor, that stamping down of the workman, and such like things, if men are truly what they profess to be ? God in heaven knows that what I speak is true, and too many here know it themselves. If they be Christians, at least they want revival ; if there be life in them, it is but a spark that is covered up with heaps of ashes ; it needs to be fanned, ay, and it needs to be stirred also, that, haply, some of the ashes may be removed.

and the spark may have place to live. The church wants revival in the persons of its members. The members of Christian churches are not what once they were. It is fashionable to be religious now; persecution is taken away; and ah! I had almost said, the gates of the church were taken away with it. The church has, with few exceptions, no gates now; persons come in, and go out of it, just as they would march through St. Paul's cathedral, and make it a very place of traffic, instead of regarding it as a select and sacred spot, to be apportioned to the holy of the Lord, and to the excellent of the earth, in whom is God's delight. If this be not true, you know how to treat it; you need not confess to sin you have not committed; but if it be true, and true in your case, O! humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God; ask him to search and try you, that if you be not his child you may be helped to renounce your profession, lest it should be to you but the gaudy pageantry of death, and mere tinsel and gewgaw in which to go to hell. If you be his, ask that he may give you more grace, that you may renounce these faults and follies, and turn unto him with full purpose of heart, as the effect of a revived godliness in your soul.

Again: where the *conduct* of professing Christians is consistent, let me ask the question, Does not the *conversation* of many a professor lead us either to doubt the truthfulness of his piety, or else to pray that his piety may be revived? Have you noticed the conversation of too many who think themselves Christians? You might live with them from the first of January to the end of December, and you would never be tired of their religion for what you would hear of it. They scarcely mention the name of Jesus Christ at all. On Sabbath afternoon all the ministers are talked over, faults are found with this one and the other, and all kinds of conversation take place, which they call religious, because it is concerning religious places. But do they ever talk of what he said and did, and what he suffered for us here below? Do you often hear the salutation addressed to you by your brother Christian, "Friend, how doth thy soul prosper?" When we step into each other's houses, do we begin to talk concerning the cause and truth of God? Do you think that God would now stoop

from heaven to listen to the conversation of his church, as once he did, when it was said, "The Lord hearkened and heard, and a book of remembrance was written for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon his name?" I solemnly declare, as the result of thorough, and, I trust, impartial observation, that the conversation of Christians, while it can not be condemned on the score of morality, must almost invariably be condemned on the score of Christianity. We talk too little about our Lord and Master. That word sectarianism has crept into our midst, and we must say nothing about Christ, because we are afraid of being called sectarians. I am a sectarian, and hope to be so until I die, and to glory in it; for I can not see, now-a-days, that a man can be a Christian, thoroughly in earnest, without winning for himself the title. Why, we must not talk of this doctrine, because perhaps such a one disbelieves it; we must not notice such and such a truth in Scripture, because such and such a friend doubts or denies it; and so we drop all the great and grand topics which used to be the staple commodities of godly talk, and begin to speak of any thing else, because we feel that we can agree better on worldly things than we can on spiritual. Is not that the truth? and is it not a sad sin with some of us, that we have need to pray unto God, "O Lord, revive thy work in my soul, that my conversation may be more Christ-like, seasoned with salt, and kept by the Holy Spirit?"

And yet a third remark here. There are some whose conduct is all that we could wish, whose conversation is for the most part anetuous with the gospel, and savory of truth; but even they will confess to a third charge, which I must now sorrowfully bring against them and against myself, namely, that there is *too little real communion with Jesus Christ*. If, thanks to divine grace, we are enabled to keep our conduct tolerably consistent, and our lives unblemished, yet how much have we to cry out against ourselves, from a lack of that holy fellowship with Jesus which is the high mark of the true child of God! Brethren, let me ask some of you how long it is since you have had a love-visit from Jesus Christ—how long since you could say, "My beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the lilies?" How long is it since "he brought

you into his banqueting house, and his banner over you was love?" Perhaps some of you will be able to say, "It was but this morning that I saw him; I beheld his face with joy, and was ravished with his countenance." But I fear the greatest part of you will have to say, "Ah, sir, for months I have been without the shinings of his countenance." What have you been doing, then, and what has been your way of life? Have you been groaning every day? Have you been weeping every minute? "No!" Then you ought to have been. I can not understand how your piety can be of any very brilliant order, if you can live without the sunlight of Christ, and yet be happy. Christians will lose sometimes the society of Jesus; the connection between themselves and Christ will be at times severed, as to their own feeling of it; but they will always groan and cry when they lose their Jesus. What! is Christ thy Brother, and does he live in thine house, and yet thou hast not spoken to him for a month? I fear there is little love between thee and thy Brother, for thou hast had no conversation with him for so long. What! is Christ the Husband of his church, and has she had no fellowship with him for all this time? Brethren, let me not condemn you, let me not even judge you, but let your conscience speak. Mine shall, and so shall yours. Have we not too much forgotten Christ? Have we not lived too much without him? Have we not been contented with the world, instead of desiring Christ? Have we been, all of us, like that little ewe lamb that did drink out of the master's cup, and feed from his table? Have we not rather been content to stray upon the mountains, feeding anywhere but at home? I fear many of the troubles of our heart spring from want of communion with Jesus. Not many of us are the kind of men who, living with Jesus, his secrets must know. O! no; we live too much without the light of his countenance; and are too happy when he is gone from us. Let us, each of us, then, for I am sure we have each of us need, in some measure, put up the prayer, "O Lord, revive thy work!" Ah! methinks I hear one professor saying, "Sir, I need no revival in my heart; I am every thing I wish to be." Down on your knees, my brethren! down on your knees for him! He is the man that most

needs to be prayed for. He says that he needs no revival in his soul ; but he needs a revival of his humility, at any rate. If he supposes that he is all that he ought to be, and if he knows that he is all he wishes to be, he has very mean notions of what a Christian is, or of what a Christian should be, and very unjust ideas of himself. Those are in the best condition who, while they know they want reviving, yet feel their condition and groan under it.

Now, I think I have in some degree substantiated my charge, I fear with too strong arguments ; and now let me notice, that the text has something in it which I trust that each of us has. Here is not only an evil implied in these words—"O Lord, revive thy work ;" but there is an evil evidently felt. You see Habakkuk knew how to groan about it. "O Lord," said he, "revive thy work !" Ah ! we many of us want revival, but few of us feel that we want it. It is a blessed sign of life within, when we know how to groan over our departures from the living God. It is easy to find by hundreds those that have departed, but you must count those by ones who know how to groan over their departure. The true believer, however, when he discovers that he needs revival, will not be happy ; he will begin at once that incessant and continuous strain of cries and groans which will at last prevail with God, and bring the blessing of revival down. He will, days and nights in succession, cry, "O Lord, revive thy work !"

Let me mention some groaning times, which will always occur to the Christian who needs revival. I am sure he will always groan, *when he looks upon what the Lord did for him of old*. When he recollects the Mizars and the Hermons, and those places where the Lord appeared of old to him, saying, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love," I know he will never look back to them without tears. If he is what he should be as a Christian, or if he thinks he is not in a right condition, he will always weep when he remembers God's loving-kindness of old. O ! whenever the soul has lost fellowship with Jesus, it can not bear to think of the "chariots of Aminadab ;" it can not endure to think of "the banqueting

house," for it hath not been there so long; and when it does think of it, it says,

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

When he hears a sermon which relates the glorious experience of the believer who is in a healthy state, he will put his hand upon his heart, and say, "Ah! such was my experience once; but those happy days are gone. My sun is set; those stars which once lit up my darkness are all quenched; O! that I might again behold him; O! that I might once more see his face; O! for those sweet visits from on high; O! for the grapes of Eschol once more." And by the rivers of Babylon you will sit down and weep. You will weep, when you remember your goings up to Zion—when the Lord was precious to you, when he laid bare his heart, and was pleased also to fill your heart with the fullness of his love. Such times will be groaning times, when you remember "the years of the right hand of the Most High."

Again, to a Christian who wants revival, *ordinances* will be also groaning times. He will go up to the house of God; but he will say of himself when he comes away, "Ah! how changed! When I once went with the multitude that kept holy day every word was precious. When the song ascended my soul had wings, and up it flew to its nest among the stars; when the prayer was offered, I could devoutly say, 'Amen;' but now the preacher preaches as he did before; my brethren are as profited as once they were; but the sermon is dry to me, and dull. I find no fault with the preacher; I know the fault is in myself. The song is just the same—as sweet the melody, as pure the harmony; but ah! my heart is heavy; my harp strings are broken, and I can not sing;" and the Christian will return from those blessed means of grace, sighing and sobbing, because he knows he wants revival. More especially at the Lord's Supper he will think, when he sits at the table, "O! what seasons I once had here! In breaking the bread and drinking the wine my Master was present." He will bethink

himself how his soul was even carried to the seventh heaven, and the house was made "the very house of God and the gate of heaven." "But now," he says, "it is bread, dry bread to me; it is wine, tasteless wine, with none of the sweetness of paradise in it; I drink, but all in vain. No thoughts of Christ. My heart will not rise; my soul can not heave a thought half way to him!" And then the Christian will begin to groan again—"O Lord revive thy work!"

But I shall not detain you upon that subject. Those of you who know that you are in Christ, but feel that you are not in a desirable condition, because you do not love him enough, and have not that faith in him which you desire to have, I would just ask you this: Do you groan over it? Can you groan now? When you feel your heart is empty, is it "an aching void?" When you feel that your garments are stained, can you wash those garments with tears? When you think your Lord is gone, can you hang out the black flag of sorrow, and cry, "O my Jesus! O my Jesus! art thou gone?" If thou canst, then I bid thee do it. Do it, do it; and may God be pleased to give thee grace to continue to do it, until a happier era shall dawn in the reviving of thy soul!

And remark, in the last place, upon this point, that the soul, when it is really brought to feel its own sad estate, because of its declension and departure from God, *is never content without turning its groanings into prayer*, and without addressing the prayer to the right quarter: "O Lord, revive thy work!" Some of you, perhaps, will say, "Sir, I feel my need of revival; I intend to set to work this very afternoon, as soon as I shall retire from this place, to revive my soul." Do not say it; and, above all things, do not try to do it, for you never will do it. Make no resolutions as to what you will do; your resolutions will as certainly be broken as they are made, and your broken resolutions will but increase the number of your sins. I exhort you, instead of trying to revive yourself, to offer prayers. Say not, "I will revive myself," but cry, "O Lord, revive *thy* work!" And let me solemnly tell thee, thou hast not yet felt what it is to decline, thou dost not yet know how sad is thine estate, otherwise thou wouldest not talk of reviving thyself. If thou didst know thy own position, thou



wouldest as soon expect to see the wounded soldier on the battle-field heal himself without medicine, or convey himself to the hospital when his limbs are shot away, as thou wouldest expect to revive thyself without the help of God. I bid thee not do any thing, nor seek to do any thing, until first of all thou hast addressed Jehovah himself by mighty prayer—until thou hast cried out, “O Lord, revive thy work!” Remember, he that first made you must keep you alive; and he that has kept you alive must restore more life to you. He that has preserved you from going down to the pit, when your feet have been sliding, can alone set you again upon a rock, and establish your goings. Begin, then, by humbling yourself—giving up all hope of reviving yourself as a Christian, but beginning at once with firm prayer and earnest supplication to God: “O Lord, what I can not do, do thou! O Lord, revive thy work!”

Christian brethren, I leave these matters with you. Give them the attention they deserve. If I have erred, and in aught judged you too harshly, God shall forgive me, for I have meant it honestly. But if I have spoken truly, lay it to your hearts, and turn your houses into a “Bochim.” Weep men apart, and women apart, husbands apart, and wives apart. Weep, weep, my brethren: “It is a sad thing to depart from the living God.” Weep, and may he bring you back to Zion, that you may one day return like Israel, not with weeping, but with songs of everlasting joy!

II. And now I come to the second part of the subject, upon which I must be more brief. In THE CHURCH ITSELF, taken as a body, this prayer ought to be one incessant and solemn litany: “O Lord, revive thy work!”

In the present era there is *a sad decline of the vitality of godliness*. This age has become too much the age of form, instead of the age of life. I date the hour of life from this day one hundred years ago when the first stone was laid of this building in which we now worship God. Then was the day of life divine, and of power, sent down from on high. God had clothed Whitefield with power: he was preaching with a majesty and a might of which one could scarcely think mortal could ever be capable; not because he was any thing in him-

self, but because his Master girded him with might. After Whitefield there was a succession of great and holy men. But now, sirs, we have fallen upon the dregs of time. *Men* are the rarest things in all this world; we have not many left now. We have no men in government hardly, to conduct our politics, and scarcely any men in religion. We have the *things* that perform their duties, as they are called; we have the good, and, perhaps, the honest things, who in the regular routine go on like pack-horses with their bells, for ever in the old style; but men who dare to be singular, because to be singular is generally to be right in a wicked world, are not very many in this age. Compared with the puritanic times even, where are our divines? Could we marshal together our Howes and our Charnocks? Could we gather together such names as I could mention about fifty at a time? I trow not. Nor could we bring together such a galaxy of grace and talent as that which immediately followed Whitefield. Think of Rowland Hill, Newton, Toplady, Dodderidge, and numbers of others whom time would fail me to mention. They are gone, they are gone; their venerated dust sleeps in the earth; and where are their successors? Ask where, and echo shall reply, "Where?" There are none. Successors of them, where are they? God hath not yet raised them up, or, if he have, you have not yet found out where they are. There is preaching, and what is it? "O Lord, help thy servant to preach, and teach him by thy Spirit what to say." Then out comes the manuscript, and they read it. A pure insult to Almighty God! We have preaching, but it is of this order. It is not preaching at all. It is speaking very beautifully and very finely, possibly eloquently, in some sense of the word; but where is the right down preaching, such as Whitefield's? Have you ever read one of his sermons? You will not think him eloquent; you can not think him so. His expressions were rough, frequently very coarse and unconnected; there was very much declamation about him; it was a great part, indeed, of his speech. But where lay his eloquence? Not in the words you read, but in the tone in which he delivered them, and in the earnestness with which he felt them, and in the tears which ran down his cheeks, and in the pouring out

of his soul. The reason why he was eloquent was just what the word means. He was eloquent, because he spoke right out from his heart—from the innermost depths of the man. You could see when he spoke that he meant what he said. He did not speak as a trade, or as a mere machine, but he preached what he felt to be the truth, and what he could not help preaching. When you heard him preach, you could not help feeling that he was a man who would die if he could not preach, and with all his might call to men and say, "Come! come! come to Jesus Christ, and believe on him!" Now, that is just the lack of these times. Where, where is earnestness now? It is neither in pulpit nor yet in pew, in such a measure as we desire it; and it is a sad, sad age, when earnestness is scoffed at, and when that very zeal which ought to be the prominent characteristic of the pulpit is regarded as enthusiasm and fanaticism. I ask God to make us all such fanatics as most men laugh at—to make us all just such enthusiasts as many despise. We reckon it the greatest fanaticism in the world to go to hell, the greatest enthusiasm upon earth to love sin better than righteousness; and we think those neither fanatics nor enthusiasts who seek to obey God rather than man, and follow Christ in all his ways. We repeat, that one sad proof that the church wants revival is the absence of that death-like, solemn earnestness which was once seen in Christian pulpits.

*The absence of sound doctrine* is another proof of our want of revival. Do you know who are called Antinomians now, who are called "hypers," who are laughed at, who are rejected as being unsound in the faith? Why, the men that once were the orthodox are now the heretics. We can turn back to the records of our Puritan fathers, to the articles of the Church of England, to the preaching of Whitefield, and we can say of that preaching, it is the very thing we love; and the doctrines which were then uttered are—and we dare to say it everywhere—the very self-same doctrines that he proclaimed. But because we choose to proclaim them, we are thought singular and strange; and the reason is, because sound doctrine hath to a great degree ceased. It began in this way. First of all the truths were fully believed, but the angles were a

little taken off. The minister believed election, but he did not use the word, for fear it should in some degree disturb the equanimity of the deacon in the green pew in the corner. He believed that all men were depraved, but he did not say it positively, because if he did, there was a lady who had subscribed so much to the chapel—she would not come again; so that while he did believe it, and did say it in some sense, he sounded it a little. Afterward it came to this. Ministers said, “We believe these doctrines, but we do not think them profitable to preach to the people. They are quite true: free grace is true; the great doctrines of grace that were preached by Christ, by Paul, by Augustine, by Calvin, and down to this age by their successors, are true; but they had better be kept back—they must be very cautiously dealt with; they are very high and dreadful doctrines, and they must not be preached; we believe them, but we dare not speak them out.” After that it came to something worse. They said within themselves, “Well, if these doctrines will not do for us to preach, perhaps they are not true at all;” and going one step further, they said they dare not preach them. They did not actually say it, perhaps, but they began just to hint that they were not true; then they went one step further, giving us something which they said was the truth; and then they would cast us out of the synagogue, as if they were the rightful owners of it, and we were the intruders. So they have passed on from bad to worse; and if you read the standard divinity of this age, and the standard divinity of Whitefield’s day, you will find that the two can not by any possibility stand together. We have got a “new theology.” New theology? Why, it is any thing but a *Theology*; it is an ology which hath cast out God utterly and entirely, and enthroned man, as it is the doctrine of man, and not the doctrine of the everlasting God. We want a revival of sound doctrine once more in the midst of the land.

And the church at large, may be, wants *a revival of downright earnestness in its members*. Ye are not the men to fight the Lord’s battles yet. Ye have not the earnestness, the zeal, which once the children of God had. Your forefathers were oaken men; ye are willow men. Our people, what are they

many of them? Strong in doctrine when they are with strong doctrine men; but they waver when they get with others, and they change as often as they change their company; they are sometimes one thing, and sometimes another. They are not the men to go to the stake and die; they are not the men that know how to die daily, and so are ready for death when it comes. Look at our prayer-meetings, with here and there a bright exception. Go in. There are six women; scarcely ever enough members come to pray four times. Look at them. Prayer-meetings they are called; *spare* meetings they ought to be called, for sparely enough they are attended. And very few there are that go to our fellowship-meetings, or to any other meetings that we have to help one another in the fear of the Lord. Are they attended at all? I would like to see a newspaper printed somewhere, containing a list of all the persons that went to those meetings during the week in any of our chapels. Ah! my friends, if they should comprise all the Christians in London, you might find that a chapel or two would hold them all. There are few enough that go. We have not earnestness, we have not life, as we once had; if we had, we should be called worse names than we are; we should have viler epithets thrown at us, if we were more true to our Master; we should not have all things quite so comfortable, if we served God better. We are getting the church to be an institution of our land—an honorable institution. Ah! some think it a grand thing when the church becomes an honorable institution! Methinks it shows the church has swerved, when she begins to be very honorable in the eyes of the world. She must still be cast out, she must still be called evil, and still be despised, until that day shall come, when her Lord shall honor her because she has honored him—shall honor her, even in this world, in the day of his appearing.

Beloved, do you think it is true that the church wants reviving? Yes, or no? “No,” you say, “not to the extent that you suppose. We think the church is in a good condition. We are not among those who cry, ‘The former days were better than these.’” Perhaps you are not: you may be far wiser than we are, and therefore you are able to see those various signs of goodness which are to us so small that we are

not able to discover them. You may suppose that the church is in a good condition; if so, of course you can not sympathize with me in preaching from such a text, and urging you to use such a prayer. But there are others of you who are frequently prone to cry, "The church wants reviving." Let me bid you, instead of grumbling at your minister, instead of finding fault with the different parts of the church, to cry, "O Lord revive thy work!" "O!" says one, "if we had another minister. O! if we had another kind of worship. O! if we had a different sort of preaching." Just as if that were all! It is, "O! if the Lord would come into the hearts of the men you have got. O! if he would make the forms you do use full of power." You do not want fresh ways or fresh machinery; you want the life in what you have. There is an engine on a railway; a train has to be moved. "Bring another engine," says one, "and another, and another." The engines are brought, but the train does not move at all. Light the fire, and get the steam up, that is what you want; not fresh engines. We do not want fresh ministers, or fresh plans, or fresh ways, though many might be invented, to make the church better; we only want life in what we have got. Given, the very man who has emptied your chapel; given, the self-same person that brought your prayer-meeting low; God can make the chapel crowded to the doors yet, and give thousands of souls to that very man. It is not a new man that is wanted; it is the life of God in him. Do not be crying out for something new; it will no more succeed, of itself, than what you have. Cry, "O Lord, revive thy work!" I have noticed in different churches, that the minister has thought first of this contrivance, then of that. He tried one plan, and thought that would succeed; then he tried another; that was not it. Keep to the old plan, but get life in it. We do not want anything new; "the old is better"—let us keep to it. But we want the life in the old. "O!" men cry, "we have nothing but the shell; they are going to give us a new shell." No, sirs, we will keep the old one, but we will have the life in the shell too; we will have the old thing; but we must, or else we will throw the old away, have the life in the old. O! that God would give us life. The church wants fresh revivals

O! for the days of Cambuslang again, when Whitefield preached with power. O! for the days when in this place hundreds were converted sometimes under Whitefield's sermons. It has been known that two thousand credible cases of conversion have happened under one solitary discourse. O! for the age when eyes should be strained, and ears should be ready to receive the word of God, and when men should drink in the word of life, as it is indeed, the very water of life, which God gives to dying souls! O! for the age of deep feeling—the age of deep, thorough-going earnestness! Let us ask God for it; let us plead with him for it. Perhaps he has the man, or the men, somewhere, who will shake the world yet; perhaps even now he is about to pour forth a mighty influence upon men, which shall make the church as wonderful in this age, as it ever was in any age that has passed.

## SERMON VI.

### THE ANXIOUS INQUIRER.

“O that I knew where I might find him.”—JOB, xxiii 3.

WE will say nothing at this time concerning Job—we will leave the patriarch out of the question, and take these words as the exclamation forced from the aching heart of a sinner when he finds that he is lost on account of sin, and can only be saved by Christ. “O that I knew where I might find him”—“my Saviour—that I might be saved by his love and blood!” There are some who tell us that a man can, if he pleases, in one moment obtain peace with God and joy in the Holy Ghost. Such persons may know something of religion in their own hearts; but I think they are not competent to be judges of others. God may have given them some peace through believing, and brought them immediately into a state of joy; he may have given them some repentance for sin, and then given them quickly to rejoice in Jesus; but I believe that, in many more cases, God begins by breaking the iron heart in pieces, and often makes a delay of days, of weeks, and of months, before he heals the heart which he has wounded, and gives life to the spirit which he has killed. Many of God’s people have been, even for years, seeking peace, and finding none; they have known their sins, they have been permitted to feel their guilt, and yet, notwithstanding that they have sought earnestly with tears, they have not attained to a knowledge of their justification by faith in Christ. Such was the case with John Bunyan; for many a dreary month he walked the earth desolate, and said he knew himself to be lost without Christ; on his bended knees, with tears pouring like showers from his eyes, he sought mercy but he found none. Terrible words haunted him continually; dreadful passages



of Scripture were quoted in his ears ; and he found no consolation, until afterward God was pleased to appear to him in all the plenitude of grace, and give him to cast himself on the Saviour.

I think there may be some here who have been for some time under the hand of God—some who have been brought so far toward heaven as to know this, that they are undone unless Christ shall save them. I may be addressing some who have begun to pray ; many a time the walls of their chamber have listened to their supplication ; not once, nor twice, nor fifty times, but very often have they bent their knee in agonizing prayer : and yet up to this moment, so far as their own feelings are concerned, their prayers are unanswered, Christ has not smiled upon them, they have not received the application of his precious blood, and mayhap they are saying at this hour, “I am ready to give up all in despair ; he said he would receive all that came to him, and he has apparently rejected me.” Take heart, O mourner ! I have a sweet message to thee ; and I pray the Lord that thou mayest find Christ on the spot where thou art now standing or sitting, and rejoice in a pardon bought with blood.

I shall now proceed to consider the case of a man who is awakened, who is seeking Christ, but who at present has not, in his own apprehension, found him. First, I shall notice *some hopeful signs in this man's case* ; secondly, I shall try to give *some reasons why it is that a gracious God delays an answer to prayer in the case of penitent sinners* ; and then, thirdly, I shall close up by giving *some brief and suitable advice to those who have been seeking Christ, but have up to the present time found it a hopeless search*.

I. First, then, I notice, THERE ARE SOME VERY HOPEFUL SIGNS IN THE CASE OF THE MAN WHO HAS BEEN SEEKING CHRIST, THOUGH HE MAY NOT HAVE FOUND HIM.

And taking the text for a ground-work, we notice as one hopeful sign, *that the man has only one object, and that is Christ*. “O that I knew where I might find him !” The worldling's cry is, “Who will show us any good ; this good, that good, or any other good—fifty kinds of good : who will show us these ?” But the quickened sinner knows of only

one good. ‘O that I knew where I might find HIM!’ When the sinner is truly awakened to feel his guilt, if you could pour the gold of India at his feet, he would say, ‘Take it away: I want to find HIM.’ If you could then give him all the joys and delights of the flesh, he would tell you he had tried all these, and they but cloyed upon his appetite. His only cry is, ‘O that I knew where I might find HIM!’

“These will never satisfy;  
Give me Christ or else I die.”

It is a blessed thing for a man when he has brought his desires into a focus. When a man has fifty different desires, his heart resembles a pool of water, which is spread over a marsh, breeding miasma and pestilence; but when all his desires are brought into one channel, his heart becomes like a river of pure water, running along and fertilizing the fields. Happy is the man who hath one desire, if that one desire is set on Christ, though it may not yet have been realized. If it be his desire it is a blessed sign of the divine work within him. Such a man will never be content with mere ordinances. Other men will go up to God’s house, and when they have heard the sermon, they will be satisfied; but not so this man; he will say, ‘O that I knew where I might find HIM!’ His neighbor who hears the sermon will be satisfied; but this man will say, ‘I want more than that; I want to find Christ in it.’ Another man will go to the sacramental table; he will eat the bread and drink the wine, and that will be enough for him; he will be contented with it. But the quickened sinner will say, ‘No bread, no wine will satisfy me; I want Christ; I must have him; mere ordinances are of no use to me; I want not the Saviour’s clothes; I want himself; do not offer me these; you offer me the empty pitcher while I am dying of thirst; give me water, water, or I die. It is this I want.’ As we have it here in the text, ‘O that I knew where I might find him!’

Is this thy condition, my friend, at this moment? Hast thou but one desire, and is that after Christ? Then, as the Lord liveth, thou art not far from the kingdom of heaven. Hast thou but one wish in thy heart, and that one wish that

thou mayest be washed from all thy sins in Jesus' blood? Canst thou really say, "I would give all I have to be a Christian; I would give up every thing I have and hope for, if I might but feel that I have an interest in the person and death of Christ?" Then, poor soul, despite all thy fears, be of good cheer; the Lord loveth thee, and thou shalt come out into daylight soon, and rejoice in the liberty wherewith Christ makes men free.

There is another hopeful sign; not only that the man has only one desire, but that it is *an intense one*. Hear the text again! "O that I knew where I might find him!" There is an "O" here: there is an intensity of desire. There are some men who are mighty religious, but their religion is never more than skin deep only, it never goes into their heart; they can talk it finely, but they never feel it; it does not well up from the heart, and that is a bad spring that only comes from the lip; it is the true spring from the inmost heart of man that can send forth living water. But this character is no hypocrite: he means what he says. Other men will say, "Yes, I should like to be a Christian; I should like to be pardoned; I should like to be forgiven." And so they would; but they would like to go on in sin too. They would like to be saved; yes, but they would like to live in sin; they would like to hold with the hare and run with the hounds. They have no desire whatever to give up their sins. They would like to be pardoned for all their past transgressions, and then go on just the same as before. Their wish is of no use, because it is so superficial. But when the sinner is really quickened, there is nothing superficial in him then. It is, "O that I knew where I might find him!" coming from his very heart. Art thou in that position, my friend? Is thy sigh a real one? Is thy groan no mere fancy, but a real groan from the heart? Is that tear which steals down thy cheek a real tear, which comes from the grief of thy spirit? I think I hear you saying, "Sir, if you knew me you would not ask me that question, for my friends say I am miserable day after day, and so indeed I am. I go to my chamber there, in the lean to, at the top of the house, and often do I cry to God; ay, sir, I cry in such a style, I would not have any one hear me; I cry

with groans and tears, that I may be brought near to God, I do mean what I say." Then, beloved, thou shalt be saved; so sure as it is a real emotion of thy heart, God will not let thee perish. Never was there a sinner whose inmost heart cried to God, who was not loved of God; never was there one who desired with all his might to be saved, and whose soul groaned out that desire in hearty prayer, who was cast away. His mercy may tarry, but it *shall* come. Pray on still; he will hear thee at last, and thou shalt yet "rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

But notice again, that in the text there is *an admission of ignorance*, which is also a very hopeful sign. "O that I *knew!*" Many people think they know every thing, and consequently know nothing. I think it is Seneca who says, "Many a man would have been a wise man, if he had not thought himself so; if he had but known himself to have been a fool, he would have become wise." The doorstep to the temple of wisdom is a knowledge of our own ignorance. He can not learn aright who has not first been taught that he knows nothing. A sense of ignorance is a very excellent sign of grace. It is a singular thing, that every man thinks himself qualified to be a doctor of divinity; a man who knows nothing of any other science, thinks he must understand this perfectly; and, alas! alas! for those who think they know so much about God's things, and have never been taught of God! Man's school is not God's school. A man may go to all the colleges in creation, and know as little of theology when he comes out as when he went into them. It is a good thing for a man to feel that he is only beginning to learn, and to be willing to submit his heart to the teaching of God's Spirit, that he may be guided in every thing by him. He that knoweth every thing need not think himself a Christian; he that boasteth that he can understand all mysteries needeth to fear. But the quickened soul says, "Teach thou me." We become little children when God begins to deal with us. Before, we were big, tall men and women, and so wise; but when he begins to deal with us, he cuts us down to the stature of children, and we are put on the form of humility, to learn the true lessons of wisdom, and then we are taught the great things of God. Happy art thou.

O man, if thou knowest thyself to know nothing. If God hath emptied thee of thy carnal wisdom, he will fill thee with heavenly; if he hath taught thee thine ignorance, he will teach thee his wisdom, and bring thee to himself; and if thou art taught to reject all thy knowings and findings-out, God will certainly reveal himself to thee.

There is one more hopeful sign in my text that I must mention. It is this: that the person I have spoken of *is quite careless where it is he finds Christ, so that he does find him.* Do you know, beloved, that people when they feel their sins, are the worst people in the world to stick up for sects? Other men can fight with broad-swords against their fellow-creatures; but a poor awakened sinner says, "Lord, I will meet thee anywhere." When we are whole-hearted, and have never felt our sins, we are the most respectable religionists in the world; we venerate every nail in the church door, and every word in the Book, and think so much of it, that we would not have any one differ from us—we would cut him off at once; but when we feel our sins we say, "Lord, if I could find thee anywhere, I would be glad; if I could find thee at the Baptist meeting-house, if I could find thee in the Independent chapel, I should be glad enough to go there. I have always attended a large, handsome church; but if I could find thee in that little despised meeting-house, I should be glad to go there; though it would be degrading my rank and respectability, there would I go to find my Saviour." Others think they would rather not have Christ, if Christ goes anywhere except to their own church; they must keep to their own sect, and can by no means overstep the line. It is a marvelous thing, but I believe I only speak the experience of many, when I say that there are very few of you were brought to know the Lord where you were in the habit of attending. You have attended there perhaps since; but it was not your father's church, not the church of the place where you were born and bred, but some other church, into which you strayed for a time, and where the arrows stuck fast in the heart of the King's enemies. I know it was so with me; I never thought of going to the despised chapel where I was first brought to know the Lord, but it showed so hard that I could not go to a more re-

spectable place, so I was obliged to go to the little meeting; and when I got in, the preacher read his text—"Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." It was a blessed text, and blessedly applied: but if there had been any sticking as to going into places, I should not have been there. The awakened sinner says, "O that I knew where I might find him! Only let me know where; let the minister of it be the most despised in the world, I will go and hear him; let the sect to which he belongs be the most calumniated and slandered, there I will be found seeking him. If I can but find Christ, I will be content to find him anywhere." If divers can go into the deeps to bring up pearls, we should not be ashamed sometimes to dive deep to bring up precious jewels. Men will do any thing to get gold; they will work in the most muddy streams, or under the most scorching sun; surely, then, we ought not to mind how much we stoop, if we find that which is more precious than gold and silver, even "Jesus Christ, and him crucified." Is this also thy feeling? Then, beloved, I have not only a hope of thee, but I have a certainty of thee. If thou art brought to cry out, in all the senses I have mentioned. "O that I knew where I might find him!" then assuredly the Lord hath begun a good work in thee, and he will carry it on even unto the end.

II. But now, for the second point, I SHALL ENDEAVOR TO GIVE SOME REASONS WHY A GRACIOUS GOD DELAYS AN ANSWER TO THE PRAYERS OF PENITENT SINNERS. Methinks I hear some one saying, "How is it that God does not give a man comfort as soon as he repents? Why is it that the Lord makes some of his people wait in bondage till he gives them liberty?"

In the first place, it is *to display his own sovereignty*. Ah that is a word that is not often mentioned in pulpits. Divine sovereignty is a very unfashionable doctrine. Few people care to hear of a God who doeth as he pleaseth, and is absolute monarch over man; who knoweth of no law but his own absolute will, which is always the will to do that which is right, to do good to those whom he hath ordained unto eternal life, and to scatter mercy lavishly upon all creatures. But we do assert, that there is such a thing as divine sovereignty

and more especially in the work of salvation. God said thus "If I gave to all men peace as soon as they asked for it, they would begin to think they had a right to it. Now, I will make some of them wait, so that they may see that the mercy is absolutely in my hand, and that if I choose to withhold it altogether I might do so most justly; and I will make men see that it is a gift of my free grace, and not of their deserving." In some of our squares, where they are anxious to keep the right of way, you know they sometimes shut the gates, not because they would inconvenience us, but because they would preserve the right of way, and let the public see that although they let them through, yet they have no right of way, and might be excluded if the proprietors pleased. So with God: he says, "Man, if I save thee, it is entirely of my will and pleasure; my grace I give, not because thou deservest it, for then it were no grace at all; but I give it to the most undeserving of men, that I may keep my claim to it." And I take it that this is the best way of proving God's sovereignty, namely, his making delay between penitence and faith, or between penitence and that faith which brings peace with God and joy in the Holy Ghost. I think this is one very important reason.

But there is another. God sometimes delayeth manifesting his forgiving mercy to them, *in order that they may find out some secret sin*. There is something hidden in their hearts which they do not know of. They come to God confessing their sins, and they think they have made a clean breast of all their transgressions. "Nay," saith God, "I will not give you pardon yet, or I will not apply it to your conscience yet; there is a sin you have not yet discovered;" and he sets the heart searching itself again, till Jerusalem is searched as with candles, and lo, there is some sin dragged out from the corner in which it was hidden. Conscience says, "I never knew this sin before; I never felt it as a sin; Lord, I repent." "Ah," saith the mighty Maker, "now I have proved thee and tried thee, and found out this dross, I will speak to thee the word of consolation and comfort." Art thou, then, a mourner, seeking rest, and not finding it? I beseech thee, look into thine heart once more. Perhaps there is some hidden lust

there, some secret sin. Look within once more; turn the traitor out. Then will God come and dwell in thy soul, and give unto thee the "peace that passeth all understanding."

Another reason is, *that he may make us more useful in after life.* A man is never made thoroughly useful unless he has suffering. I do not think there is much done by a man who is not a suffering man. We must first suffer in our heads and hearts the things we preach, or we shall never preach them with effect; and if we are private Christians we can never be of use to our fellow men, unless we have passed through somewhat the same trials they have had to endure. So God makes some of his people wait a long time before he gives them the manifestation of their pardon, in order that they may comfort others in after days. "I need thee to be a consolation to others; therefore I will make thee full of grief, and drunken with wormwood, so that when thou shalt in after years meet with the mourner, thou mayest say to him, I have suffered the same and endured the same." And there are none so fit to comfort others, as those who have once needed comfort themselves. Then take heart. Perhaps the Lord designs thee for a great work. He is keeping thee low in bondage, and doubt, and fear, that he may bring thee out more clearly, and make thy light like the light of seven days, and bring forth thy righteousness "clear as the sun, fair as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners." Wait, then, for God designs good to thee, and good to others through thee, by this delay.

But it often arises not so much from God as from ourselves. It is *ignorance of the way of salvation* which keeps many a man longer in doubt than he would be, if he knew more of it. I do not hesitate to affirm, that one of the hardest things for a sinner to understand is the way of salvation. It seems the plainest thing in all the world; nothing appears more easy than, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." But when the sinner is led to feel himself a sinner, he finds it not so easy to understand as he thought. We tell a man that, with all their blackness, sinners are to be pardoned; that, with all their sins, they are to be forgiven freely for Christ's sake. "But," says the man when he feels himself to be black, "do you mean to tell me that I am to be made whiter than



snow? Do you mean to tell me that I who am lost am to be saved, not through any thing I do, or hope to do, but purely through what another did?" He can hardly believe it possible; he will have it, he must do something; he must do this, or that, or the other, to help Christ; and the hardest thing in the world is to bring a man to see that salvation is of the Lord alone, and not at all of himself; that it is God's free and perfect gift, which leaves nothing of ours to be added to it, but is given to us to cover us completely, from head to foot without any thing of our own. Men will conceive what God would not have them conceive, and they will not receive that which God would have them embrace. You know, it may be very easy to talk of certain cures, and to read of them. We may say "Such and such a medicine is very effective, and will work such and such a cure;" but when we are sick ourselves, we are often very dubious of the medicine, and if, having taken draught after draught of it, we find it does not cure us, perhaps we are brought to think, that though it may cure others, it can not cure us, because there has been such delay in the operation of it. So the poor soul thinks of the gospel, "Certainly it can not heal me;" and then he misunderstands the nature of the sacred medicine altogether, and begins to take the law instead of the gospel. Now the law never saved any yet, though it has condemned full many in its time, and will condemn us all, unless we have the gospel. If any man here should be in doubt on account of ignorance, let me, as plainly as I can, state the gospel. I believe it to be wrapt up in one word—*Substitution*. I have always considered, with Luther and Calvin, that the sum and substance of the gospel lies in that word, Substitution, Christ standing in the stead of man. If I understand the gospel, it is this: I deserve to be lost and ruined; the only reason why I should not be damned is this, that Christ was punished in my stead, and there is no need to execute a sentence twice for sin. On the other hand, I know I can not enter heaven, unless I have a perfect righteousness; I am absolutely certain I shall never have one of my own, for I find I sin every day; but then Christ had a perfect righteousness, and he said, "There, take my garment, put it on; you shall stand before God as if you were Christ, and I will

stand before God as if I had been the sinner ; I will suffer in **the** sinner's stead, and you shall be rewarded for works which you did not do, but which Christ did for you." I think the whole substance of salvation lies in the thought, that Christ stood in the place of man. The prisoner is in the dock ; he is about to be taken away for death ; he deserves to die ; he has been a mighty criminal. But before he is taken away, the judge asks whether there is any possible plan whereby that prisoner's life can be spared. Up rises one who is pure and perfect himself, and has known no sin, and by the allowance of the judge, for that is necessary, he steps into the dock, and says, " Consider me to be the prisoner ; pass the sentence on me, and let me die. Gentlemen of the court," says he, " consider the prisoner to be myself. I have fought for my country ; I have dared, and deserved well of it ; reward him as if he had done good, and punish me as if I had committed the sin." You say, " Such a thing could not occur in an earthly court of law." Ay, but it has happened in God's court of law. In the great court of King's Bench, where God is Judge of all, it has happened. The Saviour said, " The sinner deserves to die ; let me die in his stead, and let him be clothed in my righteousness." To illustrate this, I will give you two instances. One is that of an ancient king, who passed a law against a crime, and the punishment of the crime was, that any one who committed it should have both his eyes put out. His own son committed the crime. The king, as a strict judge, said, " I can not alter the law ; I have said that the loss of eyes shall be the penalty ; take out one of mine and one of his." So, you see, he strictly carried out the law ; but at the same time he was able to have mercy in part upon his son. But in the case of Christ we must go a little further. He did not say " Exact half the penalty of me, and half of the sinner ;" he said, " Put both my eyes out ; nail me to the tree ; let me die ; let me take all the guilt away, and then the sinner may go free." We have heard of another case, that of two brothers, one of whom had been a great criminal, and was about to die, when his brother, coming into court, decorated with medals, and having many wounds upon him, rose up to plead with the judge, that he would have mercy on the crimi-

nal for his sake. Then he began to strip himself and show his scars—how here and there on his big broad breast he had received saber cuts in defense of his country. “By these wounds,” he said—and he lifted up one arm, the other having been cut away—“by these my wounds, and the sufferings I have endured for my country, I beseech thee, have mercy on him.” For his brother’s sake the criminal was allowed to escape the punishment that was hanging over his head. It was even so with Christ. “The sinner,” he said, “deserves to die; then I will die in his stead. He deserves not to enter heaven, for he has not kept the law; but I have kept the law for him, he shall have my righteousness, and I will take his sin; and so the just shall die for the unjust, to bring him to God.” I have thus run away from the subject somewhat, in order to clear up any ignorance that might exist in the minds of some of my hearers, as to this essential point of the gospel plan.

III. And now I am to give SOME ADVICE TO THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN SEEKING CHRIST, AND WHO HAVE NEVER FOUND HIM, HOW THEY MAY FIND HIM.

In the first place, let me say, *Go wherever Christ goes.* The sick man knew that Christ went to Bethesda, and there he lay. If Christ were to walk this earth again, and heal the sick, all the sick people would inquire, “Where does Christ walk to-morrow?” and as soon as they found out where he would take his walks abroad, there they would be lying thick on the pavement, in the hope that as he passed by he would heal them. Go up, then, to Christ’s house: it is there he meets with his people. Read his Word: it is there he blesses them, by applying sweet promises to them. Keep to the ordinances: do not neglect them. Christ comes to Bethesda pool: lie by the water. If you can not put in your foot, be where Christ comes. You know, Thomas did not get the blessing, for he was not there when Jesus came. Be not away from the house of God; so that when he passes by he may haply look on thee, and say, “Thy sins are forgiven thee.”

And whatever you do, when Christ passes by, *cry after him with all your might*; never be satisfied until you do make him hear; and if he frown on you seemingly, for the moment

do not be stopp'd or stay'd. If you are a little stirred by a sermon, pray over it; do not lose the auspicious moment. If you hear any thing read which gives you some hope, lift up your heart in prayer at once; when the wind blows, then should the sails be set up; and it may happen that God may give you grace to cross the harbor's mouth, and you may find the haven inside, the haven of perpetual rest. There was a man, you know, who was born blind, and who wanted to have his sight. As he sat by the road-side one day, he heard that Jesus passed by, and when he heard that, he cried after him, "Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me." The people wanted to hear Christ preach, so they hush'd the poor man; but he cried again, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on me." The Son of David turned not his head; he did not look upon the man, but continued his discourse; but still the man shout-ed, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me!" And then Jesus stopp'd. The disciples ran to the poor man, and said, "Be still, trouble not the Master." But he cried so much the more, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me." And Jesus at last said, "What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?" He said, "Lord, that I may receive my sight." He received it, and "went on his way rejoicing." Now, your doubts say, "Hush! do not pray any more;" Satan says, "Be still; do not cry any more." Tell your doubts and fears, and the demon too, that you will give Christ no rest till he turns his eyes upon you in love, and heals your diseases. Cry aloud unto him, O thou awakened sinner, when he passes by.

The next piece of advice I would give you is this: *think very much of Christ*. No way that I know of will get you faith in Christ so well as thinking of him. I would advise you, conscience-stricken sinner, to spend an hour in meditation on Christ. You do not want to spend an hour in meditation on yourself; you will get very little good from that; you may know beforehand that there is no hope for you in yourself. But spend an hour in meditation on Christ. Go, beloved, to thy closet, and sit down in that chamber of yours; picture him in the garden; think you see him there, sweating "great drops of blood, falling down to the ground." Then picture him standing in Pilate's hall; think you see him with his

hands bound, his back pouring down rivers of gore; then follow him till you see him coming to the hill, Calvary; think you see him hurled backward, and nailed to the tree; then let your imagination, or rather your faith, bring before you the cross lifted up, and dashed into its socket, when every bone of Christ was put out of joint. Look at him; look at his thorn-crown, and see the beaded drops of blood trickling down his cheek.

“ See from his head, his hands, his feet,  
Sorrow and love flow mingling down.”

I know of no means, under God, so profitable for getting faith, as thoughts of Christ; for while you are looking at him you will say, “Blessed Jesus, didst thou die? Surely, my soul, his death is sufficient for thee.” He is able to save unto the uttermost all those who trust in him. You may think of a doctrine for ever, and get no good from it, if you are not already saved; but think of the person of Christ, and that will give you faith. Take him everywhere, wherever you go, and try to meditate on him in your leisure moments, and then he will reveal himself to you, and give you peace. Ah! that is the point where we feel that none of us have enough of Christ, not even the best of Christians. I went into a friend’s house one day, and he said to me, as a sort of hint, I suppose, “I have known so and so these thirty years, without hearing any thing of his religion.” Said I, “You will not know me thirty minutes without hearing something of mine.” It is a fact, that many Christian people spend their Sunday afternoons in talking about common-place subjects, and Jesus Christ is scarcely ever mentioned. As for the poor ungodly world, of course they neither say nor think any thing of him. But O, thou that knowest thyself to be a sinner, despise not the Man of sorrows! Let his bleeding hands drop on thee; look thou on his pierced side; and, looking, thou shalt live; for, remember, it is only by looking to Christ we shall live, not by doing any thing ourselves. We must venture on Christ, and venture wholly or else we never can be saved.

And this brings me to close up by saying to every awakened sinner, if you would have peace with God, and have it now, *venture on Christ*. It is hardly fair to say venture, for it is no

venture ; there is not a grain of hap-hazard in it ; it is quite safe. He that trusteth himself to Christ need never fear “But,” you will say, “how am I to trust Christ? What do you mean by trusting in Christ?” Why, I mean just what I say. Fully rely upon what Christ did, as the way of salvation. You know the negro, when he was asked how he believed, said, “Massa, dis is how I believe ; I fall flat down on de promise ; I can’t fall no lower.” He had just a right idea about believing. Believing is falling down on Christ, and looking to him to hold you up. Or, to illustrate it by an anecdote which I have often told : a boy at sea, who was very fond of climbing to the mast-head, one day climbed to the main-truck, and could not get down again. The sea was very rough, and it was seen that in a little while the boy would fall on the deck, and be dashed to pieces. His father saw but one way of saving his life. Seizing a speaking-trumpet, he cried out, “Boy, the next time the ship lurches, you fall into the sea.” The next time the ship lurches the boy looked down, and, not much liking the idea of throwing himself into the sea, still held to the mast. The father, who saw that the boy’s strength would soon fail him, took a gun in his hand, and cried out, “Boy, if you do not drop into the sea the next time the ship lurches, I’ll shoot you!” The boy knew his father meant it, and the next time the ship lurches he leaped into the sea. It seemed like certain destruction, but out went a dozen brawny arms, and he was saved. The sinner, in the midst of the storm, thinks he must cling to the mast of his good works, and so be saved. Says the gospel, “Let go your good works, and drop into the ocean of God’s love.” “No,” says the sinner, “it is a long way between me and God’s love ; I must perish if I trust to that ; I must have some other reliance.” “If you have any other reliance than that, you are lost.” Then comes the thundering law, and declares to the sinner, that unless he gives up every dependence, he will be lost. And then comes the happy moment, when the sinner says, “Dear Lord, I give up all my dependence, and cast myself on thee ; I take thee, Jesus, to be my one object in life, my only trust, the refuge of my soul.” Can any of you say that in your hearts ? I know there are some of you who can

But are there any who could not say it when they came here, but who can say it now? O, I would rejoice if one such were brought to God. I am conscious that I have not preached to you as I could desire; but if one such has been brought to believe and trust in the Saviour, it is enough; God will be glorified.

But alas! for such of you as will go away and say, "The man has talked about salvation, but what matters it to us?" Yes, go your way; you can afford to laugh to-day at God and his gospel; but, remember, men can not afford to scoff at boats when they are in a storm, although they may be on land. Death is after you, and will soon seize you; your pulse must soon cease to beat; strong as you are now, your bones are not of brass, nor your ribs of steel; you must lie on your lowly pallet, and there breathe out your last; or, if you be ever so rich, you must die on your curtained beds, and must depart from all your enjoyment into everlasting punishment. You will find it hard work to laugh at Christ then; you will find it dreadful work to scoff at religion then, in that day when death gets hold of you. I think I could almost stand by you and say, "Laugh now, scoffer." "Ah!" you would say, "I find it different from what I supposed; I can not laugh now—death is near me." Take warning, then, before death comes! take warning! He must be a poor ignorant man who does not insure his house before it is on fire; and he must be a fool of all fools, who thinks it unnecessary to seek the salvation of his soul till he comes to the last moment, and is in peril of his life. May God give you thought and consideration, so that you may be led to flee from sin, and fly to heaven; and may God the everlasting Father give you what I can not—give you his grace, which saveth the soul, and maketh sinners into saints, and landeth them in heaven. I can only close by repeating the words of the gospel—"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned." Having said this, if I had said no more, I should have preached Christ's gospel to you. The Lord give you understanding in all things, and help you to believe; for Jesus Christ's sake!

## SERMON VII.

### THE SINNER'S REFUGE.

"Then ye shall appoint you cities to be cities of refuge for you; that the slayer may flee thither, which killeth any person at unawares."--NUMBERS, XXXV. 11.

You are aware that the principle of blood revenge is a deep-seated one in the eastern mind. From the oldest ages it was always the custom with the Orientals, when a man was murdered or slain by chance-medley, for the nearest relative, his heir or any person related to him, to take revenge for him upon the person who, either intentionally or unintentionally, was the means of his death. This revenge was a very choice and special thing to the Oriental mind. The revenger of blood would hunt his victim for forty years—ay, until he died, if he was not able to reach him before—and would be at his heels all his life, that he might slay him. It was not necessary that the man-slayer should have any trial before a judge; the man was dead, and if he who killed him was not put to death, it was reckoned among some tribes to be legitimate to kill his father, or indeed any relative of his tribe; and until some relative of that tribe was put to death, as a revenge for the man who was slain, by accident or otherwise, a deadly feud existed between the two clans, which never could be quenched except by blood. Now, when God gave this law unto the Jews, he found all this deep-rooted love toward the system of the vengeance of blood by the nearest relative; and God acted wisely in this, as he has done in all things. There are two things mentioned in Scripture which I do not believe God ever approved, but which, finding they were deep-seated, he did not forbid to the Jews. One was polygamy: the practice of marrying many wives had become so established that



though God abhorred the thing himself, yet he allowed and permitted it to his people, the Jews; because he foresaw they would inevitably have broken the commandment, even if he had made a command that they should have but one wife. It was even so with this matter of blood vengeance. It was so deeply seated in the mind, that God, instead of refusing to the Jews what they regarded as the privilege of taking vengeance, passed a commandment which rendered it impossible almost that a man should be killed, unless he were really a murderer; for he appointed six cities, at convenient distances, so that when one man killed another by chance-medley and committed homicide, he might at once flee to one of these cities; and though he must live there all his life, yet the avenger of blood could never touch him, if he were innocent. He must have a fair trial; but even if he were found innocent he must stay within the city, into which the avenger of blood could not by any possibility come. If he went out of the city the avenger might kill him; he was therefore to suffer perpetual banishment, even for causing death accidentally, in order that it might be seen how much God regarded the rights of blood, and how fearful a thing it is to put a man to death in any way. And we see that this prevented the likelihood of any one being killed who was not guilty; for as soon as one man struck another to the ground by accident, by a stone, or any other means, he fled to the city of refuge. He had a start of the pursuer; and if he arrived there, he was secure and safe.

Now, I wish to use this custom of the Jews as a metaphor and type, to set forth the salvation of men through Jesus Christ our Lord. I shall give you first an explanation, and then an exhortation.

#### I. WE SHALL ATTEMPT AN EXPLANATION OF THIS TYPE.

1. Note, *The person for whom the city of refuge was provided.* It was not provided for the willful murderer; if he fled there, he must be dragged out of it, and given up to the avenger after a fair trial, and the avenger of death was to kill him, and so have blood for blood, and life for life. But in case of accident, when one man had slain another, without malice or forethought, and had only committed homicide,

then the man fleeing there was perfectly safe. Here, however, the type of Christ is not in keeping; Christ is not a city of refuge provided for men that are innocent, but a city provided for men that are guilty—not for men who have accidentally transgressed, but for men who have willfully gone astray. Our Saviour has come into the world to save, not those who have by mistake and error committed sin, but those who have fearfully transgressed against his known commandments, and have gone astray of their own free-will, their own perversity leading them to rebel against God.

2. *The avenger of blood.* In explaining this, I must, of course, take every part of the figure. The avenger of blood, I have said, was usually next of kin, but I believe any one of the family was held to be competent. If, for instance, my brother had been killed, it would have been my duty, as the first of the family, to avenge his blood, if possible, there and then; to go after the murderer, or the man who had caused death accidentally, and put him to death at once; and if I could not do that, it would be my business, and that of my father, and, indeed, of every male of the family, to hunt and pursue that man, until God should deliver him into our hand, so that we might put him to death. I mean not that it is our duty now, but it would have been under the old Jewish dispensation. It was allowed by the Jewish law, that those who were of the kith and kin of the man killed, should be the avengers of his blood. We find the type of this, then, for the sinner, in the law of God. Sinner, the law of God is the blood avenger against you; you have willfully transgressed, you have killed God's commandments, you have trampled them under foot; the law is the avenger of blood; that is after you, and it will have you; condemnation is hanging over your head now, and ere long it shall overtake you; though it reach you not in this life, yet, in the world to come, the avenger of blood, the Moses, the law shall have its vengeance upon you, and you shall be utterly destroyed.

3. But there *was a city of refuge* provided under the law; and let me tell you a few things concerning this city. You will remember there were six cities of refuge, in order that one of them might be at a convenient distance from any part

of the country. Now, there are not six Christs; there is but one; but then there is a Christ everywhere. "The word is nigh thee, in thy mouth, in thy heart; if thou wilt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart, thou shalt be saved." The city of refuge was a priestly city—a city of the Levites, and it afforded protection to the manslayer for life. He might never go out of it, till the death of the then reigning high priest; after which he might go free, without being touched by the avenger of blood at all. But during the time of his sojourn there, he was housed and fed gratuitously; every thing was provided for him, and he was kept entirely safe. And I would have you mark that he was safe in this city, not because of the bolts or bars of the city, but simply because it was of divine appointment. Do you see the man running from the avenger? The avenger is after him, fast and furious; the man has just reached the borders of the city; in a moment the avenger halts; he knows it is of no use going any further after him, not because the city walls are strong, nor because the gates are barred, nor because an army standeth without to resist, but because God hath said the man shall be safe as soon as he has crossed the border, and has come into the suburbs of the city. Divine appointment was the only thing which made the city of refuge secure. Now, beloved, Jesus Christ is the divinely appointed way of salvation; whosoever amongst us shall make haste from our sins, and fly to Christ, being convinced of our guilt, and helped by God's Spirit to pursue the road, we shall, without doubt, find security; the course of the law shall not touch us, Satan shall not harm us, vengeance shall not reach us, for the divine appointment, stronger than gates of iron or brass, shieldeth every one of us who has "fled for refuge to the hope set before us in the gospel."

This city of refuge, I must have you note, too, had round it suburbs of a very great extent. Two thousand cubits were allowed for grazing land for the cattle of the priests, and a thousand cubits within these for fields and vineyards. Now, no sooner did the man reach the outside of the city, the suburbs, than he was safe; it was not necessary for him to get within the walls but the suburbs themselves were sufficient

protection. Learn, hence, that if ye do but touch the hem of Christ's garment, ye shall be made whole; if ye do but lay hold of him with "faith as a grain of mustard seed," with faith which is scarcely a believing, but is truly a believing, you are safe.

"A little genuine grace ensures  
The death of all our sins."

Get within the borders; lay hold of the hem of Christ's garments, and thou art secure.

We have some interesting particulars, also, with regard to the distance of these cities from the habitations of men in Judea. It is said, that wherever a homicide might occur, any man might get to a city of refuge within half a day. And verily, beloved, it is no great distance to the breast of Christ; it is but a simple renunciation of our own powers, and a laying hold of Christ, to be our all in all, that is required, in order to our being found in the city of refuge. And with regard to the roads to the city, we are told that they were strictly preserved. Every river was bridged; as far as possible, the road was made level, and every obstruction removed, so that the man who fled might find an easy passage to the city. Once a year the elders of the city went along the roads to keep them in order, so that nothing might occur, through the breaking down of bridges, or the stopping up of the highway, to impede the flight of any one, and cause him to be overtaken and killed. And wherever there were by-roads and turnings, there were fixed up hand-posts, and with this word upon them "*Miklat*"—"refuge"—pointing out the way in which the man should fly, if he wished to reach the city. And there were two people always kept on the road: so that in case the avenger of blood should overtake a man, they might come in the way and entreat the avenger to stay his hand, until the man had reached the city, lest haply innocent blood should be shed without a fair trial, and so the avenger should be proved guilty of murder; for the risk, of course, was upon the head of the avenger, if he put one to death that did not deserve to die. Now, beloved, I think this is a picture of the road to Christ Jesus. It is no round-about road of the law; it is no obeying this, that, and the other; it is a straight road: "Be

lieve and live." It is a road so hard, that no self-righteous man can ever tread it; but it is a road so easy, that every sinner, who knows himself to be a sinner, might by it find his way to Christ, and his way to heaven. And lest they should be mistaken, God has set me and my brethren in the ministry, to be like hand-posts in the way, to point poor sinners to Jesus; and we desire ever to have on our lips, the cry "Refuge, refuge, refuge!" Sinner, that is the way; walk thou therein and be thou saved.

I think I have thus given the explanation. Christ is the city of refuge, who preserves all those that flee to him for mercy; he does that because he is the divinely appointed Saviour, able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by him.

## II. WE HAVE AN EXHORTATION TO GIVE.

You must allow me to picture a scene. You see that man in the field. He has been at work; he has taken an ox-goad in his hand, to use it in some part of his husbandry. Unfortunately, instead of doing what he desires to do, he strikes a companion of his to the heart, and he falls down dead! You see the poor man with horror in his face; he is a guiltless man; but, O! what misery he feels when he sees the corpse lying at his feet! A pang shoots through his heart, such as you and I have never felt—horror, dread, desolation! Yes, some of us have felt something akin to it; we will not allude to the when and the wherefore; but who can describe the horror of a man at seeing his companion fall at his feet? Words are incapable of expressing the anguish of his spirit; he looks upon him, he takes him up—he ascertains that he is really dead. What next! Do you not see him? In a moment he flies out of the field where he was at labor, and runs along the road with all his might; he has many miles before him, six long hours of hard running, and just as he passes the gate, he turns his head, and there is the man's brother! He has just come into the field, and seen his brother lying dead. O! can you conceive how the man's heart palpitates with fear? He has a little start upon the road. He just sees the other, with red face, hot and fiery, rushing out of the field, with the ox-goad in his hand, and running after him. The

way lies through the village where the man's father lives—now he rushes through the streets! He does not even stop to bid good-by to his wife, nor kiss his children! But on, on he flies for his very life. The relative calls his father, and his other friends, and they all rush after him. Now, there is a troop on the road; the man is still flying a-head—no rest for him. Though one of his pursuers rests, the others still track him. There is a horse in the village; they take it, and pursue him. If they can find any animal that can assist their swiftness, they will take it. Can you not conceive him crying, "O, that I had wings that I might fly?" See how he spurns the earth beneath his feet! What to him the green fields on either hand; what the brooks; he stops not even so much as to wet his mouth. The sun is scorching him; but it is still on, on, on! He casts aside one garment after another; still he rushes on, and the pursuers are behind him. He feels like the poor stag pursued by the hounds; he knows they are eager for his blood, and that if they do but once overtake him it will be a word, a blow—dead! See how he speeds his way! Now, do you see him? A city is rising into sight; he can see the towers of the city of refuge; his weary feet almost refuse to carry him further; the veins are standing out on his brow, like whipcords; the blood spurts from his nostrils; he is straining to the utmost, as he rushes on, and faster he would go if he were master of more strength. The pursuers are after him—they have almost reached him; but see, and rejoice! He has just got to the outskirts of the city; there is the line of demarcation; he leaps it, and falls senseless to the ground; and there is joy in his heart. The pursuers come and look at him; but they dare not slay him. The knife is in their hand, and the stones too, to stone him or draw his blood; but they dare not touch him. He is safe, he is secure; his running has been just fast enough; he has just managed to leap into the kingdom of life, and avoid death.

Sinner, that picture I have given thee is a picture of thyself, in all but the man's guiltlessness, for thou art a guilty man. O! if thou didst but know that the avenger of blood is after thee! O! that God would give thee grace that thou couldst have a sense of thy danger to-night! thou wouldst

Not then stop a solitary instant without flying to Christ. Thou wouldst say, even while sitting in thy pew, "Let me away, away, away, where mercy is to be found," and thou wouldst give neither sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eyelids, till thou hadst in Christ found a refuge for thy spirit. I am come, then, to exhort thee to-night. Let me pick out one of you to be a case for all the rest; there is a young man here who is guilty; the proofs of his guilt lie at his feet to-night. He knows himself to be a great transgressor; he has foully offended against God's law. Young man, young man, certainly, as you are guilty, the avenger of blood is after you! O! he is a horrid thing, that avenger—God's fiery law; did you ever see it? It speaketh words of flame; it hath eyes like lamps of fire. If you could once see the law of God, and mark the dread keenness of its horrible sword, you might, as you sat in your pew, quiver to death itself in horror at your doom. Sinner, bethink thee, if this avenger get hold of thee, it will not be temporal death merely; it will be death eternally. Sinner, remember, if the law doth get its hand on thee, thou art damned; and dost thou know what damnation means? Say, canst thou tell what are the billows of eternal wrath, and what the worm that never dies; what the lake of fire, what the pit that is bottomless? No, thou canst not know how dreadful these things are. Surely, if thou couldst, man, thou wouldst be up on thy feet, and off for life, eternal life. Thou wouldst be like that man in Bunyan's "Progress," who put his fingers in his ears, and ran away; and when his neighbors ran after him, he cried, "Eternal life, eternal life!" O, stolid stupidity—O, sottish ignorance—O, worse than brutal ignorance, that makes men sit down in their sins, and rest content. The drunkard quaffeth still his bowl; he knoweth not that in its dregs there lieth wrath. The swearer still indulgeth in his blasphemy; he knoweth not that one day his oaths shall return upon his own head. You will go your way, and eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and live merrily and happily; but, ah! poor souls, if ye knew that the avenger of blood was after you, you would not act so foolishly! Would you suppose that the man, after he had killed his neighbor, and when he saw the avenger coming, would coolly take his seat, and

wait, when there was a city of refuge provided? No; such folly was reserved for such as you are; God has left that folly to be the topstone of the folly of the human race, to be the most glittering jewel in the crown of free will, to be consummate folly—the dress wherein free will doth robe itself. O! you will not fly to Christ, you will stop where you are, you will rest contented, and one day the law will seize you, and then wrath, eternal wrath, will lay hold upon you! How foolish is the man who wastes his time, and carelessly loiters, when the city of refuge is before him, and when the avenger of blood is after him!

Suppose, now, I take another case. I have a young man here who says, “Why, sir, it is no use in trying to be saved; I shall not think of prayer, or faith, or any thing of that sort because there is no city of refuge for me.” Why, suppose that poor man who had killed his neighbor had said that; suppose he had sat still, and folded his arms, and said, “There is no city of refuge for me.” You do not mean what you say. If you thought there was no city of refuge for you, I know what you would do; you would shriek, and cry, and groan. There is a kind of despair that some people have, which is a sham despair. I have met with many who say, “I do not believe I ever could be saved,” and they seem not to care whether they are saved or not. Why, man, how foolish would he be, who would sit still, because he fancied there was no entrance for him into the city, and let the avenger slay him! But your folly is just as great and worse, if you sit still, and say, “He will never have mercy on me.” He is as much a suicide who refuses the medicine, because he thinks it will not cure him, as the man who takes the dirk, and stabs himself to the heart. You have no right, sir, to let your despair triumph over the promise of God. He hath said it, and he means it: “Whosoever calleth on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” If he has shown you your guilt, depend upon it, there is a city of refuge for you; haste thee to it; haste thee to it; may God help you to betake yourselves to it now! Ay, if men knew how dreadful is the wrath to come, and how terrible is judgment, how swiftly would they fly! There is not a hearer of mine here that would delay an hour to fly to Christ, if he did



but know how fearful is his condition out of Christ. When God the Spirit once convinces us of our sin, there is no halting then; the Spirit says, "To-day, if you will hear his voice," and we say, "To-day, Lord, to-day, hear our voice!" There is no halting then; there is no pausing then; it is on, on, on, for our very life; and I beseech you, men, brethren, you, who have sinned against God, and know it; you that want to be delivered from the wrath to come, I beseech you, by him that liveth and was dead, flee to Christ; but take this exhortation, take heed it is Christ you flee to; for if the man who had slain his neighbor, had fled to another city, it would have been of no avail; had he fled to a city that was not an ordained city of refuge, he might have sped on with all the impetuosity of desire, and yet have been slain within the city gates. So, ye self-righteous ones, ye may fly on to your good works, ye may practice your baptism, and your confirmation, and your church going, and your chapel going; ye may be all that is good and excellent, but ye are flying to the wrong city, and the avenger of blood will find you, after all. Poor soul! remember Christ Jesus is the only refuge for a guilty sinner: his blood, his wounds, his agonies, his sufferings, his death, these, then, are the gates and walls of the city of salvation. But if we trust not in these, without a doubt, trust where we may, our hope shall be as a broken reed, and we shall perish after all.

I may have one here who is just awakened, just led to see his sin, as if it were a murdered corpse beneath his feet; it seems to me that God has sent me to that one man in particular. Man, God has shown you your guilt; he sent me to-night to tell you that there is a refuge for you; though you are guilty, he is good; though you have revolted and rebelled, he will have mercy on those that repent, and trust in the merits of his Son. And now he has bidden me say to you, "Fly, fly, fly!" In God's name, I say to you, fly to Christ. He has bidden me warn you to-night against delays; he has bidden me remind you that death surprises men when least they expect it; he has bidden me to warn you that the avenger will not spare, neither will his eye pity. His sword was forged for vengeance, and vengeance it will have. And he has bidden me exhort you by the terrors of the law, by the day of judgment, by the

wrath to come, by the uncertainty of life, and by the nearness of death, this night to fly to Christ.

“Haste, traveler, haste, the night comes on :  
And thou far off from rest and home :  
Haste, traveler, haste!”

But, O how much more earnest is our cry, when we say, “Haste, sinner, haste.” Not only doth the night come on; but, lo! the blood avenger is behind. Already he has slain his thousands. Let the shrieks of souls, already damned, come up in your ears. Already the avenger has done wonders of wrath; let the howlings of Gehenna startle you; let the torments of hell amaze you. What! will you stop with such a sword behind you? will you pause with such an avenger in swift pursuit? What! young man, will you stop this night? God has convinced you of your sin; will you go to your rest this night without a prayer? Will you live another day without fleeing to Christ? No; I think I see the Spirit of God in you to-night, and I think I hear what he makes you say. He makes you say, “No, God helping me, I give myself to Christ now; and if he will not now shed abroad his love in my heart, yet this is my one resolve; no slumber to my eyes will I afford till Christ shall look on me, and seal my pardon with his Spirit --the pardon bought with blood.” But if thou sittest still, young man, and thou wilt do so, left to thy own free will, I can do no more for thee than this, I must weep for thee in secret. Alas! for thee, my hearer; alas! for thee; the ox led to the slaughter is more wise than thou; the sheep that goeth to its death is not so foolish as thou art. Alas! for thee, my hearer, that thy pulse should beat a march to hell. Alas! that yonder clock, like the muffled drum, should be the music of the funeral march of thy soul. Alas! alas! that thou shouldst fold thine arms in pleasure, when the knife is at thy heart. Alas! alas! for thee, that thou shouldst sing, and make merriment, when the rope is about thy neck, and the drop is tottering under thee. Alas! for thee, that thou shouldst go thy way, and live merrily and happily, and yet be lost. Thou remindest me of the silly moth that dances round about the flame, singeing itself for a while, and then at last plunging to

its death. Such art thou! Young woman, with thy butterfly clothing, thou art leaping round the flame that shall destroy thee. Young man, light and frothy in thy conversation, gay in thy life, thou art dancing to hell; thou art singing thy way to damnation, and promenading the road to destruction. Alas! alas! that ye should be spinning your own winding sheets; that ye should every day by your sins be building your own gallows; that by your transgressions ye should be digging your own graves, and working hard to pile the faggots for your own eternal burning. O! that ye were wise, that ye understood this, that ye would consider your latter end. O! that ye would flee from the wrath to come. O! my hearers, the wrath to come, the wrath to come! O, God! how terrible! these lips dare not venture to describe, this heart filleth in agony; and, my hearers, are there not some of you that will soon be in the wrath to come? Yes, yes! there are some of you, who, if you were now to drop dead in your pews, must be damned. Ah! ye know it; ye know it; ye dare not deny it; I see you know; as you hang down your heads, you seem to say it is true; I have no Christ to trust to, no robe of righteousness to wear, no heaven to hope for. My hearer, give me thine hand; never did father plead with son with more impassioned earnestness than I would with thee. Why wouldst thou sit still, when hell is burning in thy face. "Why will ye die, O house of Israel!" O, God! must I preach to these people in their place in hell; and must I continue to preach to them, and be "a savor of death unto death to them," and not "a savor of life unto life?" And must I, must I, help to make their hell more intolerable? Must it be so? Must the people who now listen to us, like the people of Chorazin and Bethsaida, have a more terrible doom than the people of Sodom? Ah! yes, the Lord hath said it, and we believe it. O! ye that are left to your own free will, to choose the way to hell, as all men do when left alone—let these eyes run down with tears for ye, because ye will not weep for yourselves. Strange! strange! that I should feel more for some of your souls than you do for yourselves! My God knoweth, there is not a stone that I would leave unturned to save each one of you; there is nought that human strength could do, or human

study would learn, which I would not seek after, if I might but be the instrument of saving you from hell; and yet you act as though it concerned you not, whom it should concern the most; it is my business, but it is far more yours. Sirs, if ye be lost, remember, it is yourselves that will be lost; if ye perish, ye perish; I am clean of your blood. If ye flee not from the wrath to come, I have warned you; I could not bear to have the blood upon my head which some, even of those who like sound doctrine, I fear, will have at the last day of account. I tremble for some I know, that preach God's gospel, in some sense fully, but who never warn sinners. A member of my church said to me lately, "I heard such a one preach; a sound doctrine man he is called. I heard him preach for nine years, attending the theater all the time. I could curse, I could swear, I could sin, and I never heard a warning from that man's lips the whole nine years." Ah! my God, my God, let this world hiss me; let me wear the coat that sparkleth, and the cap that garnisheth a fool. Let earth condemn me, and let the fools of the universe spurn me; but free me from the blood of my hearers. By God's grace, again I register the vow, God helping me; the only thing I seek in this world is to be faithful to my hearers' souls. If you are damned, it is not for want of preaching to, nor for want of earnest warning. Young men and maidens, old men with gray hairs, merchants and tradesmen, servants, fathers, mothers, children, I have warned you this night, you are in danger of hell, and as God liveth, before whom I stand, you will be there soon, unless you flee from the wrath to come. Remember, none but Jesus can save you. But if God shall enable you to see your danger, and fly to Christ, he will have mercy upon you for ever, and the avenger of blood will never find you out. No, not even when the red lightnings shall be flashing from the hand of God in the day of judgment. That city of refuge shall shelter you, and in the heart of Jesus, triumphant, blessed, secure, you shall sing the righteousness and the blood of Christ who shelters sinners from the wrath to come.

## SERMON VIII.

### THE DUMB SINGING.

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing; for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert."—ISAIAH, XXXV. 5, 6.

WHAT a difference grace makes, whenever it enters the heart! We find here the blind spoken of; but they are not blind when once grace has touched their eyes; then "the eyes of the blind are opened." We read also of the deaf; but they are not deaf after grace has operated upon them. "the ears of the deaf are unstopped." Here are men who have been lame before; but when once the omnipotent influence of divine grace has come upon them, they leap like a hart. And those who were dumb once, so far from being dumb any longer, have experienced a change that must be radical, for its effects are surprising. The tongue of the dumb not simply speaks, but it sings.

Grace makes a great difference in a man, when it enters into him. How vain, then, are the boasts and professions of some persons, who assert themselves to be the children of God, and yet live in sin. There is no perceivable difference in their conduct; they are just what they used to be before their pretended conversion; they are not changed in their acts, even in the least degree, and yet they do most positively affirm that they are the called and living children of God, although they are entirely unchanged. Let such know that their pretensions are lies, and that falsehood is the only groundwork that they have for their hopes; for, wherever the grace of God is, it makes men to differ. A graceless man is not like a gracious man; and a gracious man is not like a graceless one

We are "new creatures in Christ Jesus." When God looks upon us with the eye of love, in conversion and regeneration he makes us as opposite from what we were before as light is from darkness, as even heaven itself is from hell. God changes man. He works in him a change so great, that no reformation can even so much as thoroughly imitate it; it is an entire change—a change of the will, of the being, of the desires, of the hates, of the dislikings, and of the likings. In every respect the man becomes new when divine grace enters into his heart. And yet thou sayest of thyself, "I am converted," and remain what thou wast! I tell thee once again to thy face, that thou sayest an empty thing; thou hast no ground for saying it. If grace permits thee to sin as thou wast wont to do, then that grace is no grace at all. That grace were not worth the having which permits a man to be, after he receives it, what he was before. No, we must ever hold and teach the great doctrine of sanctification. Where God really justifies he really sanctifies too; and where there is the remission of sin, there is also the forsaking of it. Where God hath blotted out transgression, he also removeth our love of it, and maketh us seek after holiness, and walk in the ways of the Lord. I think we may fairly infer this from the text, as a prelude to the observations we have to make concerning it.

And now I shall want you, first of all, to notice *the sort of people whom God has chosen to sing his praises, and to sing them eternally*. Then, in the second place, I shall enter into a *more full description of the dumb people here described*. Then, thirdly, I shall try to notice *certain special times and seasons when those dumb people sing more sweetly than at others*.

I. First, then, THE PERSONS WHOM GOD HATH CHOSEN TO SING HIS SONGS FOR EVER. "The tongue of the *dumb* shall sing." We may make this the first point. There is no difference, by nature, between the elect and others; those who are now glorified in heaven, and who walk the golden streets clad in robes of purity, were by nature as unholy and defiled, and as far from original righteousness, as those who, by their own rejection of Christ, and by their love of sin, have brought themselves into the pit of eternal torment, as a punishment for their iniquities. The only reason why there is a difference between

those who are in heaven and those who are in hell, rests with divine grace, and with divine grace alone. Those in heaven must inevitably have been cast away, had not everlasting mercy stretched out its hand and redeemed them. They were by nature not one whit superior to others. They would as certainly have rejected Christ, and have trodden under foot the blood of Jesus, as did those who were cast away, if grace, free grace, had not prevented them from committing this sin. The reason why they are Christians is not because they did naturally will to be so, nor because they did by nature desire to know Christ, or to be found of him; but they are now saints simply because God made them so. He gave them the desire to be saved; he put into them the will to seek after him; he helped them in their seekings, and afterward brought them to feel that peace which is the fruit of justification. But by nature they were just the same as others; and if there is any difference, we are obliged to say that the difference does not lie in their favor. In very many cases, we who now "rejoice in hope of the glory of God" were the very worst of men. There are multitudes that now bless God for their redemption, who once cursed him; who implored, as frequently as they dared to do, with oaths and swearing, that the curse of God might rest upon their fellows and upon themselves. Many of the Lord's anointed were once the very castaways of Satan, the sweepings of society, the refuse of the earth, those whom no man cared for, who were called outcasts, but whom God hath now called desired ones, seeing he hath loved them.

I am led to these thoughts from the fact that we are told here that those who sing were dumb by nature. Their singing does not come naturally from themselves; they were not born songsters; no, they were dumb ones, those whom God would have to sing his praises. It does not say the tongue of the stammerer, or the tongue of him that blasphemed, or the tongue of him that misused his tongue, but "the tongue of the dumb," of those who have gone furthest from any thought of singing, of those who have no power of will to sing—the tongue of such as these shall yet be made to sing God's praises. Strange choice that God has made! Strange, for its graciousness! strangely manifesting the sovereignty of

his will! God would build for himself a palace in heaven of living stones: where did he get them? Did he go to the quarries of Paros? Hath he brought forth the richest and the purest marble from the quarries of perfection? No, ye saints, look to “the hole of the pit whence ye were digged, and to the rock whence ye were hewn!” Ye were full of sin; so far from being stones that were white with purity, ye were black with defilement, seemingly utterly unfit to be stones in the spiritual temple, which should be the dwelling-place of the Most High. And yet he chose you to be trophies of his grace, and of his power to save. When Solomon built for himself a palace, he built it of cedar: but when God would build for himself a dwelling for ever, he cut not down the goodly cedars, but he dwelt in a bush, and hath preserved it as his memorial for ever: “The God that dwelt in the bush.” Goldsmiths make exquisite forms from precious metals; they fashion the bracelet and the ring from gold:—God maketh his precious things out of base material; and from the black pebbles of the defiling brooks he hath taken up stones, which he hath set in the golden ring of his immutable love, to make them gems to sparkle on his finger for ever. He hath not selected the best, but apparently the worst of men, to be the monuments of his grace; and when he would have a choir in heaven that should with tongues harmonious sing his praises—a chorus that should for ever chant hallelujahs louder than the noise of many waters, and like great thunders, he did not send Mercy down to seek earth’s songsters, and cull from those who have the sweetest voices: he said, “Go, Mercy, and find out the dumb, and touch their lips, and make them sing. The virgin tongues that never sang my praise before, that have been silent till now, shall break forth in rhapsodies sublime, and they shall lead the song; even angels shall but attend behind, and catch the notes from the lips of those who once were dumb.” “The tongue of the dumb shall sing” God’s praises in heaven.

O! what a fountain of consolation this opens for you and for me! Ay, beloved, if God did not choose the base things of this world, he would never have chosen us; if he had respect unto the countenances of men, if he were a respecter



of persons, where had you and I been this day ; we had never been instances of his love and mercy. No, as we look upon ourselves now, and remember what we once were, we are often obliged to say,

“ Depths of merey, can there be  
Merey still reserved for me ?”

How many times we have sung at the Lord’s table—at the sacramental supper of our Master—

“ Why was I made to hear thy voice  
And enter while there ’s room,  
While thousands make a wretched choice,  
And rather starve then come ?”

And we have joined too in singing—

“ ’Twas the same love that spread the feast,  
That sweetly forced us in ;  
Else we had still refused to taste,  
And perished in our sin.”

Grace is always grace, but it never seems so gracious as when we see it brought to our unworthy selves. Ay, my friends, you may be Arminians in your doctrine, but you never can be Arminians in your feelings ; you are obliged to confess that it is all of grace, and cast away the thought that it was of your foreseen faith or of your foreseen good works that the Lord chose you. We are obliged to come to this, to feel and know that it must have been of merey, free merey, and of that alone ; that we were not capable of doing good works without his grace preventing us before good works, and without his grace also in good works, enabling us to do them ; and, therefore, they never could have been the motive to divine love, nor the reason why it flowed toward us. O ! ye unworthy ones, ye saints that feel your deep natural depravity, and mourn over your ruin by the fall of Adam, lift up your hearts to God ! He hath delivered you from all the impediments which Adam cast upon you ; your tongue is loosed, it is loose now ; Adam made it dumb, but God hath loosed it ; your eyes that were blinded by Adam’s fall are opened now ; he hath lifted you from the miry clay. What Adam lost for us, Christ hath regained for us ; he hath plucked us out of the pit, and “ set us upon a

rock, and established our goings, and hath put a new song into our mouth, even praise for evermore." Yes, "the tongue of the dumb shall sing."

And then just another hint here, before I leave this point. How this ought to give you encouragement in seeking to do good to others! Why, my brethren, I can never think any man too far gone for divine mercy, since I know that God saved me. Whenever I have felt desponding about any of my hearers, who have for a long time persevered in guilt, I have only had to reach down my own biography from the shelves of my memory and just think what I too was, till grace redeemed me, and brought me to my Saviour's feet; and then I have said, "It will be no wonder if that man is saved; after what he hath done for me, I can believe any thing of my Master. If he hath blotted out my transgressions, if he hath clean melted away my sin, then I can never despair of any of my fellow-creatures; I may of myself, but I can not of them." Remember, they may be dumb now, but he can make them sing. Your son John is a sad reprobate; keep on praying for him, mother; God can change his heart. Your daughter's heart seems hard as adamant; he who makes the dumb sing can make rocks melt. Believe in God for your children, as well as for yourselves; trust him; take their cases before his throne; rely upon him that he can save them, and believe that in answer to earnest prayer, he also will do it. And if you have neighbors that are full of the pestilence of sin, whose vices come up before you as a stench in your nostrils, yet fear not to carry the gospel to them; though they be harlots, drunkards, swearers, be not afraid to tell them of the Saviour's dying love. He makes the dumb sing; he does not ask even of them a voice to begin with; they are dumb, and he does not ask of them even the power of speech, but he gives them the power. O! if you have neighbors who are haters of the Sabbath, haters of God, unwilling to come to the house of God, despising Christ; if you find them as far gone as you can find them, recollect, he maketh the dumb to sing, and therefore, he can make them live. He wants no goodness in them to begin with; all he wants is just the rough, raw material, unhewn, uncut, unpolished. And he does not want even good mate

rial; bad as the material may be, he can make it into something inestimably precious, something that is worthy of the Saviour's blood. Go on; fear not! If the dumb can sing, then surely you can never say that any man need be cast away.

II. I am now to enter into *some rather more lucid description of these dumb people*. Who are they?

Well, sometimes I get a good thought out of old Master Cruden's Concordance. I believe that is the best commentary to the Bible, and I like to study it. I opened it lately at this passage, and I found Master Cruden describing different kinds of dumb people. He says there are four or five different sorts; but I shall name only four of them. The first sort of dumb people he mentions are those that can not speak; the second sort are those that won't speak; the third sort are those that dare not speak; and the fourth sort are those that have got nothing to say, and therefore they are dumb.

1. The first sort of people who shall sing are *those who can not speak*. This is the usual acceptation of the word dumb: the others are, of course, only figurative applications of the term. We call a man dumb when he can not speak. Now, spiritually, the man who is still in his trespasses and sins is dumb; and I will prove that. He is dead; and there is none so dumb as a dead man. We used to hear in our childhood that they buried none but deaf and dumb persons in certain churchyards. It was intended to tickle our childish fancies, and misled us a little; but the meaning was, that none but dead people were buried there; none are so dumb as those who are dead. "Shall the dead arise and praise thee? Shall thy loving-kindness be declared in the grave, or thy faithfulness in destruction?" The word of God assures us that unregenerate men are spiritually dead; it follows, then, that they must be spiritually dumb. They can not sing God's praises; they know him not, and, therefore, they can not exalt his glorious name. They can not confess their sins; they can utter the mere words of confession, but they can not really confess, for they do not know the evil of sin, nor have they been taught to feel what a bitter thing it is, and to know themselves as sinners. But "no man can call Jesus Lord, except by the Holy Ghost; and these people can not do so truly. Perhaps, it may be,

they can talk well on the doctrines; but they can not speak them out of the fulness of their hearts, as living and vital principles which they know in themselves. They can not join in the songs, nor can they take part in the conversation of a Christian. If they sit down with the saints, perhaps they have culled a few phrases from the garden of the Lord, which they use and apply to certain things which they do not know any thing about. They talk a language the meaning of which they do not comprehend—like Milton's daughters reading a language to their father which they did not understand. Still, so far as the essence of the matter is concerned, they are dumb. But, hail to sovereign grace! "the tongue of the dumb shall sing!" God will have his darlings made what they should be. They are dumb by nature, but he will not leave them so; they can not now sing his praises, but they shall do it; they do not now confess their sins, but he will bring them on their knees yet, and make them pour out their hearts before him. They can not now talk the brogue of Canaan, nor speak the language of Sion, but they shall do it soon. Grace, omnipotent grace, will have its way with them. They shall be taught to pray; their eyes shall be made to flow with tears of penitence; and then, after that, their lips shall sing to the praise of sovereign grace.

I need not dwell upon this point, because I have many here that were dumb once, who can bless God that they can now sing. And does it not sometimes seem to you, beloved, a very strange thing, that you are what you are? I should think it must be the strangest thing in the world for a dumb man to speak, because he has no idea how a man feels when he is speaking; he has no notion of the thing at all. Like a man blind from his birth, he has no idea what kind of a thing sight can be. We have heard of a blind man, who supposed that the color scarlet must be very much like the sound of a trumpet: he had no other way of comparing it. So the dumb man has no notion of the way to talk. Do you not think it is a strange thing that you are what you are? You said once, "I will never be one of the canting Methodists. Do you think I shall ever make a profession of religion? What! I attend a prayer meeting? No." And you went along the streets in all your

gayety of mirth, and said, "What! I become a little child, and give up my mind to simple faith, and not reason at all? What! am I to give up all argument about things, and simply take them for granted, because God has said them? Nay, that never can be." I will be bound to say, it will be a wonder to you as long as you are here, that you are the children of God; and even in heaven itself your greatest wonder will be that you were ever brought to know the Saviour.

2. But there is a sort of dumb people that *will not speak*. They are mentioned by Isaiah. He said of preachers in his day they were dumb dogs that would not bark. I bless God we are not now quite so much inundated by this kind of dumb people as we used to be. God has raised up, especially in the Church of England, of late, a large number of evangelical men, who are not afraid to preach the whole counsel of God. There are many such faithful preachers of the gospel to be found; and although we used to say we were the only evangelicals that preached the gospel, the time has come when "she that was barren keeps house, and has become the joyful mother of children." There is no reason why the Church of England should not be thoroughly evangelical; if it keeps to its articles, it ought to be. It is the most inconsistent church in the world, if it is not a Calvinistic one. It must be inconsistent, unless it keeps to those grand fundamental truths which are indeed a code of faith to be received by all believers—the truths which are written in its articles.

But, O! there are a great many among us Dissenters, and in the Church of England, too, that are dumb dogs. There are still plenty who do not know any thing about the gospel; who preach a vast deal about a great many things, but nothing about Jesus Christ; who buy their sermons cheap, and preach them at their ease; who ask God to tell them what to say, and then pull their manuscripts out of their pockets. We have had to mourn, especially in years gone by, that we could look from parish to parish, and find nobody but a dumb dog in the church, and in the pulpits of Dissenters too. And some men who might have spoken with a little earnestness, if they liked, let the people slumber under them, instead of preaching the word with true fidelity, as if they would not have to give

account to God at the last. My aged grandfather tells a story, that I believe he himself could verify, of a person who once resided near him, and called himself a preacher of the gospel. He was visited by a poor woman, who asked him what was the meaning of the new birth? He replied, "My good woman, what do you come to me about that for? Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, did not know; he was a wise man, and did not know; and how do you think I should?" So she had to go away with only that answer. Time was when such an answer might have been given by a great many who were reckoned to be the authorized teachers of religion, but knew nothing really about the matter. They understood a great deal more about fox-hunting than about preaching, and more about farming their land than about the spiritual husbandry of God's church. But we bless God that there are not so many of that sort now; and we pray that the race may be come thoroughly extinct; that every pulpit, and every place of worship may be filled with a man who has a tongue of fire and a heart of flame, and shuns not to declare the whole counsel of God, neither seeking the smile of men nor dreading their frown. We have a promise that it shall be so. "The tongue of the dumb shall sing." And, ah! they do sing well too, when God makes them sing.

You remember Rowland Hill's story in "The Village Dialogues," about Mr. Merriman. Mr. Merriman was a sad scapegrace of a preacher; he was to be seen at every fair and revel, and used seldom to be found in his pulpit when he should have been; but when he was converted, he began to preach with tears running down his face—and how the church began to be crowded! The squire would not go and hear any of that stuff, and locked up his pew; and Mr. Merriman had a little ladder made outside the door, as he did not wish to break the door open; and the people used to sit on the steps, up one side and down the other, so that it made twice as much room as there was before.

No people make such good preachers as those who were dumb once. If the Lord opens their mouths, they will think they can not preach often enough, and earnestly enough, to make up for the mischief they did before. Chalmers himself

might never have been so eloquent a preacher, had he not been for a long time a dumb dog. He preached morality, he said, till he made all the people in his parish immoral; he kept on urging them to keep God's law, till he made them break it; but when he turned round, and began to preach God's gospel, then the dumb began to sing. O! may God bring this about in every one of us! If we are dumb as professed ministers, may he open our mouths, and force us to speak forth his word, lest at the last day the blood of our hearers' souls should be found upon our skirts, and we should be cast away as unfaithful stewards of the gospel of Christ!

3. I now introduce you to a third sort of dumb people. They are dumb because *they dare not* speak; and they are good people, blessed souls. Here is one of them: "I was dumb with silence; I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it!" Ah! it is blessed to be dumb in that fashion. The Lord's servant will often have to be dumb under trials and troubles. When Satan tempts him to repine, he will put his finger to his lip and say, "Hush, murmuring heart, be still!" "Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?" Even the child of God will do like Job, who sat down for seven days and nights, and said not a word, for he felt that his trouble was heavy, and he could say nothing. It would have been as well if Job had kept his mouth shut all the next few days; he would not have said so much amiss as he did in some things that he uttered. It would have been well if he could always have kept silence. O! there are times when you and I, beloved, are obliged to keep the bridle on our tongues, lest we should murmur against God. We are in evil company; perhaps our spirits are hot within us, and we want to take vengeance for the Lord; we are like the friends of David, who wanted to take away the head of Shimei. "Let us take off this dead dog's head," we say; and then our Jesus tells us to put our sword into its scabbard, for the "servant of the Lord must not strive." How often have we thus been dumb! And sometimes when there have been slanders against our character, and men have calumniated us, O! how our fingers have itched to be at them! We have wanted to be at them at once, and let them see who was the strongest of the

two. But we have said, "No; our Master did not answer and he 'left us an example that we should follow his steps.'" The chief priests accused him of many things, but he "answered them not a word." But we have found it hard sometimes to be dumb, like the sheep when it is brought to the shearer, or the lamb when it is in the slaughter-house. We could scarcely keep quiet. When we have been upon our beds in sickness, we have tried to quench every murmuring word; we have not let a sentence escape our lips, when we could possibly avoid it; but notwithstanding all that, we have found it hard work to keep dumb, though it is blessed work when we are enabled to do it. Now, ye who have been dumb under great weights of sorrow; ye whose songs have been suspended, because ye durst not open your lips, lest sighs should usurp the place of praise, come, listen to this promise, "The tongue of the dumb shall sing." Yes, though you are in the deepest trouble now, and are obliged to be silent, you shall sing yet. Though, like Jonah, you are in the whale's belly, carried down, as he called it, into the lowest hell; though the earth with her bars is about you for ever, and the weeds are wrapped about your head, yet you "shall look again toward his holy temple." Though you have hung your harp upon the willows, bless God you have not broken it; you will have use for it by-and-by; you shall take it down from its resting-place, and

"Loud to the praise of sovereign grace,  
Bid every string awake."

If you have no songs in the night, yet he shall compass you about with songs of deliverance; if you can not sing his praises now, you shall do so by-and-by, when greater grace shall have come into your heart, or when delivering mercy shall be the subject of your song, in better days that are yet to come. But, blessed be God, we are not always to be silent in affliction; we are bound to sing. And I think we ought to sing even when we ought to be dumb; though we are dumb as to murmuring, we ought to sing God's praises. An old Puritan said, "God's people are like birds; they sing best in cages." He said, "God's people often sing the best when they are in



the deepest trouble." Said old Master Brooks, "The deeper the flood was, the higher the ark went up to heaven." So it is with the child of God: the deeper his troubles, the nearer to heaven he goes, if he lives close to his Master. Troubles are called weights, and weights, you know, generally clog us and keep us down to the earth; but there are ways, by the use of the laws of mechanics, by which you can make a weight lift you; and so it is possible to make your troubles lift you nearer heaven, instead of making them sink you. Ah! we thank our God he has sometimes opened our mouth when we were dumb; when we were ungrateful and did not praise him, he has opened our mouth by a trial, and though when we had a thousand mercies we did not praise him, when he sent a sharp affliction, then we began to do so. He has thus made the tongue of the dumb to sing.

4. We will mention one more kind of dumb people, and then we shall have done. There are *those who have nothing to say*, and, therefore, they are dumb. I will give you an instance: Solomon says in the Proverbs—"Open thy mouth for the dumb;" and he shows by the context that he means those who in the court of judgment have nothing to plead for themselves, and have to stand dumb before the bar. Like that man of old, who, when the king came in to see the guests, had not on a wedding garment, and when the king said, "Friend, how camest thou in hither?" stood speechless, not because he could not speak, but because he had nothing to say. Have not you and I been dumb, and are we not now, when we stand on law terms with God, when we forget that Jesus Christ and his blood and righteousness were our full acquittal? Are we not obliged to be dumb when the commandments are laid bare before us, and when the law of God is brought home to our conscience? There was a time with each of us, and not long ago with some here present, when we stood before Moses's seat, and heard the commandments read; and when we were asked, "Sinner, canst thou claim to have kept these commandments?" we were dumb. Then we were asked, "Sinner, canst thou give any atonement for the breach of these commandments?" and we were dumb. We were asked, "Sinner, canst thou, by a future obedience, wipe out

thy past sin?" We knew it was impossible, and we were dumb. Then we were asked, "Canst thou endure the penalty; canst thou bear to welter for ever in the flames of hell? Canst thou suffer everlasting torments from the red right hand of an angry God? Canst thou dwell with everlasting burnings, and abide with eternal fires?" and we were dumb. And then we were asked the question, "Prisoner at the bar, hast thou any reason to plead why thou shouldst not be condemned?" and we were dumb. And we were asked, "Prisoner, hast thou any helper? hast thou any one that can deliver thee?" and we stood dumb, for we had nothing to say. Ay, but blessed be God, the tongue of the dumb can now sing. And shall I tell you what we can sing? Why, we can sing this: "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?" Not God, for he has justified. "Who is he that condemneth?" Not Christ, for "he hath died, yea, rather hath risen again, who is also at the right hand of God, and maketh intercession for us." We who had not a word to say for ourselves, can now say every thing. We can say,

"Bold shall I stand at that great day,  
For who aught to my charge can lay?  
Fully absolved by Christ I am,  
From sin's tremendous curse and shame."

Yes, the dumb ones can sing. So shall you, poor dumb one: if God has made you dumb by taking away all the names of Baal out of your mouth—if he has taken away all your self-righteousness and all your trust in yourself, as truly as ever he has shut your mouth he will open it. If God has killed your self-righteousness, he will give you a better; if he has knocked down all your refuges of lies, he will build you up a good refuge. He has not come to destroy you; he has shut your mouth to fill it with his praise. Be of good cheer; look to Jesus; cast thine eyes to the cross; put thy confidence in him; and even thou, who thinkest thyself a castaway, even thou, poor, weeping Mary, even thou shalt yet sing of redeeming love.

IV. And now I have to conclude by just noticing *the occasions when the tongues of these dumb people sing the best*

When does the tongue of the dumb sing? Why, I think it sings always, little or much. It is always singing. If it is once set at liberty, it will never leave off. There are some of you people who say this world is a howling wilderness; well, you are the howlers—you make all the howling. If you choose to howl, I can not help it: I prefer the promise of my text—“Then shall the tongue of the dumb,” not howl, but “sing.” Yes, they do sing always, little or much; sometimes it is in a low hush-note; sometimes they have to go rather deep in the bass; but there are other times, when they can mount to the highest notes of all. They have *special times of singing*. When they lose their burden at the foot of the cross, that is the time when they begin to sing. Never did a harp of heaven sound so sweetly as when touched by the finger of some returning prodigal, not even the songs of the angels seem to me to be so sweet as that first song of rapture which gushes forth from the inmost soul of the forgiven child of God. You know how John Bunyan describes it. He says, when poor Pilgrim lost his burden at the cross, he gave three great leaps, and went on his way singing. We have not forgotten those three great leaps; they were great leaps—leaps of praise. We have leaped many times since then with joy and gratitude; but we think we never leaped so high as we did at the time when we saw our many sins all gone, and our transgressions covered up in the tomb of the Saviour. By the way, let me tell you a little story about that matter of John Bunyan. I am a great lover of John Bunyan, but I do not believe him infallible; for I met with a story the other day which I think a very good one. There was a young man in Edinburg who wished to be a missionary. He was a wise young man; he thought—“Well, if I am to be a missionary, there is no need for me to transport myself far away from home; I may as well be a missionary in Edinburg.” There’s a hint to some of you ladies, who give away tracts in your district, and never give your servant Mary one. Well, this young man started, and determined to speak to the first person he met. He met one of those old fishwives; those of us who have seen them can never forget them; they are extraordinary women indeed. So stepping up to her he said, “Here you are, coming with

your burden on your back; let me ask you if you have got another burden, a spiritual burden?" "What!" she said; "do you mean that burden in John Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress? Because if you do, young man, I have got rid of that many years ago, before you were born. But I went a better way to work than the Pilgrim did. The evangelist that John Bunyan talks about was one of your parsons that do not preach the gospel; for he said, 'Keep that light in thine eye and run to the wicket-gate.' Why, man alive! that was not the place for him to run to. He should have said, 'Do you see that cross? Run there at once! But instead of that, he sent the poor Pilgrim to the wicket-gate first; and much good he got by going there! He got tumbling into the slough, and was like to have been killed by it.'" "But did not you," he asked, "go through any Slough of Despond?" "Yes, young man, I did; but I found it a great deal easier going through with my burden off than with it on my back." The old woman was quite right. John Bunyan put the getting rid of the burden too far off from the commencement of the Pilgrimage. If he meant to show what usually happens, he was right; but if he meant to show what ought to have happened, he is wrong. We must not say to the sinner, "Now, sinner, if thou wilt be saved go to the baptismal pool; go to the wicket-gate; go to the church; do this or that." No, the cross should be right in front of the wicket-gate; and we should say to the sinner, "Throw thyself there, and thou art safe; but thou art not safe till thou canst cast off thy burden, and lie at the foot of the cross, and find peace in Jesus. Well, that is a time when we can sing.

And after that do God's people sing? Yes, they have sweet singing times in their house of communion. Oh! the music of that word "communion," when it is heard in the soul—communion with Jesus, fellowship with Jesus, whether in his sufferings, or in his glories! Those are singing times when the heart is lifted up to feel its oneness with Christ, and its vital union with him, and is enabled to "rejoice in hope of the glory of God," through communion with the Saviour.

Have not you had some precious singing times at the Lord's table? Ah! when the bread has been broken, and the wine

doured out, how often has it been to me a time of song, when the people have all joined in singing,

“Gethsemane, can I forget,  
Or there thy conflict see,  
Thine agony and bloody sweat,  
And not remember thee?

“When to the cross I turn my eyes,  
And rest on Calvary,  
O! Lamb of God, my sacrifice,  
I must remember thee.”

I am in the house of God, I think, every day. I believe that David could not have prayed for more than I have got, when he prayed that he might dwell in the house of the Lord for ever; for I spend more of my time in the house of God than I do anywhere else. But my best moments are at the Lord's table. I do rejoice then, when I have no thought of what I have to say to others, but simply to sit down amongst the Lord's family, and taste my morsel of bread, and have my sip of the wine. O! it is then the soul finds its Saviour precious. I look forward for every month to come, when I may once more sit at the table of my Master, and spiritually eat his flesh and drink his blood, and feel that I have indeed life in him, because I have got union with him. Ah! those are singing times to the family of God. And so, sometimes are preaching times and sometimes hearing times. Prayer meetings are often special singing times; in fact, the means of grace will very frequently be blessed of God to be to us the occasion of song.

But lastly, my dear friends, for I can not stop to mention all these singing times, the best we shall have will be when you and I come to die. Ah! there are some of you that are like what is fabled of the swan. The ancients said the swan never sang in his life-time, but always sang just when he died. Now, there are many of God's desponding children who seem to go all their life under a cloud; but they get a swan's song before they die. The river of their life comes running down, perhaps black and miry with troubles, and when it begins to touch the white foam of the sea there comes a little glistening

in its waters. So, beloved, though we may have been very much dispirited by reason of the burden of the way, when we get to the end we shall have sweet songs. Are you afraid of dying? O! never be afraid of that; be afraid of living. Living is the only thing which can do any mischief; dying never can hurt a Christian. Afraid of the grave? It is like the bath of Esther, in which she lay for a time, to purify herself with spices, that she might be fit for her lord. The grave fits the body for heaven. There it lieth: and corruption, earth and worms, do but refine and purify our flesh. Be not afraid of dying; it does not take any time at all. All that death is, is emancipation, deliverance, heaven's bliss to a child of God. Never fear it; it will be a singing time. You are afraid of dying, you say, because of the pains of death. Nay, they are the pains of life—of life struggling to continue. Death has no pain; death itself is but one gentle sigh—the fetter is broken, and the spirit fled. The best moment of a Christian's life is his last one, because it is the one that is nearest heaven; and then it is that he begins to strike the key note of the song which he shall sing to all eternity. O! what a song will that be! It is a poor noise we make now; when we join the song perhaps we are almost ashamed to sing; but up there our voices shall be clear and good; and there

“Loudest of the crowd we'll sing,  
While heaven's resounding mansions ring  
With shouts of sovereign grace.”

The thought struck me the other day, that the Lord will have in heaven some of those very big sinners that have gone further astray than any body that ever lived—the most extraordinary extravaganzas of vice—just to make the melody complete by singing some of those alto notes we sometimes hear, which you and I, because we have not gone so far astray, will never be able to utter. I wonder whether one has stepped into this chapel this morning, whom God has selected to take some of those alto notes in the scale of praise. Perhaps there is one such here. O! how will such a one sing, if grace, free grace, shall have mercy upon him!

And now, farewell, with just this solitary word: My breth-

ren, the members of this church, strive together in your prayers, that God may bless you. Be not content with what you are, however prosperous you may be ; but seek to increase more and more. Pray that you and your children may be added to the church of Christ here, and may live to see others added too. Keep prayer going ; do not neglect your prayer meetings. Christmas Evans gives us a good idea about prayer. He says, "Prayer is the rope in the belfry ; we pull it and it rings the bell up in heaven." And so it is. Mind you keep that bell going. Pull it well. Come up to prayer meetings. Keep on pulling it ; and though the bell is up so high that you can not hear it ring, depend upon it, it can be heard in the tower of heaven, and is ringing before the throne of God, who will give you answers of peace according to your faith. May your faith be large and plentiful, and so will your answers be !

## S E R M O N I X .

### F O R E T A S T E S O F T H E H E A V E N L Y L I F E .

“ And they took of the fruit of the land in their hands, and brought it down unto us, and brought us word again, and said, It is a good land which the Lord our God doth give us.”—DEUT., i. 25.

You remember the occasion concerning which these words were written. The children of Israel sent twelve men as spies into the land of Canaan, who brought back with them the fruit of the land, amongst the rest a bunch of grapes from Esheol, too heavy to be borne by one man, and which, therefore, two of them carried on a staff between them. But I shall not remark upon the figure, but only say that as they learned of Canaan by the fruit of the land brought to them by the spies, so you and I, even while we are on earth, if we be the Lord's beloved, may learn something of what heaven is—a state to which we are to attain hereafter—by certain blessings which are brought to us on earth.

They were sure that the land of Israel was a *fertile land* when they saw the fruits which it produced, brought by their brethren, and when they ate thereof. Perhaps there was but little for so many, and yet those who did eat were made at once to understand that it must have been a goodly soil that produced such fruit. Now, then, beloved, we who love the Lord Jesus Christ have had clusters of the grapes of Esheol. We have had some fruits of heaven even since we have been on earth, and by them we are able to judge of the richness of the soil of Paradise which bringeth forth such rare and choice fruits.

I shall, therefore, present to you some views of heaven in order to give you some idea how it is that the Christian on earth enjoys a foretaste of them.



Possibly, there are scarce two Christians who have the same news of heaven; though they all expect the same heaven, yet the most prominent feature in it is different to each different mind according to its constitution. Now, I will confess what is to me the most prominent feature of heaven, judging at the present moment. At another time I may love heaven better for another thing: but lately I have learned to love heaven as a *place of security*. We have seen high professors turning from their profession, ay, and we have seen some of the Lord's own beloved committing grievous faults and slips, which have brought disgrace upon their character, and injury to their souls. Now I have learned to look to heaven lately as a place where we shall never, never sin—where our feet shall be fixed firmly upon a rock—where there is neither tripping nor sliding—where faults shall be unknown—where we shall have no need to keep watch against an indefatigable enemy, because there is no foe that shall annoy us—where we shall not be on our guard day and night watching against the incursion of foes, for there “the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest.” I have looked upon it as the land of complete security, where the garment shall be always white, where the face shall be always anointed with fresh oil, where there is no fear of slipping or turning away, but where we shall stand fast for ever. And I ask you, if that be a true view of heaven—and I am sure it is one feature of it—do not the saints even on earth enjoy some fruits of Paradise, even in this sense? Do we not even in these huts and villages below sometimes taste the joys of blissful security? The doctrine of God's word is, that all who are in union with the Lamb are safe, that all believers must hold on their way, that those who have committed their souls to the keeping of Christ shall find him a faithful and immutable keeper. On such a doctrine we can enjoy security even on earth; not that high and glorious security which renders us free from every slip and trip, but nevertheless a security well nigh as great, because it secures us against ultimate ruin, and renders us certain that we shall attain to eternal felicity. And, beloved, have you never sat down and reflected on the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints? I trow you have. God has brought home to you a

sense of your security in the person of Christ. He has told you that your name is graven on his hand; he has whispered in your ear the promise, "Fear not, I am with thee." You have been led to look upon him, the great surety of the covenant, as faithful and true, and, therefore, bound and engaged to present you, the weakest of the family, with all the chosen race, before the throne of God; and in such sweet contemplation I am sure you have been drinking some of the juice of his spiced pomegranates; you have had some of the dainty fruits of Paradise; you have had some of the enjoyments which the perfect saints have above in a sense of security.

O how I love that doctrine of the perseverance of the saints I renounce the pulpit when I can not preach it, for the gospel seems to be a blank desert and a howling wilderness—a gospel as unworthy of God as it would be beneath even my acceptance, frail worm as I am—a gospel which saves me to-day and rejects me to-morrow—a gospel which puts me in Christ's family one hour, and makes me a child of the devil the next—a gospel which justifies and then condemns me—a gospel which pardons me, and afterward casts me to hell. Such a gospel is abhorrent to reason itself, much more to the God of the whole earth. But on the other ground of faith, that

"He to the end must endure  
As sure as the earnest is given,"

we do enjoy a sense of perfect security even as we dwell in this land of wars and fightings. As the spies brought their brethren bunches of the grapes, so in the security we enjoy, we have a foretaste and earnest of the joy of Paradise.

In the next place, most probably the greater part of you love to think of heaven under another aspect: as *a place of perfect rest*. You sons of toil, you love the sanctuary because it is there you sit to hear God's word, and rest your wearied limbs. When you have wiped the hot sweat from your burning brow, you have often thought of heaven where your labors shall be over; you have sung with sweet emphasis,

"There shall I bathe my weary soul  
In seas of heavenly rest."

**Rest, rest, rest,—this is what you want. And to me this idea**

of heaven is exceedingly beautiful. Rest I know I never shall have beneath this sky, while Christ's church is as barbarous as it is; for the most barbarous of masters is the church of Christ. I have served it, and am well-nigh hounded to my grave by Christian ministers perpetually requiring me to do impossibilities that they know no mortal strength can accomplish. Willing I am to labor till I drop, but more I can not do; yet I am perpetually assailed on this side and the other, till, go where I may, there seems no rest for me till I slumber in my grave; and I do look forward to heaven with some degree of happiness. There I shall rest from labors constant and perpetual, though much loved. And you, too, who have been toiling long to gain an object you have sought after—you have said if you could get it you would lie down and rest; you have toiled after a certain amount of riches, you have said if you could once gain a competence you would then make yourself at ease. Or, you have been laboring long to gain a certain point of character, and then you have said you would lay down your arms and rest. Ay, but you have not reached it yet; and you love heaven because heaven is the goal to the racer, the target of the arrow of existence; you love heaven because it will be the couch of time, ay, an eternal rest for the poor weary struggler upon earth. You love it as a place of rest; and do we never enjoy a foretaste of heaven upon earth in that sense? O, yes, beloved! blessed be God, "we who have believed do enter into rest." Our peace is like a river, and our righteousness like the waves of the sea. God may give to his people rest: even the rest that remaineth for the people of God. We have stormy trials and bitter troubles in the world; but we have learned to say, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul! for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee." Did you never, in times of great distress, climb up to your closet, and there on your knees pour out your heart before God? Did you never feel after you had so done that you had bathed yourself in rest, so that

"Let cares like a wild deluge come,  
And storms of sorrow fall,"

you cared not one whit for them? For you had found a

shield in Christ; you had looked upon the face of God's anointed. Ah, Christian, that rest without a billow of disturbance, that rest so placid and serene, which in your deepest troubles you have been enabled to enjoy in the bosom of Christ, is to you a bunch of the mighty vintage of heaven, one grape of the heavenly cluster which you shall soon partake of in the land of the hereafter. Here, again, you see we can have a foretaste of heaven, and realize what it is even while here upon earth.

But that idea of rest will suit some indolent professors, and, therefore, let me just give the very opposite of it. I do think that one of the worst sins a man can be guilty of in this world is to be idle. I can almost forgive a drunkard, but a lazy man I do think there is very little pardon for. I think a man who is idle has as good a reason to be a penitent before God as David had when he was an adulterer, for the most abominable thing in the world is for a man to let the grass grow up to his ankles and do nothing. God never sent a man into the world to be idle. And there are some who make a tolerably fair profession, but who do nothing from one year's end to the other.

The next idea of heaven is, that it is *a place of uninterrupted service*. It is a place where they serve God day and night in his temple, and never know weariness, and never require to slumber. Do you know what is the deliciousness of work? For although we must complain when people expect impossibilities of us, it is the highest enjoyment of life to be busily engaged for Christ. Tell me the day I do not preach, I will tell you the day in which I am not happy; but the day in which it is my privilege to preach the gospel, and labor for God, is generally the day of my peaceful and quiet enjoyment after all. Service is delight. Praising God is pleasure. Laboring for him is the highest delight a mortal can know, O, how sweet it must be to sing his praises, and never feel that the throat is dry! O, how blessed to flap the wing for ever and never feel it flag! O, what sweet enjoyment to run upon his errands, evermore to circle round the throne of God in heaven while eternity shall last, and never once lay the head on the pillow, never once feel the throbbings of fatigue, never

once the pangs that admonish us that we need to cease, but to keep on for ever like eternity's own self—a broad river rolling on with perpetual floods of labor! O, that must be enjoyment! That must be, indeed, a heaven, to serve God day and night in his temple! But you have served God on earth, and have had foretastes of that. I wish some of you knew the sweets of labor a little more, for although labor breedeth sweat, it breedeth sweets too—more especially labor for Christ. There is a satisfaction before the work; there is a satisfaction in the work; there is a satisfaction after the work, and there is a satisfaction in looking for the fruits of the work; and a great satisfaction when we get the fruits. Labor for Christ is, indeed, the robing-room of heaven; if it be not heaven itself, it is one of the most blissful foretastes of it. Thank God, Christian, if you can do any thing for your Master. Thank him if it is your privilege to do the least thing for him, for remember in so doing he is giving you a taste of the grapes of Eshcol. But you indolent people, you do not get the grapes of Eshcol, because you are too lazy to carry that big bunch. You would like it to come into your mouths without the trouble of gathering it; but you do not care to go forth and serve God. You sit still and look after yourselves, but what do you do for other people? You go to your place of worship; you talk about your Sunday-school and sick society, and so on. You never teach in the Sunday-school, and you never visit a sick person, and yet you take a great deal of credit to yourself while you do nothing at all. You will never know much of the enjoyments of heavenly glory until you know a little of the work of the kingdom of heaven on earth.

Now, let us proceed to some other points. Another view of heaven is, that it is *a place of complete victory and glorious triumph*. This is the battle-field; there is the triumphal procession. This is the land of the sword and the spear; that is the land of the wreath and the crown. This is the land of the garment rolled in blood and of the dust of the fight; that is the land of the trumpet's joyful sound—that is the place of the white robe and of the shout of conquest. O, what a thrill of joy shall shoot through the hearts of all the blessed when

their conquests shall be complete in heaven, when death itself, the last of foes, shall be slain—when Satan shall be dragged captive at the chariot wheels of Christ—when he shall have overthrown sin and trampled corruption as the mire of the streets—when the great shout of universal victory shall rise from the hearts of all the redeemed! What a moment of pleasure shall that be! O, dear brethren, you and I have foretastes of even that. We know what conquests, what souls' battles we have even here. Did you never struggle against an evil heart, and at last overcome it? O, with what joy did you lift your eyes to heaven, the tears flowing down your cheeks, and say, "Lord, I bless thee that I have been able to overcome that sin." Did you ever have a strong temptation, and did you wrestle hard with it, and know what it was to sing with great joy, "My feet slipped; but thy mercy held me up?" Have you, like Bunyan's Christian, fought with old Apollyon, and have you seen him flap his dragon-wings and fly away? There you had a foretaste of heaven; you had just a guess of what the ultimate victory will be. In the death of that one Philistine you had the destruction of the whole army. That Goliath who fell beneath your sling and stone was but one out of the multitude who must yield their bodies to the fowls of heaven. God gives you partial triumphs that they may be the earnest of ultimate and complete victory. Go on and conquer, and let each conquest, though a harder one and more strenuously contested, be to you as a grape of Esheol, a foretaste of the joys of heaven.

Furthermore, without doubt one of the best views we can ever give of heaven is, that it is *a state of complete acceptance with God*, recognized and felt in the conscience. I suppose that a great part of the joy of the blessed saints consists in a knowledge that there is nothing in them to which God is hostile; that their peace with God has not any thing to mar it; that they are so completely in union with the principles and thoughts of the Most High; that his love is set on them; that their love is set on him; that they are one with God in every respect. Well, beloved, and have we not enjoyed a sense of acceptance here below? Blotted and blurred by many doubts

and fears, yet there have been moments when we have known ourselves as well accepted as we shall know ourselves to be even when we stand before the throne. There have been bright days with some of us, when we could "set to our seal" that God was true; and, when afterward, feeling that the Lord knoweth them that are his, we could say, "And I know that I am his too." There have been moments when, with an un-faltering lip, we could say,

"Now, I can call my Jesus mine;  
Now, I can all my joys resign;  
Can tread the world beneath my feet,  
And all that earth calls good and great;"

when we had such a view of the perfection of Christ's righteousness that we felt that God had accepted us, and could not do otherwise; we had such a sense of the efficacy of the blood of Christ, we felt sure that our sins were all pardoned, and that they never could be mentioned unto us in mercy for ever. And, beloved, though I have spoken of other joys, let me say, this is the cream of all of them, to know ourselves accepted in God's sight. O! to feel that I, a guilty worm, am now received in my Father's bosom; that I, a lost prodigal, am now feasting at his table with delight; that I, who once heard the voice of his anger, now listen to the notes of his love. This is joy—this is joy worth worlds. What more can they know up there than that? And were it not that our sense of it were so imperfect, we might bring heaven down to earth, and might at least dwell in the suburbs of the celestial city, if we could not be privileged to go within the gates. So you see, again, we can have bunches of the grapes of Esheol in that sense. Seeing that heaven is a state of acceptance, we, too, can know and feel that acceptance, and rejoice in it.

And, again, heaven is *a state of great and glorious manifestations*. You look forward to heaven as the place where you shall

"See, and hear, and know  
All you desire and wish below."

You are now looking at it darkly through a glass: there you shall see face to face—Christ looks down on the Bible, and the

Bible is his looking-glass. You look into it, and see the face of Christ as in a mirror darkly; but soon you shall look upon himself, and see him face to face. You expect heaven as a place of peculiar manifestations. You believe that there he will unvail his face to you; that

“Millions of years your wondering eyes  
Shall o'er your Saviour's beauties rove.”

You are expecting to see his face, and never, never sin. You are longing to know the secrets of his heart. You believe that in that day you shall see him as he is, and shall be like him in the world of spirits. Well, beloved, though Christ does not manifest himself to us as he does to the bright ones there, have not you and I had manifestations even while we have been in this vale of tears? Speak, beloved; let your heart speak; hast thou not had visions of Calvary; has not thy Master sometimes touched thy eyes with eye-salve, and let thee see him on his cross? Hast thou not said

“Here I'd sit for ever viewing  
Mercy stream in streams of blood!  
Precious drops my soul bedewing,  
Plead and claim my peace with God.”

Have you not wept for joy and grief when you saw him bleeding out his life from his heart for you, and beheld him nailed to the tree for your sakes! O yes! I know you have had such manifestations of him. And have you not seen him in his risen glories? Have you not beheld him there exalted on his throne? Have you not by faith beheld him as the Judge of the quick and the dead, and as the Prince of the kings of the earth? Have you not looked through the dim future, and seen him with the crown of all the kingdoms on his head, with the diadems of all monarchies beneath his feet, and the scepters of all thrones in his hand? Have you not anticipated the moment of his most glorious triumphs, when he

“Shall reign from pole to pole with illimitable sway?”

Yes, you have, and therein you have had foretastes of heaven. When Christ has thus revealed himself to you, you have looked



within the veil, and, therefore, you have seen what is there, you have had some glimpses of Jesus while here; those glimpses of Jesus are but the beginning of what shall never end. Those joyous melodies of praise and thanksgiving are but the preludes of the notes of Paradise.

And now, lastly, the highest idea of heaven, perhaps, is the *idea of most hallowed and blissful communion*. I have not given you near half that I might have given you of the various characteristics of heaven, as described in God's word, but communion is the best. Communion! that word so little spoken of, so seldom understood. That word, communion! Dearly beloved, you hear us say, "And the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all;" but there are many of you that do not know the meaning of that sweet heaven in a word. Communion! It is the flower of language; it is the honeycomb of words. Communion! You like to talk of corruption best, do you not? Well, if you like that filthy word, you are very willing to meditate upon it. I do so when I am forced to do it; but communion seems to me to be a sweeter word than that. You like to talk a great deal about affliction, don't you? Well, if you love the black word—ah! you have reason to love it; but if you love to be happy upon it, you may do so; but give me for my constant text and for my constant joy, communion. And I will not choose which kind of communion it shall be. Sweet Master, if thou givest me communion with thee in thy sufferings, if I have to bear reproach and shame for thy name's sake, I will thank thee; if I may have fellowship with thee in it, and if thou wilt give me to suffer for thy sake, I will call it honor, that so I can be a partaker of thy sufferings; and if thou givest me sweet enjoyments, if thou dost raise me up and make me to sit in heavenly places in Christ, I will bless thee. I will bless thee for ascension communion—communion with Christ in his glories. Do you not say the same? And for communion with Christ in death. Have you died unto the world, as Christ did die unto himself? And then have you had communion with him in resurrection? Have you felt that you are raised to newness of life, even as was he? And have you had communion with him in ascension, so that you could know yourself to be an

heir to a throne in Paradise? If so, you have had the best earnest you can receive of the joys of Paradise. To be in heaven is to lean one's head upon the breast of Jesus. You have done it on earth? Then you know what heaven is. To be in heaven is to talk with Jesus, to sit at his feet, to let our heart beat against his heart. If you have had that on earth, you have had some of the grapes of heaven.

Cherish, then, these foretastes, of whatever kind they may have been in your individual case. Differently constituted, you will all look at heaven in a different light. Keep your foretaste just as God has given it to you. He has given each of you some one; if you love it, it is most suitable to your own condition. Treasure it up; think much of it. Think more of your Master. For, remember, it is "Christ in you the hope of glory," after all, that is your only foretaste of heaven; and the more fully prepared shall you be for the bliss of the joyous ones in the land of the happy.

## SERMON X.

### PREACHING FOR THE POOR.

“The poor have the gospel preached to them.”—MATT., xi. 5

JOHN, the forerunner of Christ, had some followers who continued with him after Christ had come in the flesh, and openly manifested himself among the people. These disciples were in doubt as to whether Jesus was the Messiah or no. I believe that John himself had no doubt whatever upon the matter, for he had received positive revelations, and had given substantial testimonies on the subject. But in order to relieve their doubts, John said to his disciples, in some such words, ‘Go and ask him yourselves;’ and, therefore, he dispatched them with this message, ‘Tell us whether thou art he that should come, or do we look for another?’ Jesus Christ continuing his preaching for a while, said, ‘Stay and receive your answer;’ and instead of giving them an affirmative reply, ‘I am that Messiah,’ he said, ‘Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.’ As much as to say, ‘That is my answer; these things are my testimonies—on the one hand, that I come from God, and, on the other hand, that I am *the Messiah*.’ You will see the truth and force of this reply, if you will observe that it was prophesied of the Messiah, that he should do the very things which Jesus at that moment was doing. It is said of Messias, in the 35th chapter of Isaiah, at the 5th and 6th verses: ‘Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing; for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.’

The Jews had forgotten this too much ; they only looked for a Messiah who should be clothed with temporal grandeur and dignity, and they overlooked the teaching of Isaiah, that he should be “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” And, besides that, you observe, they overlooked the miracles which it was prophesied should attend the coming of the glorious one, the King of kings and Lord of lords. Jesus gave this as his answer—a practical demonstration of John’s problem, proving it to an absolute certainty. But he not only referred to the miracles, he gave them a further proof—“The poor have the gospel preached to them.” This, also, was one evidence that he was Messiah. For Isaiah, the great Messianic prophet, had said, “He shall preach the gospel unto the meek ;” that is, the poor. And in that Jesus did so, it was proved that he was the man intended by Isaiah. Beside, Zechariah mentions the congregation of the poor who attend on him, and therein evidently foretold the coming of Jesus Christ, the preacher to the poor.

I shall not, however, dwell upon these circumstances this morning ; it must be apparent to every hearer, that here is sufficient proof that Jesus Christ is the person who had been foretold under the name of Shiloh, or Messiah. We all believe *that*, and, therefore, there is little need that I should try to prove what you have already received. I rather select my text this morning as one of the constant marks of the gospel in all ages and in every land. “The poor have the gospel preached to them.” This is to be its *semper eadem*, its constant stamp. And we believe, where the poor have not the gospel preached unto them, there is a departure from the dispensation of the gospel, the forsaking of this which was to be a fundamental trait and characteristic of the gospel dispensation : “The poor have the gospel preached to them.”

I find that these words will bear three translations ; I shall, therefore, have three heads, which shall be composed of three translations of the text. The first is that of *the authorized version* : “The poor have the gospel preached to them ;” it is also Tyndal’s version. The second is *the version of Cranmer, and the version of Geneva*, which is the best, “The poor are evangelized,” that is to say, they not only hear the gospel,

but they are influenced by it—the poor receive it. The last is the translation of *some eminent writers*, and above all of *Wyckliffe*, which amused me when I read it, although I believe it to be as correct as any of the others. *Wyckliffe* translates it—“pore men ben taken to prechyng of the gospel.” The verb may be equally well translated in the active as in the passive sense: “The poor have taken to the preaching of the gospel.” That is to be one of the marks of the gospel dispensation in all times.

I. First, then, THE AUTHORIZED VERSION, “The poor have the gospel preached to them.” It was so in Christ’s day; it is to be so with Christ’s gospel to the end of time. Almost every impostor who has come into the world has aimed principally at the rich, and the mighty, and the respectable; very few impostors have found it to be worth their while to make it prominent in their preaching that they preach to the poor. They went before princes to promulgate their doctrines; they sought the halls of nobles, where they might expatiate upon their pretended revelations. Few of them thought it worth their while to address themselves to those who have been most wickedly-called “the swinish multitude,” and to speak to them the glorious things of the gospel of Christ. But it is one delightful mark of Christ’s dispensation, that he aims first at the poor. “The poor have the gospel preached to them.” It was wise in him to do so. If we would fire a building, it is best to light it at the basement; so our Saviour, when he would save a world, and convert men of all classes and all ranks, begins at the lowest rank, that the fire may burn upward, knowing right well that what is received by the poor will ultimately by his grace be received by the rich also. Nevertheless, he chose this to be given to his disciples, and to be the mark of his gospel—“the poor have the gospel preached unto them.” Now, I have some things to say this morning, which I think are absolutely necessary if the poor are to have the gospel preached unto them.

In the first place, let me say, then, *that the gospel must be preached where the poor can come and hear it.* How can the poor have the gospel preached to them, if they can not come and listen to it? and yet how many of our places of worship

are there into which they can not come, and into which, if they could come, they would only come as inferior creatures. They may sit in the back seats, but are not to be known and recognized as any thing like other people. Hence the absolute necessity of having places of worship large enough to accommodate the multitude; and hence, moreover, the obligation to go out into the highways and hedges. If the poor are to have the gospel preached unto them, then we must take it where they can get it. If I wanted to preach to English people, it would be of no use for me to go and stand on one of the peaks of the Himalayas, and begin preaching; they could not hear me there. And it is of little avail to build a gorgeous structure for a fashionable congregation, and then to think of preaching to the poor; they can not come any more than the Hottentots can make the journey from Africa and listen to me here. I should not expect them to come to such a place, nor will they willingly enter it. The gospel should be preached, then, where the poor will come; and if they will not come after it, then let it be taken to them. We should have places where there is accommodation for them, and where they are regarded and respected as much as any other rank and condition of men. It is with this view alone that I have labored earnestly to be the means of building a large place of worship, because I feel that although the bulk of my congregation in New Park-street chapel are poor, yet there are many poor who can, by no possibility, enter the doors, because we can not find room for the multitudes to be received. You ask me why I do not preach in the street. I reply, I would do so, and am constantly doing so in every place except London, but here I can not do it, since it would amount to an absolute breach of the peace: it is impossible to conceive what a multitude of people must be necessarily assembled. I trembled when I saw twelve thousand on the last occasion I preached in the open air; therefore I have thought it best, for the present at least, to desist, until happily there shall be fewer to follow me. Otherwise my heart is in the open air movement; I practice it everywhere else, and I pray God to give to our ministers zeal and earnestness, that they may take the gospel into the streets, highways and by-ways, and compel the people to come

in, that the house may be filled. O that God would give this characteristic mark of his precious grace, that the poor might have the gospel preached unto them.

“But,” you reply, “there are plenty of churches and chapels to which they might come.” I answer, yes, but that is only one half of the matter. *The gospel must be preached attractively* before the poor will have the gospel preached unto them. Why, there is no attraction in the gospel to the great mass of our race, as it is currently preached. I confess that when I have a violent headache, and can not sleep, I could almost wish for some droning minister to preach to me; I feel certain I could go to sleep then, for I have heard some under the soporific influence of whose eloquence I could most comfortably snore. But it is not at all likely that the poor will ever go to hear such preachers as these. If they are preached to in fine terms—in grandiloquent language which they can not lay hold of—the poor will not have the gospel preached to them, for they will not go to hear it. They must have something attractive to them; we must preach as Christ did; we must tell anecdotes, and stories, and parables, as he did; we must come down and make the gospel attractive. The reason why the old Puritan preachers could get congregations was this—they did not give their hearers dry theology; they illustrated it; they had an anecdote from this and a quaint passage from that classic author; here a verse of poetry; here and there even a quip or pun—a thing which now-a-days is a sin above all sins, but which was constantly committed by these preachers, whom I have ever esteemed as the patterns of pulpit eloquence. Christ Jesus was an attractive preacher; he sought above all means to set the pearl in a frame of gold, that it might attract the attention of the people. He was not willing to place himself in a parish church, and preach to a large congregation of thirteen and a-half, like our good brethren in the city, but would preach in such a style that people felt they must go to hear him. Some of them gnashed their teeth in rage and left his presence in wrath, but the multitudes still thronged to him to hear and to be healed. It was no dull work to hear this King of preachers, he was too much in earnest to be dull, and too humane to be incomprehensible. I be

lieve that until it is imitated, the poor will not have the gospel preached to them. There must be an interesting style adopted, to bring the people to hear. But if we adopt such a style they will call us clownish, vulgar, and so on. Blessed be God, we have long learned that vulgarity is a very different thing from what some men suppose. We have been so taught, that we are willing to be even clowns for Christ's sake, and so long as we are seeing souls saved we are not likely to alter our course. During this last week I have seen, I believe, a score of persons who have been in the lowest ranks, the very meanest sinners, the greatest of transgressors, who have, through preaching in this place, been restored and reclaimed. Do you think, then, that I shall shear my locks to please the Philistine? O, no; by the grace of God, Samson knoweth where his strength lieth, and is not likely to do that to please any man, or any set of men. Preaching must reach the popular ear; and to get at the people it must be interesting to them, and by the grace of God we hope it shall be.

But, in the next place, if the poor are to have the gospel preached unto them, *it must be preached simply*. It is a waste of time to preach Latin to you, is it not? To the multitude of people it is of no use delivering a discourse in Greek. Possibly five or six of the assembly might be mightily edified, and go away delighted; but what of that? The mass would retire unedified and uninstructed. You talk about the education of the people, don't you, and about the vast extent of English refinement? For the most part it is a dream. Ignorance is not buried yet. The language of one class of Englishmen is a dead language to another class; and many a word which is very plain to many of us, is as hard and difficult a word to the multitude as if it had been culled out of Hindostani or Bengali. There are multitudes who can not understand words composed of Latin, but must have the truth told them in round homely Saxon, if it is to reach their hearts. There is my friend the Rev. So-and-so, Doctor of Divinity; he is a great student; and whenever he finds a hard word in his books he tells it next Sunday to his congregation. He has a little intellectual circle, who think his preaching must be good, because they can not understand it, and who think it proven



that he must be an intelligent man because all the pews are empty. They believe he must be a very useful member of society; in fact, they compare him to Luther, and think he is a second Paul, because nobody will listen to him, seeing it is impossible to understand him. Well, we conceive of that good man that he may have a work to do, but we do not know what it is. There is another friend of ours, Mr. Cloudyton, who always preaches in such a style that if you should try to dissect the sermon for a week afterwards you could by no possibility tell what he meant. If you could look at things from his point of view you might possibly discover something; but it does appear by his preaching as if himself had lost his way in a fog, and were scattering a whole mass of mist about him everywhere. I suppose he goes so deep down into the subject that he stirs the mud at the bottom, and he can not find his way up again. There are some such preachers, whom you can not possibly understand. Now, we say, and say very boldly too, that while such preaching may be esteemed by some people to be good, we have no faith in it at all. If ever the world is to be reclaimed, and if sinners are to be saved, we can see no likelihood in the world of its being done by such means. We think the word must be understood before it can really penetrate the conscience and the heart; and we would always be preaching such as men can understand, otherwise the poor will not "have the gospel preached to them." Why did John Bunyan become the apostle of Bedfordshire and Huntingdonshire, and round about? It was because John Bunyan, while he had a surpassing genius, would not condescend to cull his language from the garden of flowers, but he went into the hayfield, and the meadow, and plucked up his language by the roots, and spoke out in the words that the people used in their cottages. Why is it that God has blessed other men to the stirring of the people, to the bringing about of spiritual revivals, to the renewal of the power of godliness? We believe it has always been owing to this, under God's Spirit, that they have adopted the phraseology of the people, and have not been ashamed to be despised because they talked as common people did.

But now we have something to say more important than

this. We may preach, very simply too, and very attractively, and yet it may not be true that "the poor have the gospel preached to them," for the poor may have something else preached to them beside the gospel. It is, then, highly important that we should each of us ask what the gospel is, and that when we think we know it we should not be ashamed to say, "this is the gospel, and I will preach it boldly, though all men should deny it." O! I fear that there is such a thing as preaching another gospel, "which is not another, but there be some that trouble us." There is such a thing as preaching science and philosophy attractively, but not preaching the gospel. Mark, it is not preaching, but it is preaching the gospel that is the mark of Christ's dispensation and of his truth. Let us take care to preach fully the depravity of man, let us dwell thoroughly upon his lost and ruined estate under the law, and his restoration under the gospel; let us preach of these three things, for, as a good brother said, "The gospel lies in three things, the word of God only, the blood of Christ only, and the Holy Spirit only." These three things make up the gospel. "The Bible, the Bible alone the religion of Protestants; the blood of Christ the only salvation from sin, the only means of the pardon of our guilt; and the Holy Spirit the only regenerator, the only converting power that will alone work in us to will and to do of his good pleasure." Without these three things there is no gospel. Let us take heed, then, for it is a serious matter, that when the people listen to us, it is *the gospel* that we preach, or else we may be as guilty as was Nero, the tyrant, who, when Rome was starving, sent his ships to Alexandria, where there was corn in plenty, not for wheat, but for sand to scatter in the arena for his gladiators. Ah! there be some who seem to do so—scattering the floor of their sanctuary not with the good corn of the kingdom, upon which the soul's of God's people may feed and grow thereby, but with sand of controversy, sand of logic, which no child of God can ever receive to his soul's profit. "The poor have the gospel preached to them." Let us take heed that it is the gospel. Hear, then, ye chief of sinners, the voice of Jesus: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I

am chief." "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." "Whosoever believeth and is baptized shall be saved." "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

And just one more hint on this point, namely, this—it must be said of us, if we would keep true to Christ's rule and apostolic practice, that "the poor have the gospel *preached* to them." In these days there is a growing hatred of the pulpit. The pulpit has maintained its ground full many a year, but partially by its becoming inefficient, it is losing its high position. Through a timid abuse of it, instead of a strong, stiff use of the pulpit, the world has come to despise it; and now most certainly we are not a priest-ridden people one half so much as we are a press-ridden people. By the press we are ridden indeed. Mercuries, Dispatches, Journals, Gazettes, and Magazines, are now the judges of pulpit eloquence and style. They thrust themselves into the censor's seat, and censure those whose office it should rather be to censure them. The pulpit has become dishonored; it is esteemed as being of very little worth and of no esteem. Ah! we must always maintain the dignity of the pulpit. I hold that it is the *Therompylæ* of Christendom; it is here that the battle must be fought between right and wrong; not so much with the pen, valuable as that is as an assistant, as with the living voice of earnest men, "contending earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints." In some churches the pulpit is put away; there is a prominent altar, but the pulpit is omitted. Now, the most prominent thing under the gospel dispensation is not the altar, which belonged to the Jewish dispensation, but the pulpit. "We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacles;" that altar is Christ; but Christ has been pleased to exalt "the foolishness of preaching" to the most prominent position in his house of prayer. We must take heed that we always maintain preaching. It is this that God will bless; it is this that he has promised to crown with success. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." We must not expect to see great changes, nor any great progress of the gospel, until there is greater esteem for the pulpit—more said of it and thought of

it. "Well," some may reply, "you speak of the dignity of the pulpit; I take it, you lower it yourself, sir, by speaking in such a style to your hearers." Ah! no doubt you think so. Some pulpits die of dignity. I take it, the greatest dignity in the world is the dignity of converts—that the glory of the pulpit is, if I may use such a metaphor, to have captives at its chariot wheels, to see converts following it, and where there are such, and those from the very worst of men; there is a dignity in the pulpit beyond any dignity which a fine mouth-  
ing of words and a grand selection of fantastic language could ever give to it. "The poor have the gospel preached to them."

II. Now, the next translation is, THE TRANSLATION OF GENEVA, principally used by Calvin in his commentary; and it is also the translation of Thomas Cranmer, whose translation, I believe, was at least in some degree molded by the Genevan translation. He translates it thus: "The poor receive the gospel." The Genevan translation has it, "The poor receive the glad tidings of the gospel," which is a tautology, since glad tidings mean the same thing as gospel. The Greek has it, "The poor are evangelized." Now, what is the meaning of this word "evangelized?" They talk with a sneer in these days of evangelical drawing-rooms and evangelicals, and so on. It is one of the most singular sneers in the world, for to call a man an evangelical by way of joke, is the same as calling a man a gentleman by way of scoffing at him. To say a man is one of the gospellers, by way of scorn, is like calling a man a king by way of contempt. It is an honorable, a great, a glorious title, and nothing is more honorable than to be ranked among the evangelicals. What is meant, then, by the people being evangelized? Old Master Burkitt, thinking that we should not easily understand the word, says, that as a man is said to be Italianized by living among the Italians, getting their manners and customs, and becoming a citizen of the state, so a man is evangelized when he lives where the gospel is preached, and gets the manners and customs of those who profess it. Now, that is one meaning of the text. One of the proofs of our Saviour's mission is not only that the poor hear the Word, but are influenced by it and are gospelized. O

how great a work it is to gospelize any man, and to gospelize a poor man. What does it mean? It means, to make him *like* the gospel. Now, the gospel is holy, just, and true, and loving, and honest, and benevolent, and kind, and gracious. So, then, to gospelize a man is to make a rogue honest, to make a harlot modest, to make a profane man serious, to make a grasping man liberal, to make a covetous man benevolent, to make the drunken man sober, to make the untruthful man truthful, to make the unkind man loving, to make the hater the lover of his species, and, in a word, to gospelize a man is, in his outward character, to bring him into such a condition that he labors to carry out the command of Christ, "Love thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself." Gospelizing, furthermore, has something to do with an inner principle; gospelizing a man means saving him from hell and making him a heavenly character; it means blotting out his sins, writing a new name upon his heart—the new name of God. It means bringing him to know his election, to put his trust in Christ, to renounce his sins, and his good works too, and to trust solely and wholly upon Jesus Christ, as his Redeemer. O! what a blessed thing it is to be gospelized! How many of you have been so gospelized? The Lord grant that the whole of us may feel the influence of the gospel. I contend for this, that to gospelize a man is the greatest miracle in the world. All the other miracles are wrapped up in this one. To gospelize a man, or, in other words, to convert him, is a greater work than to open the eyes of the blind; for is it not opening the eyes of the blind soul that he may see spiritual matters, and understand the things of heavenly wisdom, and is not a surgical operation easier than an operation on the soul? Souls we can not touch, although science and skill have been able to remove films and cataracts from the eyes. "The lame walk." Gospelizing a man is more than this. It is not only making a lame man walk, but it is making a dead man who could not walk in the right way, walk in the right way ever afterward. "The lepers are cleansed." Ah! but to cleanse a sinner is greater work than cleansing a leper. "The deaf hear." Yes, and to make a man, who never listened to the voice of God, hear the voice of his Maker, is a miracle greater

than to make the deaf hear, or even to raise the dead. **Great** though that be, it is not a more stupendous effort of divine power than to save a soul, since men are naturally dead in sins, and must be quickened by divine grace if they are saved. To gospelize a man is the highest instance of divine might, and remains an unparalleled miracle, a miracle of miracles. "The poor are evangelized."

Beloved, there have been some very precious specimens of poor people who have come under the influence of the gospel. I think I appeal to the hearts of all of you who are now present, when I say there is nothing we more reverence and respect than the piety of the poor and needy. I had an engraving sent to me the other day which pleased me beyond measure. It was an engraving simply but exquisitely executed. It represented a poor girl in an upper room, with a lean-to roof. There was a post driven in the ground, on which was a piece of wood, standing on which were a candle and a Bible. She was on her knees at a chair, praying, wrestling with God. Every thing in the room had on it the stamp of poverty. There was the mean coverlet to the old stump bedstead; there were the walls that had never been papered, and perhaps scarcely whitewashed. It was an upper story to which she had climbed with aching knees, and where, perhaps, she had worked away till her fingers were worn to the bone, to earn her bread at needle-work. There it was that she was wrestling with God. Some would turn away and laugh at it; but it appeals to the best feelings of man, and moves the heart far more than does the fine engraving of the monarch on his knees in the grand assembly. We have had lately a most excellent volume, the *Life of Captain Hedley Vicars*; it is calculated to do great good, and I pray God to bless it; but I question whether the history of Captain Hedley Vicars will last as long in the public mind as the history of the *Dairyman's Daughter* or the *Shepherd of Salisbury Plain*. The histories of those who have come from the ranks of the poor always lay hold of the Christian mind. O! we love piety anywhere; we bless God when coronets and grace go together; but if piety in any place does shine more brightly than anywhere else, it is in rags and poverty. When the poor

woman in the almshouse takes her bread and her water, and blesses God for both—when the poor creature who has not where to lay his head, yet lifts his eye and says, “My Father will provide,” it is then like the glow-worm in the damp leaves, a spark the more conspicuous for the blackness around it. Their religion gleams in its true brightness, and is seen in all its luster. It is a mark of Christ’s gospel that the poor are gospelized—that they can receive the gospel. True, it is, the gospel affects all ranks, and is equally adapted to them all; but yet we say, “If one class be more prominent than another, we believe that in Holy Scripture the poor are most of all appealed to.” “O!” say some very often, “the converts whom God has given to such a man are all from the lower ranks; they are all people with no sense; they are all uneducated people that hear such and such a person.” Very well, if you say so; we might deny it if we pleased, but we do not know that we shall take the trouble, because we think it no disgrace whatever; we think it rather to be an honor that the poor are evangelized, and that they listen to the gospel from our lips. I have never thought it a disgrace at any time. When any have said, “Look, what a mass of uneducated people they are.” Yes, I have thought, and blessed be God they are, for those are the very people that want the gospel most. If you saw a physician’s door surrounded by a number of ladies of the sentimental school, who are sick about three times a week, and never were ill at all—if it were said he cured them, you would say, “No great wonder too, for there never was any thing the matter with them.” But if you heard of another man, that people with the worst diseases have come to him, and that God has made use of him, and his medicine has been the means of healing their diseases; you would then say, “There is something in it, for the people that want it most have received it.” If, then, it be true that the poor will come to hear the gospel more than others, it is no disgrace to the gospel, it is an honor to it that those who most want it do freely receive it.

III. And now I must close up by briefly dwelling on the last point. It was the third translation, **WYCKLIFFE’S TRANSLATION**. To give it you in old English—“Poor men are

taking to the preaching of the gospel." "Ah!" say some, "they had better remain at home, minding their plows or their blacksmith's hammer; they had better have kept on with their tinkering and tailoring, and not have turned preachers. But it is one of the honors of the gospel that poor men have taken to the preaching of it. There was a tinker once, and let the worldly-wise blush when they hear of it—there was a tinker once, a tinker of whom a great divine said he would give all his learning if he could preach like him. There was a tinker once, who ne'er so much as brushed his back against the walls of a college, who wrote a Pilgrim's Progress. Did ever a doctor in divinity write such a book? There was a pot-boy once—a boy who carried on his back the pewter-pots for his mother, who kept the Old Bell. That man drove men mad, as the world had it, but led them to Christ, as we have it, all his life long, until, loaded with honors he sank into his grave, with the good will of a multitude round about him, with an imperishable name written in the world's records, as well as in the records of the church. Did you ever hear of any mighty man, whose name stood in more esteem among God's people than the name of George Whitefield. And yet these were poor men, who, as Wyckliffe said, were taking to the preaching of the gospel. If you will read the life of Wyckliffe, you will find him saying there, that he believed that the Reformation in England was more promoted by the labors of the poor men, whom he sent out from Lutterworth than by his own. He gathered round him a number of the poor people whom he instructed in the faith, and then he sent them two and two into every village, as Jesus did. They went into the market-place and they gathered the people around; they opened the book and read a chapter, and then they left them a manuscript of it, which for months and years after the people would assemble to read, and would remember the gossellers that had come to tell them the gospel of Christ. These men went from market-place to market-place, from town to town, and from village to village, and though their names are unknown to fame, they were the real reformers. You may talk of Cranmer and Latimer and Ridley; they did much, but the real reformers of the English nation were people



whose names have perished from the annals of time, but are written in the records of eternity. God has blessed the poor man in preaching the truth. Far be it from me to depreciate learning and wisdom. We should not have had the Bible translated without learning, and the more learning a man can have, if he be a sanctified man, the better; he has so many more talents to lay out in his Master's service; but it is not absolutely necessary for preaching of the Word. Rough, untamed, untaught energy, has done much in the church. A Boanerges has stood up in a village; he could not put three words together in grammatical English; but where the drowsy parson had for many a year lulled all his people into an unhallowed rest, this man started up, like the herdsman Amos, and brought about a great awakening. He began to preach in some cottage; people thronged around him, then a house was built, and his name is handed down to us as the Rev. So-and-so, but then he was known as Tom the plowman, or John the tinker. God has made use of men whose origin was the most obscure, who seemed to have little, except the gifts of nature, which could be made use of in God's service; and we hold that this is no disgrace, but on the contrary an honor, that poor men are taking to preaching the gospel.

And now, beloved, I have opened my mouth for the dumb, and pleaded the cause of the poor, let me end by entreating the poor of the flock to consider the poor man's Christ; let me urge them to give him their thoughts, and may the Lord enable them to yield him their hearts. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

May God bless the high and low, the rich and poor; **yea** all of you, for his name's sake.

# S E R M O N X I .

## S E C R E T S I N S .

“Cleanse thou me from secret faults.”—PSALM xix. 12

SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS arises partly from pride, but mainly from ignorance of God's law. It is because men know little or nothing concerning the terrible character of the divine law, that they foolishly imagine themselves to be righteous. They are not aware of the deep spirituality, and the stern severity of the law, or they would have other and wiser notions. Once let them know how strictly the law deals with the thoughts, how it brings itself to bear upon every emotion of the inner man, and there is not one creature beneath God's heaven who would dare to think himself righteous in God's sight in virtue of his own deeds and thoughts. Only let the law be revealed to a man; let him know how strict the law is, and how infinitely just, and his self-righteousness will shrivel into nothing—it will become a filthy rag in his sight, whereas before he thought it to be a goodly garment.

Now, David, having seen God's law, and having praised it in his Psalm, which I have read in your hearing, he is brought by reflecting on its excellency to utter this thought, “Who can understand his errors?” and then to offer this prayer, “Cleanse thou me from secret faults.”

In the Lateran Council of the Church of Rome, a decree was passed that every true believer must confess his sins, all of them, once in a year to the priest, and they affixed to it this declaration, that there is no hope of pardon but in complying with that decree. What can equal the absurdity of such a decree as that? Do they suppose they can tell their sins as easily as they can count their fingers? Why, if we could receive pardon for all our sins by telling every sin we have com

mitted in one hour, there is not one of us who would be able to enter heaven, since, besides the sins that are known to us and that we are able to confess, there are a vast mass of sins which are as truly sins as those which we do not observe, but which are secret and come not beneath our eye. O! if we had eyes like those of God, we should think very differently of ourselves. The sins that we see and confess are but like the farmer's small samples which he brings to market, when he has left his granary full at home. We have but a very few sins which we can observe and detect, compared with those which are hidden to ourselves and unseen to our fellow creatures. I doubt not it is true of all of us who are here, that in every hour of our existence in which we are active, we commit tens of thousands of unholinesses for which conscience has never reprov'd us, because we have never seen them to be wrong, seeing we have not studied God's laws as we ought to have done. Now, be it known to us all that sin is sin, whether we see it or not—that a sin secret to us is a sin as truly as if we knew it to be a sin, though not so great a sin in the sight of God as if it had been committed presumptuously, seeing that it lacks the aggravation of wilfulness. Let all of us who know our sins, offer this prayer after all our confessions: "Lord, I have confessed as many as I know, but I must add an *et cetera* after them, and say, 'Cleanse thou me from secret faults.'"

That, however, will not be the pith of my sermon this morning. I am going after a certain class of men who have sins not unknown to themselves, but secret to their fellow creatures. Every now and then we turn up a fair stone which lies upon the greensward of the professing church, surrounded with the verdure of apparent goodness, and to our astonishment we find beneath all kinds of filthy insects and loathsome reptiles, and in our disgust at such hypocrisy, we are driven to exclaim, "All men are liars; there are none in whom we can put any trust at all." It is not fair to say so of all; but really, the discoveries which are made of the insincerity of our fellow creatures are enough to make us despise our kind, because they can go so far in appearances, and yet have so little soundness of heart. To you, sirs, who sin secretly, and yet make a

profession ; who break God's covenants in the dark and wear a mask of goodness in the light—to you, sirs, who shut the doors and commit wickedness in secret—to you I shall speak this morning. O may God also be pleased to speak to you, and make you pray this prayer, “Cleanse thou me from secret faults.”

I shall endeavor to urge upon all pretenders present to give up, to renounce, to detest, to hate, to abhor all their secret sins. And, first, I shall endeavor to show *the folly of secret sins* ; secondly, *the misery of secret sins* ; thirdly, *the guilt of secret sins* ; fourthly, *the danger of secret sins* ; and then I shall try to apply some words by way of remedy, that we may all of us be enabled to avoid secret sins.

#### I. First, then, THE FOLLY OF SECRET SINS.

Pretender, thou art fair to look upon ; thy conduct outwardly upright, amiable, liberal, generous, and Christian ; but thou dost indulge in some sin which the eye of man has not yet detected. Perhaps it is private drunkenness. Thou dost revile the drunkard when he staggers through the street ; but thou canst thyself indulge in the same habit in private. It may be some other lust or vice, it is not for me just now to mention what it is. But, pretender, we say unto thee, thou art a fool to think of harboring a secret sin ; and thou art a fool for this one reason, that thy sin is not a secret sin ; *it is known*, and shall one day be revealed ; perhaps very soon. Thy sin is not a secret ; the eye of God hath seen it ; thou hast sinned before his face. Thou hast shut to the door, and drawn the curtains, and kept out the eye of the sun, but God's eye pierceth through the darkness ; the brick walls which surrounded thee were as transparent as glass to the eye of the Almighty ; the darkness which did gird thee was as bright as the summer's noon to the eye of him who beholdeth all things. Knowest thou not, O man, that “all things are naked and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do ?” As the priest ran his knife into the entrails of his victim, discovered the heart and liver, and what else did lie within, so art thou, O man, seen by God, cut open by the Almighty ; thou hast no secret chamber where thou canst hide thyself thou hast no dark cellar where thou canst conceal thy soul. Dig

deep, ay, deep as hell, but thou canst not find earth enough upon this globe to cover thy sin; if thou shouldst heap the mountains on its grave, those mountains would tell the tale of what was buried in their bowels. If thou couldst cast thy sin into the sea, a thousand babbling waves would tell the secret out. There is no hiding it from God. Thy sin is photographed in high heaven; the deed when it was done was photographed upon the sky, and there it shall remain, and thou shalt see thyself one day revealed to the gazing eyes of all men, a hypocrite, a pretender, who didst sin in fancied secret, observed in all thine acts by the all-seeing Jehovah. O what fools men are, to think they can do any thing in secret. This world is like the glass hives wherein bees sometimes work; we look down upon them, and we see all the operations of the little creatures. So God looketh down and seeth all. Our eyes are weak; we can not look through the darkness; but his eye, like an orb of flame, penetrateth the blackness, and readeth the thoughts of man, and seeth his acts when he thinks himself most concealed. O it were a thought enough to curb us all from sin, if it were truly applied to us—"Thou, God, seest me!" Stop thief! Drop thou that which thou hast taken to thyself. God seeth thee! No eye of detection on earth hath discovered thee, but God's eyes are now looking through the clouds upon thee. Swearer! scarce any for whom thou carest heard thy oath; but God heard it; it entered into the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth. Ah! thou who leadest a filthy life, and yet art a respectable merchant, bearing among men a fair and goodly character, thy vices are all known; written in God's book. He keepeth a diary of all thine acts; and what wilt thou think on that day when a crowd shall be assembled, compared with which this immense multitude is but a drop of a bucket, and God shall read out the story of thy secret life, and men and angels shall hear it. Certain I am there are none of us who would like to have all our secrets read, especially our secret thoughts. If I should select out of this congregation the most holy man, should bring him forward and say, "Now, sir, I know all your thoughts, and am about to tell them," I am sure he would offer me the largest bribe that he could gather if I would be pleased to conceal at

least some of them. "Tell," he would say, 'of my acts; of them I am not ashamed; but do not tell my thoughts and imaginations—of them I must ever stand ashamed before God.'" What, then, sinner, will be thy shame when thy privy lusts, thy closet transgressions, thy secret crimes shall be gazetted from God's throne, published by his own mouth, and with a voice louder than a thousand thunders preached in the ears of an assembled world? What will be thy terror and confusion then, when all the deeds thou hast done shall be published in the face of the sun, in the ears of all mankind. O renounce the foolish hope of secrecy, for thy sin is this day recorded, and shall one day be advertised upon the walls of heaven.

II. In the next place, let us notice THE MISERY OF SECRET SINS.

Of all the sinners, the man who makes a profession of religion, and yet lives in iniquity, is the most miserable. A downright wicked man, who takes a glass in his hand, and says, "I am a drunkard, I am not ashamed of it," he shall be unutterably miserable in worlds to come, but brief though it be, he has his hour of pleasure. A man who curses and swears, and says, "That is my habit I am a profane man," and makes a profession of it, he has at least, some peace in his soul; but the man who walks with God's minister, who is united with God's church, who comes out before God's people, and unites with them, and then lives in sin, what a miserable existence he must have of it! Why, he has a worse existence than the mouse that is in the parlor, running out now and then to pick up the crumbs, and then back again to his hole. Such men must run out now and then to sin; and O! how fearful they are to be discovered! One day, perhaps, their character turns up; with wonderful cunning they manage to conceal and gloss it over; but the next day something else comes, and they live in constant fear, telling lie after lie, to make the last lie appear truthful, adding deception to deception, in order that they may not be discovered.

"O! 'tis a tangled web we weave,  
When once we venture to deceive."

If I must be a wicked man, give me the life of a roystering sinner, who sins before the face of day; if I must sin, let me not act as a hypocrite and a coward; let me not profess to be God's and spend my life for the devil. This way of cheating the devil is a thing which every honest sinner will be ashamed of. He will say, "Now, if I do serve my master I will serve him out and out, I will have no sham about it; if I make a profession I will carry it out; but if I do not, if I live in sin, I am not going to gloss it over by cant and hypocrisy." One thing which has ham-stringed the church, and cut her very sinews in twain, has been this most damnable hypocrisy. O! in how many places have we men whom you might praise to the very skies, if you could believe their words, but whom you might cast into the nethermost pit if you could see their secret actions. God forgive any of you who are so acting! I had almost said, I can scarce forgive you. I can forgive the man who riots openly, and makes no profession of being better, but the man who fawns, and cants, and pretends and prays, and then lives in sin, that man I hate, I can not bear him, I abhor him from my very soul. If he will turn from his ways, I will love him, but in his hypocrisy he is to me the most loathsome of all creatures. 'Tis said the toad doth wear a jewel in her head, but this man hath none, but beareth filthiness about him, while he pretends to be in love with righteousness. A mere profession, my hearers, is but painted pageantry to go to hell in: it is like the plumes upon the hearse and the trappings upon the black horses which drag men to their graves, the funeral array of dead souls. Take heed above every thing of a waxen profession that will not stand the sun; take care of a life that needs to have two faces to carry it out; be one thing, or else the other. If you make up your mind to serve Satan, do not pretend to serve God; and if you serve God, serve him with all your heart. "No man can serve two masters;" do not try it, do not endeavor to do it, for no life will be more miserable than that. Above all, beware of committing acts which it will be necessary to conceal. There is a singular poem by Hood, called "The Dream of Eugene Aram"—a most remarkable piece it is indeed, illustrating the point on which I am now dwelling. Aram has murdered a man and

cast his body into the river—"a sluggish water, black as ink, the depth was so extreme." The next morning he visited the scene of his guilt,

"And sought the black accursed pool,  
With a wild misgiving eye;  
And he saw the dead in the river bed,  
For the faithless stream was dry."

Next he covered the corpse with heaps of leaves, but a mighty wind swept through the wood and left the secret bare before the sun.

"Then down I cast me on my face,  
And first began to weep,  
For I knew my secret then was one  
That earth refused to keep,  
On land or sea, though it should be  
Ten thousand fathoms deep."

In plaintive notes he prophesies his own discovery. He buried his victim in a cave, and trod him down with stones, but when years had run their weary round the foul deed was discovered and the murderer put to death.

Guilt is a "grim chamberlain," even when his fingers are not bloody red. Secret sins bring fevered eyes and sleepless nights, until men burn out their consciences, and become in very deed ripe for the pit. Hypocrisy is a hard game to play at, for it is one deceiver against many observers; and for certain it is a miserable trade, which will earn at last, as its certain climax, a tremendous bankruptcy. Ah! ye who have sinned without discovery, 'be sure your sins will find you out;' and bethink you it may find you out ere long. Sin, like murder, will come out; men will even tell tales about themselves in their dreams. God has sometimes made men so pricked in their consciences, that they have been obliged to stand forth and confess the story. Secret sinner! if thou wantest the foretaste of damnation upon earth, continue in thy secret sins; for no man is more miserable than he who sinneth secretly, and yet trieth to preserve a character. You stag, followed by the hungry hounds, with open mouths, is far more happy than the man who is followed by his sins. You bird taken in the fowler's net, and laboring to escape, is far



more nappy than he who hath weaved around himself a web of deception, and labors to escape from it day by day by making the toils more thick and the web more strong. O! the misery of secret sins! Truly, one may pray, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults."

### III. But now, next, the guilt, THE SOLEMN GUILT OF SECRET SIN.

Now, John, you do not think there is any evil in a thing unless some body sees it, do you? You feel that it is a very great sin if your master finds you out in robbing the till; but there is no sin if he should not discover it—none at all. And you, sir, you fancy it to be a very great sin to play a trick in trade, in case you should be discovered and brought before the court; but to play a trick and never be discovered, that is all fair—do not say a word about it, Mr. Spurgeon, it is all business; you must not touch business; tricks that are not discovered, of course you are not to find fault with them. The common measure of sin is the notoriety of it. But I do not believe in that. A sin is a sin, whether done in private or before the wide world. It is singular how men will measure guilt. A railway servant puts up a wrong signal, there is an accident; the man is tried and severely reprimanded. The day before he put up the wrong signal, but there was no accident, and therefore no one accused him for his neglect. But it was just the same, accident or no accident: the accident did not make the guilt, it was the deed which made the guilt, not the notoriety nor yet the consequence of it. It was his business to have taken care; and he was as guilty the first time as he was the second, for he negligently exposed the lives of men. Do not measure sin by what other people say of it; but measure sin by what God says of it, and what your own conscience says of it.

Now, I hold that secret sin, if any thing, is the worst of sin; because secret sin implies that the man who commits it has Atheism in his heart. You will ask how that can be. I reply, he may be a professing Christian, but I shall tell him to his face that he is a practical Atheist, if he labors to keep up a respectable profession before man, and then secretly transgresses. Why, is not he an Atheist, who will say there is a

God, yet at the same time thinks more of man than he does of God? Is it not the very essence of Atheism—is it not a denial of the divinity of the Most High when men lightly esteem him and think more of the eye of a creature than of the observation of their Creator? There are some who would not, for the life of them, say a wicked word in the presence of their minister, but they can do it, knowing God is looking at them. They are Atheists. There are some who would not trick in trade for all the world if they thought they should be discovered, but they can do it while God is with them; that is, they think more of the eye of man than of the eye of God; and they think it worse to be condemned by man than to be condemned by God. Call it by what name you will, the proper name of that is practical Atheism. It is dishonoring God; it is dethroning him; putting him down below his own creatures; and what is that, but to take away his divinity? Brethren, do not, I beseech you, incur the fearful guilt of secret sins. No man can sin a little in secret, it will certainly engender more sin; no man can be a hypocrite and yet be moderate in guilt; he will go from bad to worse, and still proceed, until when his guilt shall be published, he shall be found to be the very worst and the most hardened of men. Take heed of the guilt of secret sin. Ah, now, if I could preach as Rowland Hill did, I would make some people look to themselves at home, and tremble too! It is said that when he preached there was not a man in the window, or standing in the crowd, or perched up any where, but said, "There, he is preaching at me; he is telling me about my secret sins." And when he proclaimed God's omniscience, it is said men would almost think they saw God bodily present in the midst of them, looking at them. And when he had done his sermon, they would hear a voice in their ears, "Can any hide himself in secret places that I can not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord." I would I could do that; that I could make every man look to himself, and find out his secret sin. Come, my hearer, what is it? Bring it forth to the daylight; perhaps it will die in the light of the sun. These things love not to be discovered. Tell thine own conscience, now, what it is. Look it in the face, confess it

before God, and may he give thee grace to remove that sin and every other, and turn to him with full purpose of heart! But this know--that thy guilt is guilt discovered or undiscovered, and that, if there be any difference, it is worse, because it has been secret. God save us from the guilt of secret sin! "Cleanse thou me from secret faults."

IV. And note, next, THE DANGER OF SECRET SIN. One danger is that a man can not commit a little sin in secret, without being by-the-by betrayed into a public sin. You can not, sir, though you may think you can, preserve a moderation in sin. If you commit one sin, it is like the melting of the lower glacier upon the Alps; the others must follow in time. As certainly as you heap one stone upon the cairn to-day, the next day you will cast another, until the heap, reared stone by stone, shall become a very pyramid. Set the coral insect at work, you can not decree where it shall stay its work. It will not build its rock just as high as you please, it will not stay until it shall be covered with weeds, until the weeds shall decay, and there shall be soil upon it, and an island shall be created by tiny creatures. Sin can not be held in with bit and bridle. "But I am going to have a little drink now and then. I am only going to be intoxicated once a week or so. No body will see it; I shall be in bed directly." You will be drunk in the streets soon. "I am only just going to read one lascivious book; I will put it under the sofa-cover when any one comes in." You will keep it in your library yet, sir. "I am only going into that company now and then." You will go there every day, such is the bewitching character of it; you can not help it. You may as well ask the lion to let you put your head into his mouth. You can not regulate his jaws, neither can you regulate sin. Once go into it, you can not tell when you will be destroyed. You may be such a fortunate individual, that, like Van Amburgh, you may put your head in and out a great many times; rest assured that one of these days it will be a costly venture. Again, you may labor to conceal your vicious habit, but it will come out, you can not help it. You keep your little pet sin at home; but mark this, when the door is ajar the dog will be out in the street; wrap him up in your bosom, put over him fold after fold of hypoc-

easy to keep him secret : the wretch will be singing some day when you are in company ; you can not keep the evil bird still. Your sin will gad abroad ; and what is more, you will not mind it some of these days. A man who indulges in sin privately, by degrees gets his forehead as hard as brass. The first time he sinned, the drops of sweat stood on his brow at the recollection of what he had done ; the second time no hot sweat on his brow—only an agitation of the muscles ; the third time there was the sly, sneaky look, but no agitation ; the next time, he sinned a little further ; and by degrees he became the bold blasphemer of his God, who exclaimed, ‘ Who am I that I should fear Jehovah, and who is he that I should serve him ? ’ Men go from bad to worse. Launch your boat in the current—it must go where the current takes it. Put yourself in the whirlwind—you are but a straw in the wind : you must go which way the wind carries you—you can not control yourself. The balloon can mount, but it can not direct its course ; it must go which ever way the wind blows. If you once mount into sin, there is no stopping. Take heed, if you would not become the worst of characters, take heed of the little sins, which, mounting one upon another may at last heave you from the summit and destroy your soul for ever. There is a great danger in secret sins.

But I have here some true Christians who indulge in secret sins. They say it is but a little one, and therefore do they spare it. Dear brethren, I speak to you, and I speak to myself, when I say this—let us destroy all our little secret sins. They are called little, and if they be, let us remember that it is the foxes, even the little foxes, that spoil our vines ; for our vines have tender shoots. Let us take heed of our little sins. A little sin, like a little pebble in the shoe, will make a traveler to heaven walk very wearily. Little sins, like little thieves, may open the door to greater ones outside. Christians, recollect that little sins will spoil your communion with Christ. Little sins, like little stains in silk, may damage the fine texture of fellowship ; little sins, like little irregularities in the machinery, may spoil the whole fabric of your religion. The one dead fly spoileth the whole pot of ointment. That one thistle may seed a continent with noxious weeds. Let us,

brethren, kill our sins as often as we can find them. One said —“The heart is full of unclean birds; it is a cage of them.” “Ah, but,” said another divine, “you must not make that an apology, for a Christian’s business is to wring their necks.” And so it is; if there be evil things it is our business to kill them. Christians must not tolerate secret sins. We must not harbor traitors; it is high treason against the King of heaven. Let us drag them out to light, and offer them upon the altar, giving up the dearest of our secret sins at the will and bidding of God. There is a great danger in a little secret sin; therefore avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it and shun it; and God give thee grace to overcome it!

V. And now I come, in finishing up, to plead with all my might with some of you whom God has pricked in your consciences. I have come to intreat you, if it be possible, even to tears, that you will give up your secret sins. I have one here for whom I bless God; I love him, though I know him not. He is almost persuaded to be a Christian; he halteth between two opinions; he intendeth to serve God, he striveth to give up sin, but he findeth it a hard struggle, and as yet he knoweth not what shall become of him. I speak to him with all love: my friend, will you have your sin and go to hell, or leave your sin and go to heaven? This is the solemn alternative; to all awakened sinners I put it; may God choose for you, otherwise I tremble as to which you may choose. The pleasures of this life are so intoxicating, the joys of it so ensnaring, that did I not believe that God worketh in us to will and to do, I should despair of you. But I have confidence that God will decide the matter. Let me lay the alternative before you:—on the one hand there is an hour’s merriment, a short life of bliss, and that a poor, poor bliss; on the other hand, there is everlasting life and eternal glory. On the one hand, there is a transient happiness, and afterward overwhelming woe; in this case there is a solid peace and everlasting joy, and after it overflowing bliss. I shall not fear to be called an Arminian, when I say, as Elijah did, “Choose you this day whom you will serve. If God be God, serve him; if Baal be God, serve him.” But, now, make your choice deliberately; and may God help you to do it! Do not say you

will take up with religion, without first counting the cost of it; remember, there is your lust to be given up, your pleasure to be renounced; can you do it for Christ's sake? Can you? I know you can not, unless God's grace shall assist you in making such a choice. But can you say, "Yes, by the help of God, earth's gaudy toys, its pomps, pageantries, gewgaws all these I renounce?"

"These can never satisfy;  
Give me Christ or else I die."

Sinner, thou wilt never regret that choice, if God help thee to make it; thou wilt find thyself a happy man here, and thrice happy throughout eternity.

"But," says one, "sir, I intend to be religious, but I do not hold with your strictness." I do not ask you to do so; I hope, however, you will hold with *God's* strictness, and God's strictness is ten thousand times greater than mine. You may say that I am puritanical in my preaching; God will be puritanical in judging in that great day. I may appear severe, but I can never be so severe as God will be. I may draw the harrow with sharp teeth across your conscience, but God shall drag harrows of eternal fire across you one day. I may speak thundering things; God will not speak them, but hurl them from his hands. Remember, men may laugh at hell, and say there is none; but they must reject their Bibles before they can believe the lie. Men's consciences tell them that

"There is a dreadful hell  
And everlasting pains,  
Where sinners must with devils dwell  
In darkness, fire, and chains."

Sir, will you keep your secret sins, and have eternal fire for them? Remember, it is of no use, they must all be given up, or else you can not be God's child. You can not by any means have both; it can not be God and the world, it can not be Christ and the devil; it must be one or the other. O, that God would give you grace to resign all; for what are they worth? They are your deceivers now, and will be your tormentors for ever. O! that your eyes were open to see the rottenness, the emptiness and trickery of iniquity. O! that God would turn you to himself! O! may God give you grace

to cross the Rubicon of repentance at this very hour ; to say, "Henceforth it is war to the knife with my sins ; not one of them will I willingly keep, but down with them, down with them ; Canaanite, Hittite, Jebusite, they shall all be driven out

"The dearest idol I have known,  
Whate'er that idol be ;  
Help me to tear it from its throne,  
And worship only thee."

But O ! sir, I can not do it ; it would be like pulling my eyes out." Ay, but hear what Christ says : "It were better for thee to enter into life with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire." "But it would be like cutting my arm off." Ay, and it would be better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, than to be cast into hell fire for ever. O ! when the sinner comes before God at last, do you think he will speak as he does now ? God will reveal his secret sins : the sinner will not then say, "Lord, I thought my secret sins so sweet, I could not give them up." I think I see how changed it will be then. "*Sir,*" you say now, "*you are too strict,*" will you say that when the eyes of the Almighty are glowering on you ? You say now, "*Sir, you are too precise,*" will you say that to God Almighty's face ? "*Sir, I mean to keep such-and-such a sin.*" Can you say it at God's bar at last ? You will not dare to do it then. Ah ! when Christ comes a second time, there will be a marvelous change in the way men talk. Methinks I see him ; there he sits upon his throne. Now, Caiaphas, come and condemn him now ! Judas ! come and kiss him now ! What do you stick at, man ? Are you afraid of him ? Now, Barabbas ! go ; see whether they will prefer you to Christ now. Swearer, now is your time ; you have been a bold man ; curse him to his face now. Now, drunkard ; stagger up to him now. Now, infidel ; tell him there is no Christ now—now that the world is lit with lightning and the earth is shaken with thunder till the solid pillars thereof do bow themselves—tell God there is no God now ; now laugh at the Bible ; now scoff at the minister. Why men, what is the matter with you ? Why, can't you do it ? Ah ! there you are ; you have fled to the hills and to the rocks—"Rocks, hide us ! mountains, fall on us

hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne." Ah! where are now your boasts, your vauntings, and your glories? Alas! alas! for you, in that dread day of wonders.

Secret sinner, what will then become of thee? Go out of this place unmasked; go out to examine thyself, go out to bend thy knee, go out to weep, go out to pray. God give thee grace to believe! And O, how sweet and pleasant the thought, that this day sinners have fled to Christ, and men have been born again to Jesus! Brethren, ere I finish, I repeat the words at which so many have caviled—it is now or never, it is turn or burn. Solemnly in God's sight I say it; if it be not God's truth I must answer for it in the great day of account. Your consciences tell you it is true. Take it home, and mock me if you will; this morning I am clear of your blood; if any seek not God, but live in sin, I shall be clear of your blood in that day when the watchman shall have your souls demanded of him; O, may God grant that you may be cleared in a blessed manner! When I went down these pulpit stairs a Sabbath or two ago, a friend said to me words which have been in my mind ever since—"Sir, there are nine thousand people this day without excuse in the day of judgment." It is true of you this morning. If you are damned, it will not be for want of preaching to you, and it shall not be for want of praying for you. God knoweth that if my heart could break of itself, it would, for your souls, for God is my witness, how earnestly I long for you in the bowels of Christ Jesus. O, that he might touch your hearts and bring you to him! For death is a solemn thing, damnation is a horrible thing, to be out of Christ is a dreadful thing, to be dead in sins is a terrific thing. May God lead you to view these things as they are, and save you, for his mercy's sake! 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.'

"Lord, search my soul, try every thought  
Though my own heart accuse me not  
Of walking in a false disguise,  
I beg the trial of thine eyes.  
Doth secret mischief lurk within?  
Do I indulge some unknown sin?  
O turn u y feet whene're I stray,  
And lea me in thy perfect way."



## SERMON XII.

### ELIJAH'S APPEAL TO THE UNDECIDED.

' How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him; if Baal, then follow him.' --1 KINGS, xviii. 21.

IT was a day to be remembered, when the multitudes of Israel were assembled at the foot of Carmel, and when the solitary prophet of the Lord came forth to defy the four hundred and fifty priests of the false god. We might look upon that scene with the eye of historical curiosity, and we should find it rich with interest. Instead of doing so, however, we shall look upon it with the eye of attentive consideration, and see whether we can not improve by its teachings. We have upon that hill of Carmel, and along the plain, three kinds of persons. We have first the devoted servant of Jehovah, a solitary prophet; we have, on the other hand, the decided servants of the evil one, the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal; but the vast mass of that day belonged to a third class—they were those who had not fully determined whether fully to worship Jehovah, the God of their fathers, or Baal, the god of Jezebel. On the one hand, their ancient traditions led them to fear Jehovah, and on the other hand, their interest at court led them to bow before Baal. Many of them, therefore, were secret and half-hearted followers of Jehovah, while they were the public worshipers of Baal. The whole of them at this juncture were halting between two opinions. Elijah does not address his sermon to the priests of Baal; he will have something to say to them by-and-by, he will preach them horrible sermons in deeds of blood. Nor has he aught to say to those who are the thorough servants of Jehovah, for they are not there; but his discourse is alone directed to those who are halting between two opinions.

Now, we have these three classes here this morning. We have, I hope, a very large number who are on Jehovah's side, who fear God and serve him; we have a number who are on the side of the evil one, who make no profession of religion, and do not observe even the outward symptoms of it; because they are both inwardly and outwardly the servants of the evil one. But the great mass of my hearers belong to the third class—the waverers. Like empty clouds they are driven hither and thither by the wind; like painted beauties, they lack the freshness of life; they have a name to live and are dead. Procrastinators, double-minded men, undecided persons, to you I speak this morning—"How long halt ye between two opinions?" May the question be answered by God's Spirit in your hearts, and may you be led to say, "No longer, Lord, do I halt; but this day I decide for thee, and am thy servant for ever!"

Let us proceed at once to the text. Instead of giving the divisions at the commencement, I will mention them one by one as I proceed.

I. First, you will note that *the prophet insisted upon the distinction which existed between the worship of Baal and the worship of Jehovah*. Most of the people who were before him thought that Jehovah was God, and that Baal was God too; and that for this reason the worship of both was quite consistent. The great mass of them did not reject the God of their fathers wholly, nor did they bow before Baal wholly; but as polytheists, believing in many gods, they thought both Gods might be worshiped, and each of them have a share in their hearts. "No," said the prophet when he began, "this will not do, these are *two* opinions; you can never make them one, they are two contradictory things which can not be combined. I tell you that instead of combining the two, which is impossible, you are halting between the two, which makes a vast difference." "I will build in my house," said one of them, "an altar for Jehovah here, and an altar for Baal there. I am of one opinion; I believe them both to be God." "No no," said Elijah, "it can not be so; they are *two*, and must be two. These things are not one opinion, but two opinions. No, you can not unite them." Have I not many here who say,

“I am worldly, but I am religious too ; I can go to the Music Hall to worship God on Sunday ; I went to the Derby races the other day : I go, on the one hand, to the place where I can serve my lusts ; I am to be met with in every dancing room of every description, and yet at the same time I say my prayers most devoutly. May I not be a good churchman, or a right good dissenter, and a man of the world too ? May I not, after all, hold with the hounds as well as run with the hare ? May I not love God and serve the devil too—take the pleasure of each of them, and give my heart to neither ? We answer—Not so, they are two opinions ; you can not do it, they are distinct and separate. Mark Anthony yoked two lions to his chariot ; but there are two lions no man ever yoked together yet—the Lion of the tribe of Judah and the lion of the pit. These can never go together. Two opinions you may hold in politics, perhaps, but then you will be despised by every body, unless you are of one opinion or the other, and act as an independent man. But two opinions in the matter of soul-religion you can not hold. If God be God, serve him, and do it thoroughly ; but if this world be God, serve it, and make no profession of religion. If you are a worldling, and think the things of the world the best, serve them ; devote yourself to them, do not be kept back by conscience ; spite your conscience, and run into sin. But remember, if the Lord be your God, you can not have Baal too ; you must have one thing or else the other. “No man can serve two *masters*.” If God be served, he will be a master ; and if the devil be served he will not be long before he will be a master ; and “ye can not serve two *masters*.” O ! be wise, and think not that the two can be mingled together. How many a respectable deacon thinks that he can be covetous, and grasping in business, and grind the faces of the poor, and yet be a saint ! O ! liar to God and to man ! He is no saint ; he is the very chief of sinners ! How many a very excellent woman, who is received into church fellowship among the people of God, and thinks herself one of the elect, is to be found full of wrath and bitterness, a slave of mischief and of sin, a tattler, a slanderer, a busybody ; entering into other people’s houses, and turning every thing like comfort out of the minds of these

with *WALDIA* she comes in contact—and yet she is the servant of God and of the devil too! Nay, my lady this will never answer; the two never can be served thoroughly. Serve your master, whoever he be. If you do profess to be religious, be so thoroughly; if you make any profession to be a Christian, be one; but if you are no Christian, do not *pretend* to be. If you love the world, then love it; but cast off the mask, and do not be a hypocrite. The double-minded man is of all men the most despicable; the follower of Janus, who wears two faces, and who can look with one eye upon the (so-called) Christian world with great delight, and give his subscription to the Tract Society, the Bible Society, and the Missionary Society, but who has another eye over there, with which he looks at the Casino, the Coal-hole, and other pleasures, which I do not care to mention, but which some of you may know more of than I wish to know. Such a man, I say, is worse than the most reprobate of men, in the opinion of any one who knows how to judge. Not worse in his open character, but worse really, because he is not honest enough to go through with that he professes. And how many such are there in London, in England; everywhere else! They try to serve both masters; but it can not be; the two things can not be reconciled; God and Mammon, Christ and Belial, these never can meet; there never can be an agreement between them, they never can be brought into unity, and why should you seek to do it? “*Two opinions*,” said the prophet. He would not allow any of his hearers to profess to worship both. “No,” said he, “these are two opinions, and you are halting between the two.”

II. In the second place, *the prophet calls these waverers to an account for the amount of time which they had consumed in making their choice.* Some of them might have replied, “We have not had yet an opportunity of judging between God and Baal; we have not yet had time enough to make up our minds;” but the prophet puts away that objection, and he says, “*How long* halt ye between two opinions? How long? For three years and a half not a drop of rain has fallen at the command of Jehovah; is not that proof enough? Ye have been all this time, three years and a half, expecting, till I

should come, Jehovah's servant, and give you rain; and yet, though you yourselves are starving, your cattle dead, your fields parched, and your meadows covered with dust, like the very deserts, yet all this time of judgment, and trial, and affliction, has not been enough for you to make up your minds. *How long*, then," said he, "halt ye between two opinions?"

I speak not, this morning, to the thoroughly worldly; with them I have now nothing to do; another time I may address them. But I am now speaking to you who are seeking to serve God and to serve Satan; you who are trying to be Christian worldlings, trying to be members of that extraordinary corporation, called the "religious world," which is a thing that never had an existence except in title. You are endeavoring, if you can, to make up your mind which it shall be; you know you can not serve both, and you are coming now to the period when you are saying, "Which shall it be? Shall I go thoroughly into sin, and revel in the pleasures of the earth, or become a servant of God?" Now, I say to you this morning, as the prophet did, "*How long* halt ye?" Some of you have been halting until your hair has grown gray; the sixtieth year of some you is drawing nigh. Is not sixty years long enough to make up your choice? "*How long* halt ye?" Perhaps one of you may have tottered into this place, leaning on his staff, and you have been undecided up till now. Your eightieth year has come; you have been a religious character outwardly, but a worldling truly; you are still up to this date halting, saying, "I know not on which side to be." How long, sirs, in the name of reason, in the name of mortality, in the name of death, in the name of eternity, "*How long* halt ye between two opinions?" Ye middle-aged men, ye said when ye were youths, "When we are out of our apprenticeship we will become religious; let us sow our wild oats in our youth, and let us then begin to be diligent servants of the Lord." Lo! ye have come to middle age, and are waiting till that quiet villa shall be built, and ye shall retire from business, and then ye think ye will serve God. Sirs, ye said that same when ye came of age, and when your business began to increase. I therefore solemnly demand of you, "How long halt ye between two opinions?" How much time do you want? O'

young man, thou saidst in thine early childhood, when a mother's prayer followed thee, "I will seek God when I come to manhood;" and thou hast passed that day; thou art a man, and more than that, and yet thou art halting still. "How long halt ye between two opinions?" How many of you have been church-goers and chapel-goers for years! Ye have been impressed, too, many a time, but ye have wiped the tears from your eyes, and have said, "I will seek God and turn to him with full purpose of heart;" and you are now just where you were. How many sermons do you want? How many more Sundays must roll away wasted? How many warnings, how many sicknesses, how many tollings of the bell to warn you that you must die? How many graves must be dug for your family before you will be impressed? How many plagues and pestilences must ravage this city before you will turn to God in truth? "How long halt ye between two opinions?" Would God ye could answer this question, and not allow the sands of life to drop, drop, drop from the glass, saying, "When the next goes I will repent," and yet that next one findeth you impenitent. You say, "When the glass is just so low, I will turn to God." No, sir, no; it will not answer for you to talk so; for thou mayest find thy glass empty before thou thoughtest it had begun to run low, and thou mayest find thyself in eternity when thou didst but think of repenting and turning to God. How long, ye gray heads, how long, ye men of ripe years, how long, ye youths and maidens, how long will ye be in this undecided, unhappy state? "How long halt ye between two opinions?"

Thus we have brought you so far. We have noted that there are two opinions, and we have asked the question, How long time you want to decide? One would think the question would require very little time, if time were all; if the will were not biassed to evil and contrary to good, it would require no more time than the decision of a man who has to choose a halter or life, wealth or poverty; and if we were wise, it would take no time at all; if we understood the things of God, we should not hesitate, but say at once, "Now God is my God, and that for ever."

III. But *the prophet charges these people with the absurdity*

*of their position.* Some of them said, "What! propnet, may we not continue to halt between two opinions? We are not desperately irreligious, so we are better than the profane, certainly we are not thoroughly pious; but, at any rate, a little piety is better than none, and the mere profession of it keeps us decent, let us try both!" "Now," says the prophet, "how long halt ye?" or, if you like to read  $\text{£}$  so, "how long *limp* ye between two opinions?" (How long *wriggle* ye between two opinions? would be a good word, if I might employ it.) He represents them as like a man whose legs are entirely out of joint; he first goes on one side, and then on the other, and can not go far either way. I could not describe it without putting myself into a most ludicrous posture. "How long *limp* ye between two opinions?" The prophet laughs at them, as it were. And is it not true, that a man who is neither one thing or another is in a most absurd position? Let him go among the worldlings; they laugh under their sleeve, and say, "This is one of the Exeter Hall saints," or, "That is one of the elect." Let him go among the Christian people, those that are saints, and they say, "How a man can be so inconsistent, how he can come into our midst one day, and the next be found in such and such society, we can not tell." Methinks even the devil himself must laugh at such a man in scorn. "There," says he, "I am every thing that is bad; I do sometimes pretend to be an angel of light, and put on that garb; but you do really excell me in every respect, for I do it to get something by it, but you do not get any thing by it. You do not have the pleasures of this world, and you do not have the pleasures of religion either; you have the fears of religion without its hopes; you are afraid to do wrong, and yet you have no hope of heaven; you have the duties of religion without the joys; you have to do just as religious people do, and yet there is no heart in the matter; you have to sit down, and see the table all spread before you, and then you have not power to eat a single morsel of the precious dainties of the gospel." It is just the same with the world; you dare not go into this or that mischief that brings joy to the wicked man's heart; you think of what society would say. We do not know what to make of you

I might describe you, if I might speak as the Americans do, but I will not. Ye are half one thing, and half the other. You come into the society of the saints, and try to talk as they talk; but you are like a man who has been taught French in some day-school in England; he makes a queer sort of Frenchified English, and Englishized French, and every one laughs at him. The English laugh at him for trying to do it, and the French laugh at him for failing in it. If you spoke your own language, if you just spoke out as a sinner, if you professed to be what you are, you would at least get the respect of one side; but now you are rejected by one class, and equally rejected by the other. You come into our midst, we can not receive you; you go amongst worldlings, they reject you too; you are too good for them, and too bad for us. Where are you to be put? If there were a purgatory, that would be the place for you; where you might be tossed on the one side into ice, and on the other into the burning fire, and that for ever. But as there is no such place as purgatory, and as you really are a servant of Satan, and not a child of God, take heed, take heed, how long you stay in a position so absurdly ridiculous. At the day of judgment, wavering men will be the scoff and the laughter even of hell. The angels will look down in scorn upon the man who was ashamed to own his Master thoroughly, while hell itself will ring with laughter. When that grand hypocrite shall come there—that undecided man, they will say, “Aha! we have to drink the dregs, but above them there were sweets; you have only the dregs. You dare not go into the riotous and boisterous mirth of our youthful days, and now you have come here with us to drink the same dregs; you have the punishment without the pleasure.” O! how foolish will even the damned call you, to think that you halted between two opinions! “How long limp ye, wriggle ye, walk ye in an absurd manner, between two opinions?” In adopting either opinion, you would at least be consistent; but in trying to hold both, to seek to be both one and the other, and not knowing which to decide upon, you are limping between two opinions. I think a good translation is a very different one from that of the authorized version—“How long hop ye upon two sprays?” So the



Hebrew has it. Like a bird, which perpetually flies from bough to bough, and is never still. If it keeps on doing this, it will never have a nest. And so with you: you keep leaping between two boughs, from one opinion to the other; and so between the two, you get no rest for the sole of your foot, no peace, no joy, no comfort, but are just a poor miserable thing all your life long.

IV. We have brought you thus far, then; we have shown you the absurdity of this halting. Now, very briefly, the next point in my text is this. The multitude who had worshiped Jehovah and Baal, and who were now undecided, might reply, "*But how do you know that we do not believe that Jehovah is God? How do you know we are not decided in opinion?*" The prophet meets this objection by saying, "I know you are not decided in opinion, because *you are not decided in practice*. If God be God, *follow him*; if Baal, *follow him*. You are not decided in practice." Men's opinions are not such things as we imagine. It is generally said now-a-days, that all opinions are right, and if a man shall honestly hold his convictions, he is, without doubt, right. Not so; truth is not changed by our opinions; a thing is either true or false of itself, and it is neither made true nor false by our views of it. It is for us, therefore, to judge carefully, and not to think that any opinion will do. Besides, opinions have influence upon the conduct, and if a man have a wrong opinion, he will, most likely, in some way or other, have wrong conduct, for the two usually go together. "Now," said Elijah, "that you are not the servants of God, is quite evident, for you do not follow him; that you are not thoroughly servants of Baal either, is quite evident, for you do not follow him." Now I address myself to you again. Many of you are not the servants of God; you do not follow him; you follow him a certain distance in the form, but not in the spirit; you follow him on Sundays; but what do you do on Mondays? You follow him in religious company, in evangelical drawing-rooms, and so on; but what do you do in other society? You do not follow him. And, on the other hand, you do not follow Baal; you go a little way with the world, but there is a place to which you dare not go; you are too respectable to sin as others sin,

or to go the whole way of the world. Ye dare not go to the utmost lengths of evil. "Now," says the prophet, twitting them upon this—"if the Lord be God, follow him. Let your conduct be consistent with your opinions; if you believe the Lord to be God, carry it out in your daily life; be holy, be prayerful, trust in Christ, be faithful, be upright, be loving; give your heart to God, and follow him. If Baal be God, then follow him; but do not pretend to follow the other." Let your conduct back up your opinion; if you really think that the follies of this world are the best, and believe that a fine fashionable life, a life of frivolity and gayety, flying from flower to flower, getting honey from none, is the most desirable, carry it out. If you think the life of the debauchee is so very desirable, if you think his end is to be much wished for, if you think his pleasures are right, follow them. Go the whole way with them. If you believe that to cheat in business is right, put it up over your door—"I sell trickery goods here;" or if you do not say it to the public, tell your conscience so; but do not deceive the public; do not call the people to prayers when you are opening a "British Bank." If you mean to be religious, follow out your determination thoroughly; but if you mean to be worldly, go the whole way with the world. Let your conduct follow out your opinions. Make your life tally with your profession. Carry out your opinions whatever they be. But you dare not; you are too cowardly to sin as others do, honestly before God's sun; your conscience will not let you do it—and yet you are just so fond of Satan, that you dare not leave him wholly and become thoroughly the servants of God. O do not let your character be like your profession; either keep up your profession, or give it up: do be one thing or the other.

V. And now the prophet cries, "If the Lord be God, follow him; if Baal, then follow him," and in so doing, *he states the ground of his practical claim.* Let your conduct be consistent with your opinions. There is another objection raised by the crowd. "Prophet," says one, "thou comest to demand a practical proof of our affection; thou sayest, Follow God. Now, if I believe God to be God, and that is my opinion, yet I do not see what claim he has to my opinions."

Now, mark how the prophet puts 't: he says, "*If God be God, follow him.*" The reason why I claim that you should follow out your opinion concerning God is, that God is God; God has a claim upon you, as creatures, for your devout obedience. One person replies, "What profit should I have, if I served God thoroughly? Should I be more happy? Should I get on better in this world? Should I have more peace of mind?" Nay, nay, that is a secondary consideration. The only question for you is, "*If God be God follow him.*" Not if it be more advantageous to you; but, "*if God be God, follow him.*" The secularist would plead for religion on the ground that religion might be the best for this world, and best for the world to come. Not so with the prophet; he says, "I do not put it on that ground, I insist that it is your bounden duty, if you believe in God, simply because he is God, to serve him and obey him. I do not tell you it is for your advantage—it may be, I believe it is—but that I put aside from the question; I demand of you that you follow God, if you believe him to be *God*. If you do not think he is God; if you really think that the devil is God, then follow him; his pretended godhead shall be your plea, and you shall be consistent; but if God be God, if he made you, I demand that you serve him; if it is he who puts the breath into your nostrils, I demand that you obey him. If God be really worthy of your worship, and you really think so, I demand that you either follow him, or else deny that he is God at all." Now, professor, if thou sayest that Christ's gospel is the gospel, if thou believest in the divinity of the gospel, and puttest thy trust in Christ, I demand of thee to follow out the gospel, not merely because it will be to thy advantage, but because the gospel is divine. If thou makest a profession of being a child of God, if thou art a believer, and thinkest and believest religion is the best, the service of God the most desirable, I do not come to plead with thee because of any advantage thou wouldst get by being holy; it is on this ground that I put it, that the Lord is God; and if he be God, it is thy business to serve him. If his gospel be true, and thou believest it to be true, it is thy duty to carry it out. If thou sayest Christ is not the Son of God, carry out thy Jewish or thy infidel convictions, and see whether it will end well. If

thou dost not believe Christ to be the Son of God, if thou art a Mohammedan, be consistent, carry out thy Mohammedan convictions, and see whether it will end well. But, take heed, take heed! If, however, thou sayest God is God, and Christ the Saviour, and the gospel true; I demand of thee, only on this account, that thou carry it out. What a strong plea some would think the prophet might have had, if he had said, "God is your fathers' God, therefore follow him!" But no, he did not come down to that; he said, "If God be God—I do not care whether he be your fathers' God or not—follow him." "Why do you go to chapel?" says one, "and not to church?" "Because my father and grandfather were dissenters." Ask a churchman, very often, why he attends the establishment "Well, our family were always brought up to it; that is why I go." Now, I do think that the worst of all reasons for a particular religion, is that of our being brought up to it. I never could see that at all. I have attended the house of God with my father and my grandfather; but I thought, when I read the Scriptures, that it was my business to judge for myself. I knew that my father and my grandfather took little children in their arms, and put drops of water on their faces, and they were baptized. I took up my Bible, and I could not see any thing about babes being baptized. I picked up a little Greek; and I could not discover that the word "baptized" meant to sprinkle; so I said to myself, "Suppose they are good men, they may be wrong; and though I love and revere them, yet it is no reason why I should imitate them." And therefore I left them, and became what I am to-day, a Baptist minister, so called, but I hope a great deal more a Christian than a Baptist. It is seldom I mention it; I only do so by way of illustration here. Many a one will go to chapel, because his grandmother did. Well, she was a good old soul, but I do not see that she ought to influence your judgment. "That does not signify," says one, "I do not like to leave the church of my fathers." No more do I; I would rather belong to the same denomination with my father; I would not willfully differ from any of my friends, or leave their sect and denomination, but let God be above our parents; though our parents are at the very top of our hearts, and we love them and reverence them,

and in all other matters pay them strict obedience, yet, with regard to religion, to our own Master we stand or fall, and we claim to have the right of judging for ourselves as men, and then we think it our duty, having judged, to carry out our convictions. Now I am not going to say, "If God be your mother's God, serve him;" though that would be a very good argument with some of you; but with you waverers, the only plea I use is, "If God be God, serve him;" if the gospel be right, believe it; if a religious life be right, carry it out; if not, give it up. I only put my argument on Elijah's plea—"If God be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him."

VI. And now I make my appeal to the halters and waverers, with some questions, which I pray the Lord to apply. Now I will put this question to them: "*How long halt ye?*" I will tell them; ye will halt between two opinions, all of you who are undecided, *until God shall answer by fire*. Fire was not what these poor people wanted that were assembled there. When Elijah says, that "the God that answereth by fire let him be God," I fancy I hear some of them saying, "No; the God that answereth by water let him be God; we want rain badly enough." "No," said Elijah, "if rain should come, you would say that it was the common course of providence; and that would not decide you." I tell you, all the providences that befall you undecided ones will not decide you. God may surround you with providences; he may surround you with frequent warnings from the death-bed of your fellows; but providences will never decide you. It is not the God of rain, but the God of fire that will do it. There are two ways in which you undecided ones will be decided by and-bye. You that are decided for God will want no decision; you that are decided for Satan will want no decision; you are on Satan's side, and must dwell for ever in eternal burning. But these undecided ones want something to decide them, and will have either one of the two things; they will either have the fire of God's Spirit to decide them, or else the fire of eternal judgment, and that will decide them. I may preach to you, my hearers; and all the ministers in the world may preach to you that are wavering, but you will never decide for God through the force of your own will

None of you, if left to your natural judgment, to the use of your own reason, will ever decide for God. You may decide for him merely as an outward form, but not as an inward spiritual thing, which should possess your heart as a Christian, as a believer in the doctrine of effectual grace. I know that none of you will ever decide for God's gospel, unless God decide you; and I tell you that you must either be decided by the descent of the fire of his Spirit into your hearts now, or else in the day of judgment. O! which shall it be? O! that the prayer might be put up by the thousand lips that are here: "Lord, decide me now by the fire of thy Spirit; O! let thy Spirit descend into my heart, to burn up the bullock, that I may be a whole burnt offering to God; to burn up the wood and the stones of my sin; to burn up the very dust of worldliness; ah, and to lick up the water of my impiety, which now lieth in the trenches, and my cold indifference that seek to put out the sacrifice."

"O make this heart rejoice or ache!  
Decide this doubt for me;  
**And** if it be not broken, break,  
And heal it, if it be.

"O sovereign grace, my heart subdue;  
I would be led in triumph too,  
A willing captive to my Lord,  
To sing the triumphs of his word."

And it may be, that whilst I speak, the mighty fire, unseen by men, and unfelt by the vast majority of you, shall descend into some heart which has of old been dedicated to God by his divine election, which is now like an altar broken down, but which God, by his free grace, will this day build up. O! I pray that that influence may enter into some hearts, that there may be some go out of this place, saying,

"'Tis done, the great transaction's done,  
I am my Lord's, and he is mine;  
He drew me, and I followed on,  
Glad to obey the voice divine."

"Now rest, my undivided heart,  
Fixed on this stable center, rest."

O! that many may say that! But remember, if it be not so, the day is coming—*dies iræ*, the day of wrath and anger—when ye shall be decided of God; when the firmament shall be lit up with lightnings, when the earth shall roll with drunken terror, when the pillars of the universe shall shake, and God shall sit, in the person of his Son, to judge the world in righteousness. You will not be undecided then, when, “Depart ye cursed,” or “Come, ye blessed,” shall be your doom. There will be no indecision then, when you shall meet him with joy or else with terror—when, “rocks hide me, mountains on me fall,” shall be your doleful shriek; or else your joyful song shall be, “The Lord is come.” In that day you will be decided; but till then, unless the living fire of the Holy Spirit decide you, you will go on halting between two opinions. May God grant you his Holy Spirit that you may arrive at him and be saved!

## S E R M O N   X I I I .

### SALVATION OF THE LORD.

“Salvation is of the Lord.”—JONAH, ii. 9.

JONAH learned this sentence of good theology in a strange college. He learned it in the whale's belly, at the bottom of the mountains, with the weeds wrapped about his head, when he supposed that the earth with her bars was about him for ever. Most of the grand truths of God have to be learned by trouble; they must be burned into us with the hot iron of affliction, otherwise we shall not truly receive them. No man is competent to judge in matters of the kingdom, until first he has been tried; since there are many things to be learned in the depths which we can never know in the heights. We discover many secrets in the caverns of the ocean, which, though we had soared to heaven, we never could have known. He shall best meet the wants of God's people as a preacher who has had those wants himself; he shall best comfort God's Israel who has needed comfort; and he shall best preach salvation who has felt his own need of it. Jonah, when he was delivered from his great danger, when, by the command of God the fish had obediently left its great deeps and delivered its cargo upon dry land, was then capable of judging; and this was the result of his experience under his trouble—“Salvation is of the Lord.”

By salvation here we do not merely understand the special salvation which Jonah received from death; for according to Dr. Gill, there is something so special in the original, in the word salvation having one more letter than it usually has, when it only refers to some temporary deliverance, that we can only understand it here as relating to the great work of the salvation of the soul which endureth for ever. That “sal



vation is of the Lord," I shall this morning try to show as best I can. First, I shall endeavor to *explain the doctrine*; then I shall try to show you *how God has guarded us from making any mistakes, and has hedged us up to make us believe the gospel*; then I shall dwell upon *the influence of this truth upon men*; and shall close up by showing you *the counterpart of the doctrine*. Seeing every truth hath its obverse, so hath this.

I. First, then, to begin by explanation, let us EXPOUND THIS DOCTRINE—the doctrine that salvation is of the Lord, or of Jehovah. We are to understand by this, that the whole of the work whereby men are saved from their natural estate of sin and ruin, and are translated into the kingdom of God and made heirs of eternal happiness, is of God, and of him only. "Salvation is of the Lord."

To begin, then, at the beginning, *the plan of salvation is entirely of God*. No human intellect and no created intelligence assisted God in the planning of salvation; he contrived the way, even as he himself carried it out. The plan of salvation was devised before the existence of angels. Before the day-star flung its ray across the darkness, when as yet the un-navigated ether had not been fanned by the wing of seraph, and when the solemnity of silence had never been disturbed by the song of angel, God had devised a way whereby he might save man, whom he foresaw would fall. He did not create angels to consult with them; no, of himself he did it. We might truly ask the question, "With whom took he counsel? Who instructed him, when he planned the great architecture of the temple of mercy? With whom took he counsel when he digged the deeps of love, that out of them there might well up springs of salvation? Who aided him?" None. He himself, alone, did it. In fact, if angels had then been in existence, they could not have assisted God; for I can well suppose that if a solemn conclave of those spirits had been held, if God had put to them this question, "Man will rebel; I declare I will punish; my justice, inflexible and severe, demands that I should do so; but yet I intend to have mercy;" if he had put the question to the celestial squadrons of mighty ones, "How can those things be? How can justice

have its demands fulfilled, and how can mercy reign?" the angels would have sat in silence until now; they could not have dictated the plan; it would have surpassed angelic intellect to have conceived the way whereby righteousness and peace should meet together, and judgment and mercy should kiss each other. God devised it, because without God it could not have been devised. It is a plan too splendid to have been the product of any mind except of that mind which afterward carried it out. "Salvation" is older than creation; it is "of the Lord."

And as it was of the Lord in planning so *it was of the Lord in execution*. No one has helped to provide salvation; God has done it all himself. The banquet of mercy is served up by one host; that host is he to whom the cattle on a thousand hills belong. But none have contributed any dainties to that royal banquet; he hath done it all himself. The royal bath of mercy, wherein black souls are washed, was filled from the veins of Jesus; not a drop was contributed by any other being. He died upon the cross, and as an expiator he died alone. No blood of martyrs mingled with that stream; no blood of noble confessors and of heroes of the cross entered into the river of atonement; that is filled from the veins of Christ, and from nowhere else beside. He hath done it wholly. Atonement is the unaided work of Jesus. On yonder cross I see the man who "trode the winepress alone;" in yonder garden I see the solitary conqueror, who came to the fight single-handed, whose own arm brought salvation, and whose omnipotence sustained him. "Salvation is of the Lord," as to its provisions; Jehovah—Father, Son, and Spirit—hath provided every thing.

So far we are all agreed: but now we shall have to separate a bit. "Salvation is of the Lord," *in the application of it*. "No," says the Arminian, "it is not; salvation is of the Lord, inasmuch as he does all for man that he can do; but there is something that man must do, which if he does not do, he must perish." That is the Arminian way of salvation. Now last week I thought of this very theory of salvation, when I stood by the side of that window of Carisbrooke castle, out of which King Charles of unhappy and unrighteous memory, attempted

to escape. I read in the guide book that every thing was provided for his escape; his followers had means at the bottom of the wall to enable him to fly across the country, and on the coast they had their boats lying ready to take him to another land; in fact every thing was ready for his escape. But here was the important circumstance: his friends had done all they could; he was to do the rest; but that doing the rest was just the point and brunt of the battle. It was to get out of the window, out of which he was not able to escape by any means, so that all his friends did for him went for nothing, so far as he was concerned. So with the sinner. If God had provided every means of escape, and only required him to get out of his dungeon, he would have remained there to all eternity. Why, is not the sinner by nature dead in sin? And if God requires him to make himself alive, and then afterward he will do the rest for him, then verily, my friends, we are not so much obliged to God as we had thought for; for if he require so much as that of us, and we can do it, we can do the rest without his assistance. The Romanists have an extraordinary miracle of their own about St. Demis, of whom they tell the lying legend that after his head was off he took it up in his hands and walked with it two thousand miles; whereupon, said a wit, "So far as the two thousand miles go, it is nothing at all; it is only the first step in which there is any difficulty." So I believe, if that is taken, all the rest can be easily accomplished. And if God does require of the sinner—dead in sin—that he should take the first step, then he requireth just that which renders salvation as impossible under the gospel as ever it was under the law, seeing man is as unable to believe as he is to obey, and is just as much without power to come to Christ as he is without power to go to heaven without Christ. The power must be given to him of the Spirit. He lieth dead in sin; the Spirit must quicken him. He is bound hand and foot and fettered by transgression; the Spirit must cut his bonds, and then he will leap to liberty. God must come and dash the iron bars out of their sockets, and then he can escape from the window, and make good his escape afterward; but unless the first thing be done for him, he must perish as surely under the gospel as he would have done under

the law. I would cease to preach, if I believed that God, in the matter of salvation, required any thing whatever of man which he himself had not also engaged to furnish. For how many have I frequently hanging upon my lips of the worst of characters—men whose lives have become so horribly bad, that the lip of morality would refuse to give a description of their character? When I enter my pulpit am I to believe that these men are to do something before God's Spirit will operate upon them? If so, I should go there with a faint heart, feeling that I never could induce them to do the first part. But now I come to my pulpit with a sure confidence—God the Holy Spirit will meet with these men this morning. They are as bad as they can be; he will put a new thought into their hearts; he will give them new wishes; he will give them new wills, and those who hated Christ will desire to love him; those who once loved sin will, by God's divine Spirit, be made to hate it; and here is my confidence, that what they can not do, in that they are weak through the flesh, God sending his Spirit into their hearts will do for them, and in them, and so they shall be saved.

Well then, says one, that will make people sit still and fold their arms. Sir, it will not. But if men did so I could not help it; my business, as I have often said in this place before, is not to prove to you the reasonableness of any truth, nor to defend any truth from its consequences; all I do here, and I mean to keep to it, is just to assert the truth, because it is in the Bible; then, if you do not like it, you must settle the quarrel with my Master, and if you think it unreasonable, you must quarrel with the Bible. Let others defend Scripture and prove it to be true; they can do their work better than I could; mine is just the mere work of proclaiming. I am the messenger; I tell the Master's message; if you do not like the message, quarrel with the Bible, not with me; so long as I have Scripture on my side I will dare and defy you to do any thing against me. "Salvation is of the Lord." The Lord has to apply it, to make the unwilling willing, to make the ungodly godly, and bring the vile rebel to the feet of Jesus, or else salvation will never be accomplished. Leave that one thing undone, and you have broken the link of the chain, the

very link which was just necessary to its integrity. Take away the fact that God begins the good work, and that he sends us what the old divines call preventing grace—take that away, and you have spoilt the whole of salvation; you have just taken the key-stone out of the arch, and down it tumbles. There is nothing left then.

And now on the next point we shall a little disagree again. “Salvation is of the Lord,” *as the sustaining of the work in any man’s heart.* When a man is made a child of God he does not have a stock of grace given to him with which to go on for ever, but he has grace for that day; and he must have grace for the next day, and grace for the next, and grace for the next, until days shall end, or else the beginning shall be of no avail. As a man does not make himself spiritually alive, so neither can he keep himself so. He can feed on spiritual food, and so preserve his spiritual strength; he can walk in the commandments of the Lord, and so enjoy rest and peace, but still the inner life is dependent upon the Spirit as much for its after existence as for its first begetting. I do verily believe that if it should ever be my lot to put my foot upon the golden threshold of Paradise, and put this thumb upon the pearly latch, I should never cross the threshold unless I had grace given me to take that last step whereby I might enter heaven. No man of himself, even when converted, hath any power, except as that power is daily, constantly, and perpetually infused into him by the Spirit. But Christians often set up for independent gentlemen; they get a little stock of grace in hand, and they say, “My mountain standeth firm, I shall never be moved.” But ah! it is not long before the manna begins to be putrid. It was only meant to be the manna for the day, and we have kept it for the morrow, and therefore it fails us. We must have fresh grace.

“For day by day the manna fell;  
O to learn that lesson well.”

So look day by day for fresh grace. Frequently too the Christian wants to have grace enough for a month vouchsafed to him in one moment. “O!” he says, “what a host of troubles I have coming—how shall I meet them all? O! that I had

grace enough to bear me through them all !” My dear friends, you will have grace enough for your troubles, as they come one by one. “As thy days, so shall thy strength be;” but thy strength shall never be as thy months, or as thy weeks. Thou shalt have thy strength as thou hast thy bread. “Give us this day our daily bread.” Give us this day our daily grace. But why is it you will be troubling yourself about the things of to-morrow? The common people say, “Cross a bridge when you come to it.” That is good advice. Do the same. When a trouble comes, attack it, and down with it, and master it; but do not begin now to forestall your woes. “Ah! but I have so many,” says one. Therefore I say, do not look further before thee than thou needest. “Sufficient unto the day is the *evil* thereof.” Do as the brave Grecian did, who, when he defended his country from Persia, did not go into the plains to fight, but stood in the narrow pass of Thermopylæ; there, when the myriads came to him, they had to come one by one, and he felled them to the earth. Had he ventured into the plain he would have been soon devoured, and his handfull would have been melted like a drop of dew in the sea. Stand in the narrow pass of to-day, and fight thy troubles one by one; but do not rush into the plains of to-morrow, for there thou wilt be routed and killed. As the evil is sufficient so will the grace be. “Salvation is of the Lord.”

But, lastly, upon this point. *The ultimate perfection of salvation is of the Lord.* Soon, soon, the saints of earth shall be saints in light; their hairs of snowy age shall be crowned with perpetual joy and everlasting youth; their eyes suffused with tears shall be made bright as stars, never to be clouded again by sorrow; their hearts that tremble now are to be made joyous and fast, and set for ever like pillars in the temple of God. Their follies, their burdens, their griefs, their woes, are soon to be over; sin is to be slain, corruption is to be removed, and a heaven of spotless purity and of unmingled peace is to be theirs for ever. But it must still be by grace. As was the foundation such must the top-stone be; that which laid on earth the first beginning must lay in heaven the top-most store. As they were redeemed from their filthy conversation

by grace, so they must be redeemed from death and the grave by grace too, and they must enter heaven singing

“Salvation of the Lord alone;  
Grace is a shoreless sea.”

There may be Arminians here, but they will not be Arminians there; they may here say, “It is of the will of the flesh,” but in heaven they shall not think so. Here they may ascribe some little to the creature; but there they shall cast their crowns at the Redeemer’s feet, and acknowledge that he did it all. Here they may sometimes look a little at themselves, and boast somewhat of their own strength; but there, “Not unto us, not unto us,” shall be sung with deeper sincerity and with more profound emphasis than they have even sung it here below. In heaven, when grace shall have done its work, this truth shall stand out in blazing letters of gold, “Salvation is of the Lord.”

II. Thus I have tried to expound the gospel. Now shall I show you HOW GOD HAS HEDGED THIS DOCTRINE ABOUT.

Some have said salvation in some cases is the result of *natural temperament*. Well, sir, well; God has effectually answered your argument. You say that some people are saved because they are naturally religious and inclined to be good; unfortunately I have never met with any of that class of persons yet; but I will suppose for a moment that there are such people. God has unanswerably met your objection; for, strange to say, the great number of these who are saved are just the most unlikely people in the world to have been saved, while a great number of those who perish were once just the very people whom, if natural disposition had any thing to do with it, we should have expected to see in heaven. Why, there is one here who in his youth was a child of many follies. Often did his mother weep over him, and cry and groan over her son’s wanderings; for what with a fierce high spirit that could brook neither bit nor bridle, what with perpetual rebellions and ebullitions of hot anger, she said, “My son, my son, what wilt thou be in thy riper years? Surely thou wilt dash in pieces law and order, and be a disgrace to thy father’s name.” He grew up; in youth he was wild and wanton, but,

wonder of wonders, on a sudden he became a new man, changed, altogether changed; no more like what he was before than angels are like lost spirits. He sat at her feet, he cheered her heart, and the lost, fiery one became gentle, mild, humble as a little child, and obedient to God's commandments. You say, wonder of wonders! But there is another here. He was a fair youth: when but a child he talked of Jesus; often when his mother had him on her knee he asked her questions about heaven; he was a prodigy, a wonder of piety in his youth. As he grew up, the tear rolled down his cheek under any sermon; he could scarcely bear to hear of death without a sigh; sometimes his mother caught him, as she thought, in prayer alone. And what is he now? He has just this very morning come from sin; he has become the debauched desperate villain, has gone far into all manner of wickedness and lust, and sin, and has become more damnably corrupt than other men could have made him; only his own evil spirit, once confined, has now developed itself; he has learned to play the lion in his manhood, as once he played the fox in his youth. I do not know whether you have ever met with such a case; but it very frequently is so. I know I can say that in my congregation some abandoned wicked fellow has had his heart broken, and been led to weep, and has cried to God for mercy, and renounced his vile sin; whilst some fair maiden by his side hath heard the same sermon, and if there was a tear she brushed it away; she still continues just what she was, "without God and without hope in the world." God has taken the base things of the world, and has just picked his people out of the very roughest of men, in order that he may prove that it is not natural disposition, but that "salvation is of the Lord" alone.

Well, but some say, it is *the minister* they hear who converts men. Ah! that is a grand idea, full sure. No man but a fool would entertain it. I met with a man some time ago who assured me that he knew a minister who had a very large amount of converting power in him. Speaking of a great evangelist in America, he said, "That man, sir, has got the greatest quantity of converting power I ever knew a man to have; and Mr. So-and-so in a neighboring town I think is second to him." At



that time this converting power was being exhibited; two hundred persons were converted by the converting power of this second best, and joined to the church in a few months. I went to the place some time afterwards—it was in England—and I said, “How do your converts get on?” “Well,” said he, “I can not say much about them.” “How many out of those two hundred whom you received in a year ago stand fast?” “Well,” he said, “I am afraid not many of them; we have turned seventy of them out for drunkenness already.” “Yes,” I said, “I thought so: that is the end of the grand experiment of converting power.” If I could convert you all, any one else might unconvert you; what any man can do another man can undo; it is only what God does that is abiding.

No, my brethren; God has taken good care it shall never be said conversion is of man, for usually he blesses those who seem to be the most unlikely to be useful. I do not expect to see so many conversions in this place as I had a year ago, when I had far fewer hearers. Do you ask why? Why, a year ago I was abused by every body; to mention my name was to mention the name of the most abominable buffoon that lived. The mere utterance of it brought forth oaths and cursing; with many men it was a name of contempt, kicked about the street as a foot-ball; but then God gave me souls by hundreds, who were added to my church, and in one year it was my happiness to see not less than a thousand personally who had then been converted. I do not expect that now. My name is somewhat esteemed now, and the great ones of the earth think it no dishonor to sit at my feet; but this makes me fear lest my God should forsake me now that the world esteems me. I would rather be despised and slandered than aught else. This assembly that you think so grand and fine, I would readily part with, if by such a loss I could gain a greater blessing. “God has chosen the base things of the world;” and, therefore, I reckon that the more esteemed I may be, the worse is my position, so much the less expectation shall I have that God will bless me. He hath but his “treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of man.” A poor minister began to preach once, and all the world spoke ill of him; but God

blessed him. By-and-bye they turned round and petted him. He was the man—a wonder! God left him! It has often been the same. It is for us to recollect, in all times of popularity, that “Crucify him, crucify him” follows fast upon the heels of “Hosanna,” and that the crowd to-day, if dealt faithfully with, may turn into the handful of to-morrow; for men eave not plain speaking. We should learn to be despised, learn to be contemned, learn to be slandered, and then we shall learn to be made useful by God. Down on my knees I have often fallen, with the hot sweat rising from my brow, under some fresh slander poured upon me; in an agony of grief my heart has been well-nigh broken; till at last I learned the art of bearing all and caring for none. And now my grief runneth in another line. It is just the opposite. I fear lest God should forsake me, to prove that he is the author of salvation, that it is not in the preacher, that it is not in the crowd, that it is not in the attention I can attract, but in God, and in God alone. And this thing I hope I can say from my heart: if to be made as the mire of the streets again, if to be the laughing-stock of fools and the song of the drunkard once more will make me more serviceable to my Master, and more useful to his cause, I will prefer it to all this multitude, or to all the applause that man could give. Pray for me, dear friends, pray for me, that God would still make me the means of the salvation of souls; for I fear he may say, “I will not help that man, lest the world should say *he* has done it,” for “salvation is of the Lord,” and so it must be, even to the world’s end.

III. AND NOW WHAT IS, WHAT SHOULD BE, THE INFLUENCE OF THIS DOCTRINE UPON MEN?

Why, first, with sinners, this doctrine is *a great battering ram against their pride*. I will give you a figure. The sinner in his natural estate reminds me of a man who has a strong and well-nigh impenetrable castle into which he has fled. There is the outer moat; there is a second moat; there are the high walls; and then afterward there is the dungeon and keep, into which the sinner will retire. Now, the first moat that goes round the sinner’s trusting place is his good works. “Ah!” he says, “I am as good as my neighbor; twenty shil

lings in the pound down, ready money, I have always paid ; I am no sinner ; ‘I tithe mint and cummin ;’ a good respectable gentleman I am indeed.” Well, when God comes to work with him, to save him, he sends his army across the first moat ; and as they go through it, they cry, “Salvation is of the Lord ;” and the moat is dried up, for if it be of the Lord, how can it be of good works ? But when that is done, he has a second intrenchment—ceremonies. “Well,” he says, “I will not trust in my good works, but I have been baptized, I have been confirmed ; do not I take the sacrament ? That shall be my trust.” “Over the moat ! Over the moat !” And the soldiers go over again, shouting, “Salvation is of the Lord.” The second moat is dried up ; it is all over with that. Now they come to the next strong wall ; the sinner, looking over it, says, “I can repent, I can believe, whenever I like ; I will save myself by repenting and believing.” Up come the soldiers of God, his great army of conviction, and they batter this wall to the ground, crying, “‘Salvation is of the Lord.’ Your faith and your repentance must all be given you, or else you will neither believe nor repent of sin.” And now the castle is taken ; the man’s hopes are all cut off ; he feels that it is not of self ; the castle of self is overcome, and the great banner upon which is written “Salvation is of the Lord” is displayed upon the battlements. But is the battle over ? O no ; the sinner has retired to the keep, in the center of the castle ; and now he changes his tactics. “I can not save myself,” says he, “therefore I will despair ; there is no salvation for me.” Now this second castle is as hard to take as the first, for the sinner sits down and says, “I can’t be saved, I must perish.” But God commands the soldiers to take this castle too, shouting, “Salvation *is* of the Lord ;” though it is not of man, *it is of God* ; “he is able to save, even to the uttermost,” though you can not save yourself. This sword, you see, cuts two ways ; it cuts pride down, and then it cleaves the skull of despair. If any man say he can save himself, it halveth his pride at once ; and if another man say he can not be saved, it dasheth his despair to the earth ; for it affirms that he can be saved, seeing, “Salvation *is* of the Lord.” That is the effect this doctrine has upon the sinner . may it have that effect on you !

But what influence has it upon the saint? Why, it is the keystone of all divinity. *I will defy you to be heterodox* if you believe this truth. You must be sound in the faith if you have learned to spell this sentence—"Salvation is of the Lord;" and if you feel it in your soul *you will not be proud*; you can not be; you will cast every thing at his feet, confessing that you have done nothing, save what he has helped you to do and therefore the glory must be where the salvation is. If you believe this *you will not be distrustful*. You will say, "My salvation does not depend on my faith, but on the Lord; my keeping does not depend on myself, but on God who keepeth me; my being brought to heaven rests not now in my own hands, but in the hands of God;" you will, when doubts and fears prevail, fold your arms, look upward and say,

"And now my eye of faith is dim,  
I trust in Jesus, sink or swim."

If you can keep this in your mind *you may always be joyful*. He can have no cause for trouble who knows and feels that his salvation is of God. Come on, legions of hell; come on, demons of the pit!

"He that has helped me bears me through,  
And makes me more than conqueror too."

Salvation resteth not on this poor arm, else should I despair, but on the arm of you Omnipotent—that arm on which the pillars of the heavens do lean. "Whom should I fear? The Lord is my strength and my life; of whom shall I be afraid?"

And this, may by grace, *nerve you to work for God*. If you had to save your neighbors you might sit down and do nothing; but since "salvation is of the Lord," go on and prosper. Go and preach the gospel; go and tell the gospel everywhere. Tell it in your house, tell it in the street, tell it in every land and every nation; for it is not of yourself, it is "of the Lord." Why do not our friends go to Ireland to preach the gospel? Ireland is a disgrace to the Protestant church. Why do not they go and preach there? A year or so ago a number of our brave ministers went over there to preach; they did right bravely; they went there, and they came back again, and that

is about the sum total of the glorious expedition against Popery. But why come back again? Because they were stoned, good easy men! Do they not think that the gospel ever will spread without a few stones? But they would have been killed! Brave martyrs they! Let them be enrolled in the red chronicle. Did the martyrs of old, did the apostles shrink from going to any country because they would have been killed? No, they were ready to die: and if half a dozen ministers had been killed in Ireland, it would have been the finest thing in the world for liberty in future; for after that the people dare not have touched us; the strong arm of the law would have put them down; we might have gone through every village of Ireland afterwards, and been at peace; the constabulary would soon have put an end to such infamous murder; it would have awakened the Protestantism of England to claim the liberty which is our right there as we give it elsewhere. We shall never see any great change till we have some men in our ranks who are willing to be martyrs. That deep ditch can never be crossed till the bodies of a few of us shall fill it up; and after that it will be easy work to preach the gospel there. Our brethren should go there once more. They can leave their white cravats at home, and the white feather too, and go forth with a brave heart and a bold spirit; and if the people mock and scoff, let them mock and scoff on. George Whitefield said, when he preached on Kennington Common, where they threw dead cats and rotten eggs at him, "This is only the manure of Methodism, the best thing in the world to make it grow; throw away as fast as you please." And when a stone cut him on the forehead, he seemed to preach the better for a little blood-letting. O! for such a man to dare the mob, and then the mob would not need to be dared. Let us go there, recollecting that "salvation is of the Lord," and let us in every place and at every time preach God's Word, believing that God's Word is more than a match for man's sin, and God will yet be master over all the earth.

My voice fails me again, and my thoughts too, I was weary this morning, when I came into this pulpit, and I am weary now. Sometimes I am joyous and glad, and feel in the pulpit as if I could preach for ever; at other times I feel glad to

close; but yet with such a text I would that I could have finished up with all the might that mortal lip could summon. O! to let men know this, that their salvation is of God! Swearer, swear not against him in whose hand thy breath is! Despiser, despise not him who can save you or destroy you. And thou hypocrite, seek not to deceive him from whom salvation comes, and who therefore knows right well whether thy salvation come from him.

IV. And now in concluding, let me just tell you **WHAT IS THE OBTVERSE OF THIS TRUTH.** Salvation is of God: then *damnation is of man.* If any of you are damned, you will have no one to blame but yourselves; if any of you perish, the blame will not lie at God's door; if you are lost and cast away, you will have to bear all the blame and all the tortures of conscience yourself; you will lie for ever in perdition, and reflect, "I have destroyed myself; I have made a suicide of my soul; I have been my own destroyer; I can lay no blame to God." Remember, if saved, you must be saved by God alone, though if lost you have lost yourselves. "Turn ye, turn ye why will ye die, O house of Israel." With my last faltering sentence I bid you stop and think. Ah! my hearers, my hearers! it is an awful thing to preach to such a mass as this. But the other Sunday, as I came down stairs, I was struck with a memorable sentence, uttered by one who stood there. He said, "There are 9000 people this morning without excuse in the day of judgment." I should like to preach so that this always might be said; and if I can not, O may God have mercy on me, for his name's sake! But now remember! Ye have souls; those souls will be damned, or saved. Which will it be? Damned they must be for ever, unless God shall save you; unless Christ shall have mercy upon you, there is no hope for you. Down on your knees! Cry to God for mercy. Now lift up your heart in prayer to God. May now be the very time when you shall be saved. Or ever the next drop of blood shall run through your veins, may you find peace! Remember, that peace is to be had now. If you feel now your need of it, it is to be had now. And how? For the mere asking for it. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find."

'But if your ears refuse  
The language of his grace,  
Your hearts grow hard, like stubborn Jews,  
That unbelieving race,  
The Lord with vengeance drest,  
Shall lift his hand and swear,  
You that despised my promised rest  
Shall have no portion there."

O! that ye may not be despisers, lest ye "wonder and perish!" May ye now fly to Christ, and be accepted in the beloved. It is my last best prayer. May the Lord hear it  
**Amen.**

# SERMON XIV.

## REGENERATION.

“Except a man be born again, he can not see the kingdom of God.”  
JOHN, iii. 3.

IN daily life our thoughts are most occupied with things that are most necessary for our existence. No one murmured that the subject of the price of bread was frequently on the lips of men at a time of scarcity, because they felt that the subject was one of vital importance to the mass of the population, and therefore they murmured not, though they listened to continual declamatory speeches, and read perpetual articles in the newspapers concerning it. I must offer the same excuse, then, for bringing before you this morning the subject of regeneration. It is one of absolute and vital importance; it is the hinge of the gospel; it is the point upon which most Christians are agreed, yea, all who are Christians in sincerity and truth. It is a subject which lies at the very basis of salvation. It is the very groundwork of our hopes for heaven; and as we ought to be very careful of the basement of our structure, so should we be very diligent to take heed that we are really born again, and that we have made sure work of it for eternity. There are many who fancy they are born again who are not. It well becomes us, then, frequently to examine ourselves; and it is the minister's duty to bring forward those subjects which lead to self-examination, and have a tendency to search the heart and try the reins of the children of men.

To proceed at once, I shall first make some remarks upon *the new birth*; secondly, I shall note *what is meant by not being able to see the kingdom of God if we are not born again*; then I shall go further on to note *why it is that* “except we



*are born again we can not see the kingdom of God ;*" and then *expostulate with men* as God's ambassador before I close.

I. First, then, THE MATTER OF REGENERATION. In endeavoring to explain it, I must have you notice, first of all, *the figure that is employed*. It is said a man must be born again. I can not illustrate this better than by supposing a case. Suppose that in England there should be a law passed, that admission to royal courts, preference in office, and any privileges that might belong to the nation, could only be given to persons who were born in England—suppose that birth in this land was made a *sine quâ non*, and it was definitely declared that whatever men might do or be, unless they were native born subjects of England they could not enter into her majesty's presence, and could enjoy none of the emoluments or offices of the state, nor any of the privileges of citizens. I think if you suppose such a case I shall be able to illustrate the difference between any changes and reforms that men make in themselves and the real work of being born again. We will suppose, then, that some man—a red Indian, for instance—should come to this country, and should endeavor to obtain the privileges of citizenship, well knowing that the rule is absolute and can not be altered, that a man must be a born subject, or else he can not enjoy them. Suppose he says, "*I will change my name, I will take up the name of an Englishman ; I have been called by my high-sounding title among the Sioux ; I have been called the son of the Great Westwind, or some such name ; but I will take an English name, I will be called a Christian man, an English subject.*" Will that admit him ? You see him coming to the palace gates and asking for admission. He says, "I have taken an English name." "But are you an Englishman born and bred ?" "I am not," says he. "Then the gates must be shut against you, for the law is absolute ; and though you may have the name of even the royal family itself upon you, yet because you have not been born here you must be shut out." That illustration will apply to all of us who are here present. At least, nearly the whole of us bear the professing Christian name ; living in England, you would think it a disgrace to you if you were not called Christian. You are not heathen, you are not infidel ; you are

neither Mohammedans nor Jews; you think that the name, Christian, is a creditable one to you, and you have taken it. Be ye quite assured that the name of a Christian is not the nature of a Christian, and that your being born in a Christian land, and being recognized as professing the Christian religion is of no avail whatever, unless there be something more added to it--the being born again as a subject of Jesus Christ.

“But,” says this red Indian, “I am prepared to *renounce my dress*, and to become an Englishman in fashion; in fact, I will go to the very top of the fashion; you shall not see me in any thing differing from the accepted style of the present day. May I not, when I am arrayed in court dress, and have decorated myself as etiquette demands, come in before her majesty? See, I’ll doff this plume, I will not shake this tomahawk, I renounce these garments. The moccasin I cast away for ever; I am an Englishman in dress, as well as name.” He comes to the gate, dressed out like one of our own countrymen; but the gates are still shut in his face, because the law required that he must be born in the country; and without that, whatever his dress might be, he could not enter the palace. So how many there are of you, who do not barely take the Christian name upon you, but have adopted Christian manners; you go to your churches and your chapels, you attend the house of God, you take care that there is some form of religion observed in your family; your children are not left without hearing the name of Jesus! So far so good; God forbid that I should say a word against it! But remember, it is bad because you do not go further. All this is of no avail whatever for admitting you into the kingdom of heaven, unless this also is complied with--the being born again. O! dress yourselves never so grandly with the habiliments of godliness; put the chaplet of benevolence upon your brow, and gird your loins with integrity; put on your feet the shoes of perseverance, and walk through the earth an honest and upright man; yet, remember, unless you are born again, “that which is of the flesh is flesh,” and you, not having the operations of the Spirit in you, still have heaven’s gates shut against you, because you are not born again.

“Well,” but says the Indian, “I will not only adopt the

dress, but I will *learn the language*; I will put away my brogue and my language that I once spoke, in the wild prairie or in the woods, far away from my lips. I shall not talk of the Shu-Shuh-gah, and of the strange names wherewith I have called my wild fowl and my deer, but I will speak as you speak, and act as you act; I will not only have your dress, but precisely your manners, I will talk just in the same fashion, I will adopt your brogue, I will take care that it shall be grammatically correct; will you not then admit me? I have become thoroughly Englishized; may I not then be received?" "No," says the keeper of the door, "there is no admittance, for except a man be born in this country, he can not be admitted." So with some of you; you talk just like Christians. Perhaps you have a little too much cant about you; you have begun so strictly to imitate what you think to be a godly man, that you go a little beyond the mark, and you gloss it so much that we are able to detect the counterfeit. Still you pass current among most men as being a right down sort of Christian man. You have studied biographies, and sometimes you tell long yarns about divine experience; you have borrowed them from the biographies of good men; you have been with Christians, and know how to talk as they do; you have caught a puritanical twang, perhaps; you go through the world just like professors; and if you were to be observed, no one would detect you. You are a member of the church; you have been baptized; you take the Lord's Supper; perhaps you are a deacon, or an elder; you pass the sacramental cup round; you are just all that a Christian can be, except that you are without a Christian heart. You are whitewashed sepulchres, still full of rottenness within, though garnished fairly on the outside. Well, take heed, take heed! It is an astonishing thing, how near the painter can go to the expression of life, and yet the canvas is dead and motionless; and it is equally astonishing how near a man may go to a Christian, and yet, through not being born again, the absolute rule shuts him out of heaven, and with all his profession, with all the trappings of his professed godliness, and with all the gorgeous plumes of experience, yet must he be borne away from heaven's gates.

You are uncharitable Mr. Spurgeon. I do not care what

you say about that I never wish to be more charitable than Christ. I did not say this; Christ said it. If you have any quarrel with him, settle it there; I am not the maker of this truth, but simply the speaker of it. I find it written, "Except a man be born again, he can not see the kingdom of God." If your footman should go to the door, and deliver your message correctly, the man at the door might abuse him never so much, but the footman would say, "Sir, do not abuse me, I can not help it; I can only tell you what my master told me. I am not the originator of it." So if you think me uncharitable, remember you do not accuse me, you accuse Christ; you are not finding fault with the messenger, you are finding fault with the message; Christ has said it—"Except a man be born again." I can not dispute with you, and shall not try. That is simply God's Word. Reject it at your peril. Believe it and receive it, I entreat you, because it comes from the lips of the Most High.

But now note *the manner in which this regeneration is obtained*. I think I have none here so profoundly stupid as to be Puseyites. I can scarcely believe that I have been the means of attracting one person here, so utterly devoid of every remnant of brain, as to believe the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. Yet I must just hint at it. There be some who teach that by a few drops of water sprinkled on an infant's brow the infant becomes regenerate. Well, granted. And now I will find out your regenerate ones twenty years afterward. The champion of the prize ring is a regenerated man. O! yes, he was regenerated, because in infancy he was baptized; and, therefore, if all infants in baptism are regenerated, the prize-fighter is a regenerated man. Take hold of him and receive him as your brother in the Lord. Do you hear that man swearing and blaspheming God? He is regenerate; believe me, he is regenerate; the priest put a few drops of water on his brow, and he is a regenerated man. Do you see the drunkard reeling down the street, the pest of the neighborhood, fighting every body, and beating his wife, worse than the brute. Well, he is regenerate, he is one of those Puseyite's regenerates—O! goodly regenerate! Mark you the crowd assembled in the streets! The gallows is erected,

Palmer is about to be executed ; the man whose name should be execrated through all eternity for his villainy ! Here is one of the Puseyite's regenerates. Yes, he is regenerate because he was baptized in infancy ; regenerate, while he mixes his strychnine ; regenerate while he administers his poison slowly, that he may cause death, and infinite pain, all the while he is causing it. Regenerate, forsooth ! If that be regeneration, such regeneration is not worth having ; if that be the thing that makes us free of the kingdom of heaven, verily, the gospel is indeed a licentious gospel ; we can say nothing about it. If that be the gospel, that all such men are regenerate and will be saved, we can only say, that it would be the duty of every man in the world to move that gospel right away, because it is so inconsistent with the commonest principles of morality, that it could not possibly be of God, but of the devil.

But some say all are regenerate when they are baptized. Well, if you think so, stick to your own thoughts ; I can not help it. Simon Magus was certainly one exception ; he was baptized on a profession of his faith ; but so far from being regenerated by his baptism, we find Paul saying, " I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." And yet he was one of those regenerates, because he had been baptized. Ah ! that doctrine only needs to be stated to sensible men, and they will at once reject it. Gentlemen that are fond of a filagree religion, and like ornament and show ; gentlemen of the high Beau Brummel school will very likely prefer this religion, because they have cultivated their taste at the expense of their brain, and have forgotten that what is consistent with the sound judgment of a man can not be consistent with the Word of God. So much for the first point.

Neither is a man regenerated, we say, in the next place, *by his own exertions*. A man may reform himself very much, and that is well and good ; let all do that. A man may cast away many vices, forsake many lusts in which he indulged, and conquer evil habits ; but no man in the world can make himself to be born in God ; though he should struggle never so much, he could never accomplish what is beyond his power

And, mark you, if he could make himself to be born again, still he would not enter heaven, because there is another point in the condition which he would have violated—"unless a man be born of the *Spirit*, he can not see the kingdom of God." So that the best exertions of the flesh do not reach this high point, the being born again of the Spirit of God.

And now we must say, that regeneration consists in this God the Holy Spirit, in a supernatural manner—mark, by the word supernatural I mean just what it strictly means; supernatural, more than natural—works upon the hearts of men, and they by the operations of the divine Spirit become regenerate men; but without the Spirit they never can be regenerated. And unless God the Holy Spirit, who "worketh in us to will and to do," should operate upon the will and the conscience, regeneration is an absolute impossibility, and therefore so is salvation. "What!" says one, "do you mean to say that God absolutely interposes in the salvation of every man to make him regenerate?" I do indeed; in the salvation of every person there is an actual putting forth of the divine power, whereby the dead sinner is quickened, the unwilling sinner is made willing, the desperately hard sinner has his conscience made tender; and he who rejected God and despised Christ, is brought to cast himself down at the feet of Jesus. This is called fanatical doctrine, mayhap; that we can not help; it is scriptural doctrine, that is enough for us. "Except a man be born of the Spirit he can not see the kingdom of God; that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." If you like it not, quarrel with my Master, not with me; I do but simply declare his own revelation, that there must be in your heart something more than you can ever work there. There must be a divine operation; call it a miraculous operation, if you please; it is in some sense so. There must be a divine interposition, a divine working, a divine influence, or else, do what you may, without that you perish, and are undone; "for except a man be born again, he can not see the kingdom of God." The change is radical; it gives us new natures, makes us love what we hated and hate what we loved, sets us in a new road; makes our habits different, our thoughts different, makes us

different in private, and different in public. So that being in Christ it is fulfilled: "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new."

II. And now I must come to the second point. I trust I have explained regeneration, so that all may see what it is. Now WHAT DOES THE EXPRESSION, "SEEING THE KINGDOM OF GOD," MEAN? It means two things. To see the kingdom of God on earth is to be a member of the mystical church—it is to enjoy the liberty and privileges of the child of God. To see the kingdom of heaven means to have power in prayer, to have communion with Christ, to have fellowship with the Holy Ghost; and to bring forth and produce all those joyous and blessed fruits which are the effect of regeneration. In a higher sense, "to see the kingdom of God," means to be admitted into heaven. Except a man be born again, he can not know about heavenly things on earth, and he can not enjoy heavenly blessings for ever—"he can not see the kingdom of God."

III. I think I may just pass over the second point without remark, and proceed to notice, in the third place, WHY IT IS THAT "UNLESS A MAN BE BORN AGAIN, HE CAN NOT SEE THE KINGDOM OF GOD." And I will confine my remarks to the kingdom of God in the world to come.

Why, he can not see the kingdom of God, because *he would be out of place in heaven*. A man that is not born again could not enjoy heaven. There is an actual impossibility in his nature, which prevents him from enjoying any of the bliss of Paradise. You think, mayhap, that heaven consists in those walls of jewels, in those pearly gates, and gates of gold; not so, that is the habitation of heaven. Heaven dwells there, but that is not heaven. Heaven is a state that is made here, that is made in the heart; made by God's Spirit within us, and unless God the Spirit has renewed us, and caused us to be born again, we can not enjoy the things of heaven. Why, it is a physical impossibility that ever a swine should deliver a lecture on astronomy; every man will clearly perceive that it must be impossible that a snail should build a city; and there is just as much impossibility that a sinner unmended, should

enjoy heaven. Why, there would be nothing there for him to enjoy; if he could be put into the place where heaven is, he would be miserable; he would cry, "Let me away, let me away; let me away from this miserable place!" I appeal to yourselves; a sermon is too long for you very often; the singing of God's praises is dull, dry work; you think that going up to God's house is very tedious. What will you do where they praise God day without night? If just a short discourse here is very wearying, what will you think of the eternal talkings of the redeemed through all ages of the wonders of redeeming love? If the company of the righteous is very irksome to you, what will be their company throughout eternity? I think many of you are free to confess that psalm-singing is not a bit to your taste, that you care naught about any spiritual things; give you your bottle of wine, and set you down at your ease, that is heaven for you! Well, there is no such a heaven yet made; and therefore there is no heaven for you. The only heaven there is, is the heaven of spiritual men, the heaven of praise, the heaven of delight in God, the heaven of acceptance in the beloved, the heaven of communion with Christ. Now, you do not understand any thing about this; you could not enjoy it if you were to have it; you have not the capabilities for doing so. You, yourselves, from the very fact of your not being born again, are your own barrier to heaven, and if God were to open the gate wide, and say, "Come in," you could not enjoy heaven, if you were admitted; for unless a man be born again, there is an impossibility, a moral impossibility, of his seeing the kingdom of God. Suppose there are some persons here who are entirely deaf, who have never heard sounds; well, I say they can not hear singing. Do I when I say it, say a cruel thing? It is their own disability that prevents them. So when God says you can not see the kingdom of heaven, he means that it is your own disability for the enjoyment of heaven, that will prevent you ever entering there.

But there are some other reasons; there are reasons why

"Those holy gates for ever bar  
Pollution, sin, and shame."



There are reasons, besides those in yourselves, why you can not see the kingdom of God, unless you are born again. *Ask you spirits* before the throne: "Angels, principalities, and powers, would ye be willing that men who love not God, who believe not in Christ, who have not been born again, should dwell here?" I see them, as they look down upon us, and hear them answering, "No! Once we fought the dragon, and expelled him because he tempted us to sin; we must not and we will not, have the wicked here. These alabaster walls must not be soiled with black and lustful fingers; the white pavement of heaven must not be stained and rendered filthy by the unholy feet of ungodly men. No!" I see a thousand spears bristling, and the fiery faces of a myriad seraphs thrust over the walls of Paradise. "No, while these arms have strength, and these wings have power, no sin shall ever enter here." I address myself moreover to the saints in heaven, redeemed by sovereign grace: "Children of God, are ye willing that the wicked should enter heaven as they are, without being born again? Ye love men, say, say, say, are ye willing that they should be admitted as they are?" I see Lot rise up, and he cries, "Admit them into heaven! No! What! must I be vexed with the conversation of Sodomites again, as once I was?" I see Abraham; and he comes forward, and he says, "No; I can not have them here. I had enough of them while I was with them on earth—their jests and jeers, their silly talkings, their vain conversation, vexed and grieved us. We want them not here." And, heavenly though they be, and loving as their spirits are, yet there is not a saint in heaven who would not resent with the utmost indignation the approach of any one of you to the gates of paradise, if you are still unholy, and have not been born again.

But all that were nothing. We might perhaps scale the ramparts of heaven, if they were only protected by angels, and burst the gates of paradise open, if only the saints defended them. But there is another reason than that—*God has said it himself*—"Except a man be born again, he can not see the kingdom of God." What sinner, wilt thou scale the battlements of paradise when God is ready to thrust thee down to hell? Wilt thou with impudent face brazen him out?

God has said it, God hath said it, with a voice of thunder, "Ye shall not see the kingdom of heaven." Can ye wrestle with the Almighty? Can ye overthrow Omnipotence? Can ye grapple with the Most High? Worm of the dust! canst thou overcome thy Maker? Trembling insect of an hour, shaken by the lightnings when far overhead they flash far athwart the sky, wilt thou dare the hand of God? Wilt thou venture to defy him to his face? Ah! he would laugh at thee. As the snow melteth before the sun, as wax runneth at the fierceness of the fire, so wouldst thou, if his fury should once lay hold of thee. Think not that thou canst overcome him. He has sealed the gate of Paradise against thee, and there is no entrance. The God of justice says, "I will not reward the wicked with the righteous; I will not suffer my goodly, godly Paradise to be stained by wicked ungodly men. If they turn I will have mercy upon them; but if they turn not, as I live, I will rend them in pieces, and there shall be none to deliver." Now, sinner, canst thou brazen it out against him! Wilt thou rush upon the thick bosses of Jehovah's bucklers? Wilt thou try to scale his heaven when his arrow is stringed upon the bow to reach thine heart? What! when the glittering sword is at thy neck and ready to slay thee? Wilt thou endeavor to strive against thy Maker? No potsherd, no; contend with thy fellow potsherd. Go, crawling grasshopper; go, fight with thy brothers; strive with them, but come not against the Almighty. He hath said it, and you never shall, you never shall enter heaven, unless you are born again. Again, I say, quarrel not with me; I have but delivered my Master's message. Take it, disbelieve it if you dare; but if you believe it, rail not at me, for it is God's message, and I speak in love to your soul, lest, lacking it, you should perish in the dark, and walk blindfold to your everlasting perdition.

IV. Now, my friends, A LITTLE EXPOSTULATION WITH YOU, and then farewell. I hear one man say, "Well, well, well, I see it. *I will hope that I shall be born again after I am dead.*" O, sir, believe me, you will be a miserable fool for your pains. When men die their state is fixed.

“Fixed as their everlasting state,  
 Could they repent, 'tis now too late.”

Our life is like that wax melting in the flame; death puts its stamp on it, and then it cools, and the impress never can be changed. You to day are like the burning metal running forth from the cauldron in the mold; death cools you in your mold, and you are cast in that shape throughout eternity. The voice of doom crieth over the dead, “He that is holy let him be holy still; he that is unjust let him be unjust still; he that is filthy, let him be filthy still.” The damned are lost for ever; they can not be born again; they go on cursing, ever being cursed; ever fighting against God, and ever being trampled beneath his feet; they go on ever mocking, ever being laughed at for their mockery; ever rebelling and ever being tortured with the whips of conscience, because they are ever sinning. They can not be regenerated because they are dead.

“Well,” says another, “*I will take care that I am regenerated first before I die.*” Sir, I repeat again, thou art a fool in talking thus; how knowest thou that thou shalt live? Hast thou taken a lease of thy life, as thou hast of thy house? Canst thou insure the breath within thy nostrils? Canst thou say in certainty that another ray of light shall ever reach thine eye? Canst thou be sure that, as thine heart is beating a funeral march to the grave, thou wilt not soon beat the last note; and so thou shalt die where thou standest or sittest now? O, man! if thy bones were iron, and thy sinews brass, and thy lungs steel, then mightest thou say, “I shall live.” But thou art made of dust; thou art like the flower of the field; thou mayest die now. Lo! I see death standing yonder, moving to and fro the stone of time upon his scythe, to sharpen it; to-day, to-day, for some of you he grasps the scythe—and away, away, he mows the fields, and you fall one by one. You must not, and you can not live. God carries us away as a flood, like a ship in a whirlpool; like the log in a current, dashed onward to the cataract. There is no stopping any one of us; we are all dying now! and yet you say you will be regenerated ere you die! Ay sirs, but are you regenerated now? For if not, it may be too late to hope for to

morrow. To-morrow you may be in hell, sealed up for ever by adamantine destiny, which never can be moved.

“Well,” cries another, “*I do not care much about it* ; for I see very little in being shut out of Paradise.” Ah, sir, it is because thou dost not understand it. Thou smilest at it now ; but there will be a day when thy conscience will be tender, when thy memory will be strong, when thy judgment will be enlightened, and when thou wilt think very differently from what thou dost now. Sinners in hell are not the fools they are on earth ; in hell they do not laugh at everlasting burnings ; in the pit they do not despise the words “eternal fire.” The worm that never dieth, when it is gnawing, gnaws out all joke and laughter ; you may despise God now, and despise me now, for what I say, but death will change your note. O, my hearers, if that were all, I would be willing. You may despise me, yes, you may ; but O ! I beseech you, do not despise yourselves ; O ! be not so fool-hardy as to go whistling to hell, and laughing to the pit ; for when you are there, sirs, you will find it a different thing from what you dream it to be now. When you see the gates of Paradise shut against you, you will find it to be a more important matter than you judge of now. You came to hear me preach to-day, as you would have gone to the opera or play-house ; you thought I should amuse you. Ah ! that is not my aim, God is my witness, I came here solemnly in earnest, to wash my hands of your blood. If you are damned, any one of you, it shall not be because I did not warn you. Men and women, if ye perish, my hands are washed in innocency ; I have told you of your doom. I again cry, repent, repent, repent, for “unless ye repent ye shall all likewise perish.” I came here determined this morning, if I must use rough words, to use them ; to speak right on against men, and for men too ; for the things we say against you now are really for your good. We do but warn you, lest you perish. But ah ! I hear one of you saying, “I do not understand this mystery ; pray explain it to me.” Fool, fool, that thou art ; do you see that fire ? We are startled up from our beds, the light is at the window ; we rush down stairs ; people are hurrying to and fro ; the street is trampled thick with crowds : they are rushing toward the house, which is in a burst of flame. The fire

men are at their work ; a stream of water is pouring upon the house ; but hark ye ! hark ye ! there is a man up stairs ; there is a man in the top room ; there is just time for him to escape, and barely. A shout is raised—"Aho ! fire ! fire ! fire ! aho !"—but the man does not make his appearance at the window. See, the ladder is placed against the walls ; it is up to the window sill—a strong hand dashes in the casement ! What is the man after, all the while ? What ! is he tied down in his bed ? Is he a cripple ? Has some fiend got hold of him, and nailed him to the floor ? No, no, no ; he feels the boards getting hot beneath his feet, the smoke is stifling him, the flame is burning all around, he knows there is but one way of escape, by that ladder ! What is he doing ? He is sitting down—no, you can not believe me—he is sitting down and saying, "The origin of this fire is very mysterious ; I wonder how it is to be discovered ; how shall we understand it ?" Why, you laugh at him ! You are laughing at yourselves. You are seeking to have this question and that question answered, when your soul is in peril of eternal life ! O ! when you are saved, it will be time then to ask questions ; but while you are now in the burning house, and in danger of destruction, it is not your time to be puzzling yourselves about free will, fixed fate, predestination absolute. All these questions are good and well enough afterward for those that are saved. Let the man on shore try to find out the cause of the storm ; your only business now is to ask, "What must I do to be saved ? And how can I escape from the great damnation that awaiteth me ?"

But ah ! my friends, I can not speak as I wish. I think I feel, this morning, something like Dante, when he wrote his "*Il Inferno*." Men said of him that he had been in hell ; he looked like it. He had thought of it so long, that they said, "He has been in hell," he spoke with such an awful earnestness. Ah ! if I could, I would speak like that too. It is only a few days more, and I shall meet you face to face ; I can look over the lapse of a few years, when you and I shall stand face to face before God's bar. "Watchman, watchman," saith a voice, "didst thou warn them ? didst thou warn them ?" Will any of you then say I did not ? No, even the most abandoned

of you will, at that day, say, "We laughed, we scoffed at it, we cared not for it; but, O Lord, we are obliged to speak the truth; the man was in earnest about it; he told us of our doom, and he is clear." Will you say so? I know you will.

But yet this one remark—to be cast out of heaven is an awful thing. Some of you have parents there; you have dear friends there; they grasped your hand in death, and said, "Farewell, until we meet you." But if you never see the kingdom of God, you can never see them again. "My mother," says one, "sleeps in the graveyard; I often go to the tomb and put some flowers upon it, in remembrance of her who nursed me; but must I never see her again?" No, never again; no, never, unless you are born again. Mothers, you have had infants that have gone to heaven; you would like to see your family all around the throne; but you will never see your children more, unless you are born again. Will you bid adieu this day to the immortal? Will you say farewell this hour to your glorified friends in Paradise? You must say so, or else be converted. You must fly to Christ, and trust in him, and his Spirit must renew you, or else you must look up to heaven, and say, "Choir of the blest! I shall never hear you sing; parents of my youth, guardians of my infancy, I love you, but between you and myself there is a great gulf fixed; I am cast away, and you are saved." O, I beseech you, think on these matters; and when you go away, let it not be to forget what I have said. If you are at all impressed this morning, put not away the impression; it may be your last warning; it will be a sorrowful thing to be lost with the notes of the gospel in your ears, and to perish under the ministry of truth.

## SERMON XV.

### SPIRITUAL RESURRECTION.

“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.”—  
EPHESIANS, ii. 1.

It might naturally be expected that I should have selected the topic of the resurrection on what is usually called the Easter Sabbath. I shall not do so ; for although I have read portions which refer to that glorious subject, I have had pressed on my mind a subject which is not the resurrection of Christ, but which is in some measure connected with it—the resurrection of lost and ruined man by the Spirit of God in this life.

The apostle is here speaking, you will observe, of the church at Ephesus, and, indeed, of all those who were chosen in Christ Jesus, accepted in him, and redeemed with his blood ; and he says of them, “You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.”

What a solemn sight is presented to us by a dead body ! When last evening trying to realize the thought, it utterly overcame me. The thought is overwhelming, that soon this body of mine must be a carnival for worms ; that in and out of these places, where my eyes are glistening, foul things, the offspring of loathsomeness, shall crawl ; that this body must be stretched in still, cold, abject, passive death, must then become a noxious, nauseous thing, cast out even by those that loved me, who will say, “Bury my dead out of my sight.” Perhaps you can scarcely, in the moment I can afford you, appropriate the idea to yourselves. Does it not seem a strange thing, that you, who have walked to this place this morning, shall be carried to your graves ; that the eyes with which you now behold me shall soon be glazed in everlasting darkness,

that the tongues, which just now moved in song, shall soon be silent lumps of clay; and that your strong and stalwart frame, now standing in this place, will soon be unable to move a muscle, and become a loathsome thing, the brother of the worm and the sister of corruption? You can scarcely get hold of the idea; death doth such awful work with us, it is such a Vandal with this mortal fabric, it so rendeth to pieces this fair thing that God hath builded up, that we can scarcely bear to contemplate his works of ruin.

Now, endeavor, as well as you can, to get the idea of a corpse, and when you have so done, please to understand, that that is the metaphor employed in my text to set forth the condition of your soul by nature. Just as the body is dead, incapable, unable, unfeeling, and soon about to become corrupt and putrid, so are we if we be unquickened by divine grace; dead in trespasses and sins, having within us death, which is capable of developing itself in worse and worse stages of sin and wickedness, until all of us here, left by God's grace, should become loathsome beings; loathsome through sin and wickedness, even as the corpse through natural decay. Understand, that the doctrine of the holy Scripture is, that man by nature, since the fall, is dead; he is a corrupt and ruined thing; in a spiritual sense, utterly and entirely dead. And if any of us shall come to spiritual life, it must be by the quickening of God's Spirit, vouchsafed to us sovereignly through the good will of God the Father, not for any merits of our own, but entirely of his own abounding and infinite grace.

Now, this morning, I trust I shall not be tedious; I shall endeavor to make the subject as interesting as possible, and also endeavor to be brief. The general doctrine of this morning is, that every man that is born into the world is dead spiritually, and that spiritual life must be given by the Holy Spirit, and can be obtained from no other source. That general doctrine, I shall illustrate in rather a singular way. You remember that our Saviour raised three dead persons; I do not find that during his lifetime he caused more than three resurrections. The first was the young maiden, *the daughter of Jairus*, who, when she lay on her bed dead, rose up to life at the single utterance of Christ, "*Talitha cumi!*" The



second was the case of *the widow's son*, who was on his bier, about to be carried to his tomb; and Jesus raised him up to life by saying, "Young man, I say unto thee, arise." The third, and most memorable case, was that of *Lazarus*, who was not on his bed, nor on his bier, but in his tomb, ay, and corrupt too; but notwithstanding that, the Lord Jesus Christ, by the voice of his omnipotence, crying, "Lazarus come forth," brought him out of the tomb.

I shall use these three facts as illustrations of *the different states of men*, though they be all thoroughly dead; secondly, as illustrations of *the different means of grace used for raising them*, though, after all, the same great agency is employed; and, in the third place, as illustrations of *the after experience of quickened men*; for though that to a great degree is the same, yet there are some points of difference.

I. I shall begin by noticing, then, first of all, **THE CONDITION OF MEN BY NATURE.** Men by nature are all dead. There is Jairus's daughter; she lies on her bed; she seems as if she were alive; her mother has scarce ceased to kiss her brow, her hand is still in her father's loving grasp, and he can scarcely think that she is dead; but dead she is, as thoroughly dead as she ever can be. Next comes the case of the young man brought out of his grave; he is more than dead, he has begun to be corrupt, the signs of decay are upon his face, and they are carrying him to his tomb; yet though there are more manifestations of death about him, he is no more dead than the other. He is just as dead; they are both dead, and death really knows of no degrees. The third case goes further still in the manifestation of death; for it is the case of which Martha, using strong words, said, "Lord, by this time he stinketh; for he hath been dead four days." And yet, mark you, the daughter of Jairus was as dead as Lazarus; though the manifestation of death was not so complete in her case. All were dead alike. I have in my congregation some blessed beings, fair to look upon; fair, I mean, in their character, as well as their outward appearance; they have about them every thing that is good and lovely; but mark this, if they are unregenerate they are dead still. That girl, dead in the room, upon her bed, had little about her that could show her death. Not yet

had the loving finger closed the eyelid; there seemed to be a light still lingering in her eye; like a lily just nipped off, she was as fair as life itself. The worm had not yet begun to gnaw her cheek, the flush had not yet faded from her face; she seemed well-nigh alive. And so is it with some I have here. Ye have all that heart could wish for, except the one thing needful; ye have all things save love to the Saviour. Ye are not yet united to him by a living faith. Ah! then, I grieve to say it, ye are dead! ye are dead! As much dead as the worst of men, although your death is not so apparent. Again, I have in my presence young men who have grown to riper years than that fair damsel who died in her childhood. You have much about you that is lovely, but you have just begun to indulge in evil habits; you have not yet become the desperate sinner; you have not yet become altogether noxious in the eyes of other men; you are but beginning to sin, you are like the young man carried out on his bier; you have not yet become the confirmed drunkard; you have not yet begun to curse and blaspheme God; you are still accepted in good society; you are not yet cast out; but you are dead, thoroughly dead, just as dead as the third and worst case. But I dare say I have some characters that are illustrations of that case too. There is Lazarus in his tomb, rotten and putrid; and so there are some men not more dead than others, but their death has become more apparent, their character has become abominable, their deeds cry out against them, they are put out of decent society, the stone is rolled to the mouth of their tomb, men feel that they can not hold acquaintance with them, for they have so utterly abandoned every sense of right, that we say, "Put them out of sight, we can not endure them!" And yet these putrid ones may live; these last are not more dead than the maiden upon her bed, though death has more fully revealed itself in their corruption. Jesus Christ must quicken the one as well as the other, and bring them all to know and love his name.

1. Now, then, I am about to enter into the minutiae of the difference of these three cases. I will take the case of the young maiden. I have her here to-day; I have many illustrations of her present before me; at least, I trust so. Now, will

you allow me to point out all the differences? Here is the young maiden; look upon her; you can bear the sight; she is dead, but O! *beauty lingereth there*; she is fair and lovely, though the life hath departed from her. In the young man's case there is no beauty; the worm hath begun to eat him; his honor hath departed. In the third case, there is absolute rottenness. But here there is beauty still upon her cheek. Is she not amiable? Is she not lovely? Would not all love her? Is she not to be admired, even to be imitated? Is she not fairest of the fair? Ay, that she is; but God the Spirit has not yet looked upon her; she has not yet bent her knee to Jesus, and cried for mercy; she has every thing, except true religion. Alas! for her; alas! that so fair a character should be a dead one. Alas! my sister; alas! that thou, the benevolent, the kind one, should yet be, after all, dead in thy trespasses and sins. As Jesus wept over that young man who had kept all the commandments, and yet one thing he lacked, so weep I over thee this morning. Alas! thou fair one, lovely in thy character, and amiable in thy carriage, why shouldst thou lie dead? For dead thou art, unless thou hast faith in Christ. Thine excellence, thy virtue, and thy goodness, shall avail thee nought; thou art dead, and dead thou must be, unless he make thee live.

Note, too, that in the case of this maiden, whom we have introduced to you, the daughter of Jairus, *she is yet caressed*; she has only been dead a moment or two, and the mother still presses her cheek with kisses. O! can she be dead? Do not the tears rain on her, as if they would sow the seeds of life in that dead earth again?—earth that looks fertile enough to bring forth life with but one living tear? Ay, but those salt tears are tears of barrenness. She liveth not; but she is still caressed. Not so the young man; he is put on the bier; no man will touch him any more, or else he will be utterly defiled. And as for Lazarus, he is shut-up with a stone. But this young maiden is still caressed; so it is with many of you; you are loved even by the living in Sion; God's own people love you; the minister has often prayed for you; you are admitted into the assemblies of the saints, you sit with them as God's people, ye hear as they hear, and you sing as they sing. Alas! for

you; alas! for you, that you should still be dead! O! it grieves me to the heart, to think that some of you are all that heart could wish, except that one thing; yet lacking that which is the only thing that can deliver you. You are caressed by us, received by the living in Sion into their company and acquaintance, approved of and accepted; alas! that you should yet be without life! O! in your case, if you are saved, you will have to join with even the worst in saying "I have been quickened by divine grace, or else I had never lived."

And now will you look at this maiden again? Note, *she has no grave clothes on her yet*; she is dressed in her own raiment; just as she retired to her bed a little sick, so lieth she there; not yet have the napkin and the shroud been wrapped about her; she still weareth the habiliments of sleep; she is not yet given up to death. Not so the young man yonder—he is in his grave clothes; not so Lazarus—he is bound hand and foot. But this young maiden hath no grave clothes upon her. So with the young person we wish to speak of this morning; she has as yet no evil habits, she hath not yet reached that point; the young man yonder has begun to have evil habits; and you gray-headed sinner is bound hand and foot by them; but as yet she appeareth just like the living, she acteth just like the Christian; her habits are fair, goodly, and comely; there seemeth to be little ill about her. Alas! alas! that thou shouldst be dead, even in thy fairest raiment. Alas! thou who hast set the chaplet of benevolence on thy brow, thou who dost gird thyself with the white robes of outward purity, if thou art not born again, thou art dead still. Thy beauty shall fade away like a moth; and in the day of judgment thou wilt be severed from the righteous, unless God shall make thee live. O! I could weep over those young ones who seem at present to have been delivered from forming any habits which could lead them astray, but who are yet unquickened and unsaved. O! would to God, young man and young woman, you might in early years be quickened by the Spirit.

And will you notice, yet once more, that this young maiden's death was *a death confined to her chamber*. Not so with the young man; he was carried to the gate of the city

and much people saw him. Not so Lazarus; the Jews came to weep at his tomb. But this young woman's death is in her chamber. Ay, so it is with the young woman or young man I mean to describe now. His sin is as yet a secret thing, kept to himself; as yet there has been no breaking forth of iniquity, but only the conception of it in the heart; just the embryo of lust, not as yet broken out into act. The young man has not yet drained the intoxicating cup, although he has had some whisperings of the sweetness of it; he has not yet run into the ways of wickedness, though he has had temptations thrust upon him; as yet he has kept his sin in his chamber, and most of it has been unseen. Alas! my brother, alas! my sister, that thou who in thine outward carriage art so good, should yet have sins in the chamber of thine heart, and death in the secrecy of thy being, which is as true a death as that of the grossest sinner, though not so thoroughly manifested. Would to God that thou couldst say, "And he hath quickened me, for with all my loveliness, and all my excellence, I was by nature dead in trespasses and sins." Come, let me just press this matter home. I have some in my congregation that I look upon with fear. O! my dear friends, my much loved friends how many there are among you, I repeat, that are all that the heart could wish, except that one thing—that you love not my Master. O! ye young men who come up to the house of God, and who are outwardly so good; alas! for you, that ye should lack the root of the matter. O! ye daughters of Sion, who are ever at the house of prayer, O! that ye should yet be without grace in your heart! Take heed, I beseech you, ye fairest, youngest, most upright, and most honest; when the dead are separated from the living, unless ye be regenerated, ye must go with the dead; though ye be never so fair and goodly, ye must be cast away, unless ye live.

2. Thus, I have done with the first case; now we will go to the young man, who stands second. He is not more dead than the other, but *he is further gone*. Come, now, and stop the bier; you can not look upon him! Why, the cheek is sunken—there is a hollowness there; not as in the case of the raider, whose cheek was still round and ruddy. And the eye—O, what a blackness is there! Look on him; you can see that

the gnawings of the worm will soon burst forth; corruption hath begun its work. So it is with some young men I have here. They are not what they were in their childhood, when their habits were proper and correct; but mayhap they have just been enticed into the house of the strange woman; they have just been tempted to go astray from the path of rectitude; their corruption is just breaking forth; they disdain now to sit at their mother's apron-strings; they think it foul scorn to keep to the rules that bind the moral! They! they are free, they say, and they will be free; they will live a jolly and a happy life; and so they run on in boisterous yet wicked merriment, and betray the marks of death about them. They have gone further than the maiden; she was still fair and comely; but here there is something that is the afterwork of death. The maiden was caressed, but the young man is untouched he lieth on the bier, and though men bear him on their shoulders, yet there is a shrinking from him; he is dead, and it is known that he is dead. Young man, you have got as far as that; you know that good men shrink from you. It was but yesterday that your mother's tears fell fast and thick as she warned your younger brother to avoid your sin; your very sister, when she kissed you but this morning, prayed to God that you might get good in this house of prayer; but you know that of late she has been ashamed of you; your conversation has become so profane and wicked, that even she could scarce endure it. There are houses in which you were once welcome; where you once bowed your knee with them at the family prayer, and your name was mentioned too; but now you do not choose to go there, for when you go, you are treated with reserve. The good man of the house feels that he could not let his son go with you, for you would contaminate him; he does not sit down now side by side with you, as he used to do, and talk about the best things; he lets you sit in the room as a matter of mere courtesy; he stands far away from you, as it were; he feels that you have not a spirit congenial with his own. You are a little shunned; you are not quite avoided; you are still received among the people of God, yet there is a coldness that manifests that they understand that you are not a living one.

And note, too, that this young man, though carried out to his grave, was not like the maiden; she was in the garments of life, but *he was wrapped in the cerements of death*. So many of you have begun to form habits that are evil; you know that already the screw of the devil is tightening on your finger. Once it was a screw you could slip off or on; you said you were master of your pleasures—now your pleasures are master of you. Your habits are not now commendable, you know they are not; you stand convicted while I speak to you this morning; you know your ways are evil. Ah! young man, though thou hast not yet gone so far as the open profligate and desperately profane, take heed, thou art dead! thou art dead! and unless the Spirit quicken thee, thou shalt be cast into the valley of Gehenna, to be the food of that worm which never dieth, but eateth souls throughout eternity. And ah! young man, I weep, I weep over thee; thou art not yet so far gone, that they have rolled the stone against thee; thou art not yet become obnoxious; thou art not yet the staggering drunkard, nor yet the blasphemous infidel; thou hast much that is ill about thee, but thou hast not gone all the lengths yet. Take heed; thou wilt go further still; there is no stopping in sin. When the worm is there, you can not put your finger on it, and say, “Stop; eat no more.” No, it will go on to your utter ruin. May God save you now, ere you shall come to that consummation for which hell so sighs, and which heaven can alone avert.

One more remark concerning this young man. The maiden's death was in her chamber; *the young man's death was in the city gates*. In the first case I described, the sin was secret. But, young man, yours is not. You have gone so far that your habits are openly wicked; you have dared to sin in the face of God's sun. You are not as some others—seemingly good; but you go out and openly say, “I am no hypocrite; I dare to do wrong. I do not profess to be righteous; I know I am a scapegrace rascal. I have gone astray, and I am not ashamed to sin in the street.” Ah! young man, young man! Thy father, perhaps is saying now, “Would God that I had died for him—would God that I had seen him buried in his grave, ere he should have gone to such a length in wickedness

Would God that when I first saw him, and mine eye was gladdened with my son, I had seen him the next minute smitten with disease and death! O, would to God that his infant spirit had been called to heaven, that he might not have lived to bring in this way my gray hairs in sorrow to the grave!" Your sport in the city gates is misery in your father's house; your open merriment before the world brings agony into a mother's heart. O, I beseech you, stay. O, Lord Jesus touch the bier this morning! Stop some young man in his evil habits, and say unto him, "Arise." Then will he join with us in confessing that those who are alive have been quickened by Jesus, through the Spirit, though they were dead in trespasses and sins.

3. Now we come to the third and last case—LAZARUS DEAD AND BURIED. Ah! dear friends, I can not take you to see Lazarus in his grave. Stand, O stand away from him. Whither shall we flee to avoid the noxious odor of that reeking corpse? Ah, whither shall we flee? There is no beauty there; we dare not look upon it. There is not even the gloss of life left. O, hideous spectacle! I must not attempt to describe it; words would fail me, and you would be too much shocked. Nor dare I tell the character of some men present here. I should be ashamed to tell the things which some of you have done. This cheek might mantle with a blush to tell the deeds of darkness which some of the ungodly of this world habitually practice. Ah, the last stage of death, the last stage of corruption, O, how hideous; but the last stage of sin, hideous far more! Some writers seem to have an aptitude for puddling in this mud, and digging up this miry clay; I confess that I have none. I can not describe to you the lusts and vices of a full-grown sinner. I can not tell you what are the debaucheries, the degrading lusts, the devilish, the bestial sins into which wicked men will run, when spiritual death has had its perfect work in them, and sin has manifested itself in all its fearful wickedness. I may have some here. They are not Christians. They are not, like the young maiden, still fended, nor even like the young man, still kept in the funeral procession: no, they have gone so far that decent people avoid them. Their very wife, when they go into the house, rushes



up stairs to be out of the way. They are scorned. Such a one is the harlot, from whom one's head is turned in the very street. Such a one is the openly profligate, to whom we give wide quarters, lest we touch him. He is a man that is far gone. The stone is rolled before him. No one calls him respectable. He dwelleth, perhaps, in some back slum of a dirty lane; he knoweth not where to go. Even as he stands in this place, he feels that if his next-door neighbor knew his guilt he would give him a wide berth, and stand far away from him; for he has come to the last stage; he has no marks of life. He is utterly rotten. And mark; as in the case of the maiden, the sin was in the chamber, secret; in the next case it was in the open streets, public; but in this case it is secret again. It is in the tomb. For you will mark that men, when they are only half gone in wickedness, do it openly; but when they are fully gone their lust becomes so degrading that they are obliged to do it in secret. They are put into the grave, in order that all may be hidden. Their lust is one which can only be perpetrated at midnight; a deed which can only be done when shrouded by the astonished curtains of darkness. Have I any such here? I can not tell that I have many; but still I have some. Ah! in being constantly visited by penitents I have sometimes blushed for this city of London. There are merchants whose names stand high and fair. Shall I tell it here? I know it on the best authority, and the truest, too. There are some who have houses large and tall, who on the exchange are reputable and honorable, and every one admits them and receives them into their society; but ah! there are some of the merchants of London who practice lusts that are abominable. I have in my church and congregation—and I dare say what men dare to do—I have in my congregation women whose ruin and destruction have been wrought by some of the most respected men in respectable society. Few would venture on so bold a statement as that; but if you boldly do the thing, I must speak of it. It is not for God's ambassador to wash his mouth beforehand; let him boldly reprove, as men do boldly sin. Ah! there are some that are a stench in the nostrils of the Almighty; some whose character is hideous beyond all hideousness. They have to be cov

ered up in the tomb of secrecy; for men would scout them from society, and hiss them from existence, if they knew all. And yet—and now comes a blessed interposition—yet this last case may be saved as well as the first, and as easily too. The rotten Lazarus may come out of his tomb, as well as the slumbering maiden from her bed. The last, the most corrupt, the most desperately abominable, may yet be quickened; and he may join in exclaiming, “And I have been quickened, though I was dead in trespasses and sins.” I trust you will understand what I wish to convey—that the death is the same in all cases; but the manifestation of it is different; and that the life must come from God, and from God alone.

II. And now I will go on to another point—THE QUICKENING. These three persons were all quickened, and they were all quickened by the same being—that is by Jesus. But they were all quickened in a different manner. Note, first, the young maiden on her bed. When she was brought to life, it is said, “Jesus took her by the hand and said, Maiden, arise.” It was a still small voice. Her heart received its pulse again, and she lived. It was the gentle touching of the hand—no open demonstration—and the soft voice was heard, “Arise.” Now usually when God converts young people in the first stage of sin, before they have formed evil habits, he does it in a gentle manner; not by the “terrors of the law, the tempest, fire and smoke,” but he makes them like Lydia, “whose heart the Lord opened” that she received the word. On such “it droppeth like the gentle dew from heaven upon the place beneath.” With hardened sinners grace cometh down in showers that rattle on them; but in young converts it often cometh gently. There is just the sweet breathing of the Spirit. They perhaps scarcely think it is a true conversion; but true it is, if they are brought to life.

Now note the next case. Christ did not do the same thing with the young man that he did with the daughter of Jairus. No; the first thing he did was, he put his hand, not on him, mark you, but *on the bier*; “and they that bare it stood still,” and after that, without touching the young man, he said in a louder voice, “Young man, I say unto thee, arise!” Note the difference; the young maiden’s new life was given to her secretly

The young man's was given more publicly. It was done in the very street of the city. The maiden's life was given gently by a touch; but in the young man's case it must be done, not by the touching of him, but by the touching of the bier. Christ takes away from the young man his means of pleasure. He commands his companions, who by bad example are bearing him on his bier to his grave, to stop, and then there is a partial reformation for a while; after that there comes the strong outspoken voice, "Young man, I say unto thee, arise!"

But now comes the worst case; and will you please at your leisure at home to notice what preparations Christ made for the last case of Lazarus? When he raised the maiden, he walked up into the chamber, smiling, and said, "She is not dead, but sleepeth." When he raised the young man, he said to the mother, "Weep not." Not so when he came to the last case; there was something more terrible about that: it was *a man in his grave corrupting*. It was on that occasion you read, "Jesus wept;" and after he had wept, it is said that "he groaned in his spirit;" and then he said, "Take away the stone;" and then there came the prayer, "I know that thou hearest me always." And then, will you notice, there came, what is not expressed so fully in either of the other cases. It is written, "Jesus cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth!" It is not written that he cried with the loud voice to either of the others. He spake to them; it was his word that saved all of them; but in the case of Lazarus, he cried to him in a loud voice. Now I have, perhaps, some of the last characters here—the worst of the worst. Ah, sinner, may the Lord quicken thee! But it is a work that makes the Saviour weep. I think when he comes to call some of you from your death in sin who have gone to the utmost extremity of guilt, he comes weeping and sighing for you. There is a stone there to be rolled away—your bad and evil habits; and when that stone is taken away, a still small voice will not do for you; it must be the loud crashing voice, like the voice of the Lord, which breaketh the cedars of Lebanon, "Lazarus, come forth!" John Bunyan was one of those rotten ones. What strong means were used in his case. Terrible dreams, fearful convulsions, awful shakings to and fro—all had to be employed to

make him live. And yet some of you think, when God is terrifying you by the thunders of Sinai, that he really does not love you. It is not so: you were so dead that it needed a loud voice to arrest your ears.

III This is an interesting subject: I wish I could dilate upon it, but my voice fails me; and, therefore, permit me to go to the third point very briefly. THE AFTER-EXPERIENCE OF THESE THREE PEOPLE WAS DIFFERENT—at least, you gather it from the commands of Christ. As soon as the maiden was alive, Christ said, “Give her meat;” as soon as the young man was alive, “he delivered him to his mother;” as soon as Lazarus was alive, he said, “Loose him, and let him go.” I think there is something in this. When young people are converted who have not yet acquired evil habits; when they are saved before they become obnoxious in the eyes of the world, the command is, “*Give them meat.*” Young people want instruction; they want building up in the faith; they generally lack knowledge; they have not the deep experience of the older man; they do not know so much about sin, nor even so much about salvation as the older man that has been a guilty sinner; they need to be fed. So that our business as ministers, when the young lambs are brought in, is to remember the injunction, “Feed my lambs;” take care of them; give them plenty of meat. Young people, search after an instructive minister; seek after instructive books; search the Scriptures, and seek to be instructed: that is your principal business. “Give her meat.”

The next case was a different one. He gave the young man up to his mother. Ah! that is just what he will do with you young man, if he makes you live. As sure as ever you are converted, he will give you up to your mother again. You were with her when you first as a babe sat on her knee; and that is where you will have to go again. O, yes; grace knits together again the ties which sin has loosed. Let a young man become abandoned; he casts off the tender influence of a sister and the kind associations of a mother; but if he is converted, one of the first things he will do will be to find the mother out, and the sister out, and he will find a charm in their society that he never knew before. You that have gone

into sin, let this be your business, if God has saved you. Seek good company. Just as Christ delivered the young man to his mother, do you seek after your mother, the church. Endeavor as much as possible to be found in the company of the righteous; for, as you were carried before to your grave by bad companions, you need to be led to heaven by good ones.

And then comes the case of Lazarus. "*Loose him, and let him go.*" I do not know how it is that the young man never was loosed, I have been looking through every book I have about the manners and customs of the East, and have not been able to get a clew to the difference between the young man and Lazarus. The young man, as soon as Christ spoke to him, "sat up and began to speak;" but Lazarus, in his grave-clothes, lying in the niche of the tomb, could do no more than just shuffle himself out from the hole that was cut in the wall, and then stand leaning against it. He could not speak; he was bound about in a napkin. Why was it not so with the young man? I am inclined to think that the difference lay in the difference of their wealth. The young man was the son of a widow. Very likely he was only wrapped up in a few common things, and not so tightly bound about as Lazarus. Lazarus was of a rich family; very likely they wrapped him up with more care. Whether it was or not, I do not know. What I want to hint at is this: when a man is far gone into sin, Christ does this for him—he breaks off his evil habits. Very likely the old sinner's experience will not be a feeding experience. It will not be the experience of walking with the saints. It will be as much as he can do to pull off his grave-clothes, to get rid of his old habits: perhaps to his death he will have to be rending off bit after bit of the cerements in which he has been wrapped. There is his drunkenness; O what a fight he will have with that! There is his lust, what a combat he will have with that, for many a month! There is his habit of swearing; how often will an oath come into his mouth, and he will have as hard work as he can to thrust it down again! There is his pleasure-seeking; he has given it up; but how often will his companions be after him, to get him to go with them. His life will be ever afterward a loos

ing and letting go ; for he will need it till he cometh up to be with God for ever and ever.

And now, dear friends, I must close by asking you this question, *Have you been quickened?* And I must warn you that, good, or bad, or indifferent, if you have never been quickened you are dead in sins, and must be cast away at the last. I must bid you, however, who have gone the furthest into sin, not to despair ; Christ can quicken you as well as the best. O that he would quicken you and lead you to believe ! O that he now would cry to some, "Lazarus, come forth !" and make some harlot virtuous, some drunkard sober. O that he would bless the word, especially to the young and amiable and lovely, by making them now the heirs of God and the children of Christ !

And now but one thing I have to say to those who are quickened ; and then adieu this morning, and may God bless you ! My dear friends, you who are quickened, let me advise you to take care of the devil ; he will be sure to be after you. Keep your mind always employed, and so you will escape him. O be aware of his devices ; seek to "keep the heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." The Lord bless you, for Jesus' sake.

# SERMON XVI.

## CONFESSION OF SIN.

A SERMON WITH SEVEN TEXTS.

MY sermon this morning will have seven texts, and yet I pledge myself that there shall be but three different words in the whole of them; for it so happens that the seven texts are all alike, occurring in seven different portions of God's holy Word. I shall require, however, to use the whole of them to exemplify different cases; and I must request those of you who have brought your Bibles with you to refer to the texts as I shall mention them.

The subject of this morning's discourse will be this—CONFESSION OF SIN. We know that this is absolutely necessary to salvation. Unless there be a true and hearty confession of our sins to God, we have no promise that we shall find mercy through the blood of the Redeemer. "Whosoever confesseth his sins and forsaketh them shall find mercy." But there is no promise in the Bible to the man who will not confess his sins. Yet, as upon every point of Scripture there is a liability of being deceived, so more especially in the matter of confession of sin. There be many who make a confession, and a confession before God, who, notwithstanding, receive no blessing, because their confession has not in it certain marks which are required by God to prove it genuine and sincere, and which demonstrate it to be the work of the Holy Spirit. My text this morning consists of three words, "I have sinned." And you will see how these words, in the lips of different men, indicate very different feelings. While one says, "I have sinned," and receives forgiveness; another we shall meet with says, "I have sinned," and goes his way to blacken himself with worse crimes than before, and dive into greater depths of sin than heretofore he had discovered.

## THE HARDENED SINNER.

PHARAOH—"I have sinned"—EXODUS, ix. 27.

I. The first case I shall bring before you is that of the *hardened sinner*, who, when under terror, says, "I have sinned." And you will find the text in the book of Exodus, the 9th chapter, and 27th verse: "And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time: the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked."

But why this confession from the lips of the haughty tyrant? He was not often wont to humble himself before Jehovah. Why doth the proud one bow himself? You will judge of the value of his confession when you hear the circumstances under which it was made. "And Moses stretched forth his rod toward heaven; and the Lord sent thunder and hail, and the fire ran along upon the ground; and the Lord rained hail upon the land of Egypt. So that there was hail, and fire mingled with the hail, very grievous, such as there was none like it in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation." "Now," says Pharaoh, whilst the thunder is rolling through the sky, while the lightning flashes are setting the very ground on fire, and while the hail is descending in big lumps of ice, now, says he, "I have sinned." He is but a type and specimen of multitudes of the same class. How many a hardened rebel on ship-board, when the timbers are strained and creaking, when the mast is broken, and the ship is drifting before the gale, when the hungry waves are opening their mouths to swallow the ship up alive, and quick as those that go into the pit—how many a hardened sailor has then bowed his knee, with tears in his eyes, and cried, "I have sinned!" But of what avail and of what value was his confession? The repentance that was born in the storm died in the calm; that repentance of his that was begotten amid the thunder and the lightning, ceased so soon as all was hushed in quiet, and the man who was a pious mariner when on board ship, became the most wicked and abominable of sailors when he placed his foot on *terra firma*. How often, too, have we seen this in a



storm of thunder and lightning? Many a man's cheek is blanched when he hears the thunder rolling; the tears start to his eyes, and he cries, "O God, I have sinned!" while the rafters of his house are shaking, and the very ground beneath him reeling at the voice of God which is full of majesty. But alas, for such a repentance! When the sun again shines, and the black clouds are withdrawn, sin comes again upon the man, and he becomes worse than before. How many of the same sort of confessions, too, have we seen in times of cholera, and fever, and pestilence! Then our churches have been crammed with hearers, who, because so many funerals have passed their door, or so many have died in the street, could not refrain from going up to God's house to confess their sins. And under that visitation, when one, two, and three have been lying dead in the house, or next door, how many have thought they would really turn to God! But, alas! when the pestilence had done its work, conviction ceased; and when the bell had tolled the last time for a death caused by cholera, then their hearts ceased to beat with penitence, and their tears did flow no more.

Have I any such here this morning? I doubt not I have hardened persons who would scorn the very idea of religion, who would count me a cant and hypocrite if I should endeavor to press it home upon them, but who know right well that religion is true, and who feel it in their times of terror! If I have such here this morning, let me solemnly say to them, "Sirs, you have forgotten the feelings you had in your hours of alarm; but, remember, God has not forgotten the vows you then made." Sailor, you said, if God would spare you to see the land again, you would be his servant; you are not so, you have lied against God, you have made him a false promise, for you have never kept the vow which your lips did utter. You said, on a bed of sickness, that if he would spare your life you would never again sin as you did before; but here you are, and this week's sins shall speak for themselves. You are no better than you were before your sickness. Couldst thou lie to thy fellow-man, and yet go unreprieved? And thinkest thou that thou wilt lie against God, and yet go unpunished? No; the vow, however rashly made is registered in heaven;

and though it be a vow which man can not perform, yet, as it is a vow which he has made himself, and made voluntarily too, he shall be punished for the non-keeping it; and God shall execute vengeance upon him at last, because he said he would turn from his ways, and then when the blow was removed he did it not. A great outcry has been raised of late against tickets-of-leave; I have no doubt there are some men here, who before high heaven stand in the same position as the ticket-of-leave men stand to our government. They were about to die, as they thought; they promised good behavior if they might be spared, and they are here to-day on ticket-of-leave in this world; and how have they fulfilled their promise? Justice might raise the same outcry against them as they do against the burglars so constantly let loose upon us. The avenging angel might say, "O God, these men said, if they were spared they would be so much better; if any thing they are worse. How have they violated their promise, and how have they brought down divine wrath upon their heads!" This is the first style of penitence; and it is a style I hope none of you will imitate, for it is utterly worthless. It is of no use for you to say, "I have sinned," merely under the influence of terror, and then to forget it afterwards.

#### THE DOUBLE-MINDED MAN.

BALAAH—"I have sinned."—NUMBERS, xxii. 34.

II. Now for a second text. I beg to introduce to you another character—the *double minded man*, who says, "I have sinned," and feels that he has, and feels it deeply too, but who is so worldly-minded that he "loves the wages of unrighteousness." The character I have chosen to illustrate this, is that of *Balaam*. Turn to the book of Numbers, the 22d chapter and the 34th verse: "And Balaam said unto the angel of the Lord, I have sinned."

"I have sinned," said Balaam; but yet he went on with his sin afterward. One of the strangest characters of the whole world is Balaam. I have often marveled at that *man*; he

seems really in another sense to have come up to the lines of Ralph Erskine,

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

For he did seem to be so. At times no man could speak more eloquently and more truthfully, and at other times he exhibited the most mean and sordid coveteousness that could disgrace human nature. Think you see Balaam; he stands upon the brow of the hill, and there lie the multitudes of Israel at his feet; he is bidden to curse them, and he cries, "How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed?" And God opening his eyes, he begins to tell even about the coming of Christ, and he says, "I shall see him but not now: I shall behold him but not nigh." And then he winds up his oration by saying—"Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!" And ye will say of that man, he is a hopeful character. Wait till he has come off the brow of the hill, and ye will hear him give the most diabolical advice to the king of Moab, which it was even possible for Satan himself to suggest. Said he to the king, "You can not overthrow these people in battle, for God is with them; try and entice them from their God." And ye know how with wanton lusts they of Moab tried to entice the children of Israel from allegiance to Jehovah; so that this man seemed to have the voice of an angel at one time, and yet the very soul of a devil in his bowels. He was a terrible character; he was a man of two things, a man who went all the way with two things to a very great extent. I know the Scripture says, "No man can serve two masters." Now this is often misunderstood. Some read it, "No man can *serve two* masters." Yes he can; he can serve three or four. The way to read it is this: "No man can serve two *masters*." They can not both be masters. He can serve two, but they can not both be his master. A man can serve two who are not his masters or twenty either; he may live for twenty different purposes, but he can not live for more than one master purpose—there can only be one master purpose in his soul. But Balaam labored to serve two; it was like the people of whom it was said, "They feared the Lord, and served other gods." Or like Rufus, who was a loaf of the same leaven;

for you know our old king Rufus painted God on one side of his shield, and the devil on the other, and had underneath the motto, "Ready for both; catch who can." There are many such, who are ready for both. They meet a minister, and how pious and holy they are; on the Sabbath they are most respectable and upright people in the world, as you would think; indeed, they affect a drawling in their speech which they think to be eminently religious. But on a week day, if you want to find the greatest rogues and cheats, they are some of those men who are so sanctimonious in their piety. Now, rest assured, my hearers, that no confession of sin can be genuine, unless it be a whole hearted one. It is of no use for you to say, "I have sinned," and then to keep on sinning. "I have sinned," say you, and it is a fair, fair face you show; but, alas! alas! for the sin you will go away and commit. Some men seem to be born with two characters. I remarked when in the library at Trinity College, Cambridge, a very fine statue of Lord Byron. The librarian said to me, "Stand here, sir." I looked, and I said, "what a fine intellectual countenance! What a grand genius he was!" "Come here," he said, "to the other side." "Ah! what a demon! There stands the man that could defy the deity." He seemed to have such a scowl and such a dreadful leer in his face; even as Milton would have painted Satan when he said—"Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven." I turned away and said to the librarian, "Do you think the artist designed this?" "Yes," he said, "he wished to picture the two characters—the great, the grand, the almost superhuman genius that he possessed, and yet the enormous mass of sin that was in his soul." There are some men here of the same sort. I dare say, like Balaam, they would overthrow every thing in argument with their enchantments; they could work miracles; and yet at the same time there is something about them which betrays a horrid character of sin, as great as that which would appear to be their character for righteousness. Balaam, you know, offered sacrifices to God upon the altar of Baal; that was just the type of his character. So many do; they offer sacrifices to God on the shrine of Mammon; and while they will give to the building of a church, and distribute to the poor, they will

at the other door of their counting-house grind the poor for bread, and press the very blood out of the widow, that they may enrich themselves. Ah! it is idle and useless for you to say, "I have sinned," unless you mean it from your heart. That double minded man's confession is of no avail.

### THE INSINCERE MAN.

SAUL—"I have sinned."—1 SAMUEL, xv. 24.

III. And now a third character, and a third text. In the first book of Samuel, the 15th chapter and 24th verse: "And *Saul* said unto Samuel, I have sinned."

Here is the *insincere man*—the man who is not like Balaam, to a certain extent sincere in two things; but the man who is just the opposite—who has no prominent point in his character at all, but is molded everlastingly by the circumstances that are passing over his head. Such a man was *Saul*. Samuel reproved him, and he said, "I have sinned." But he did not mean what he said; for, if you read the whole verse, you will find him saying, "I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and thy words; *because I feared the people:*" which was a lying excuse. Saul never feared any body; he was always ready enough to do his own will—he was the despot. And just before, he had pleaded another excuse, that he had saved the bullocks and lambs to offer to Jehovah, and therefore both excuses could not have been true. You remember, my friends, that the most prominent feature in the character of Saul was his insincerity. One day he fetched David from his bed, as he thought, to put him to death in his house. Another time he declares, "God forbid that I should do aught against thee, my son David." One day, because David saved his life, he said, "Thou art more righteous than I; I will do so no more." The day before he had gone out to fight against his own son-in-law, in order to slay him. Sometimes Saul was among the prophets, easily turned into a prophet, and then afterward among the witches; sometimes in one place, and then another, and insincere in every thing. How many such we have in every Christian assembly; men

who are very easily molded! Say what you please to them, they always agree with you. They have affectionate dispositions, very likely a tender conscience; but then the conscience is so remarkably tender, that when touched it seems to give, and you are afraid to probe deeper—it heals as soon as it is wounded. I think I used the very singular comparison once before, which I must use again: there are some men who seem to have India-rubber hearts. If you do but touch them, there is an impression made at once; but then it is of no use, it soon restores itself to its original character. You may press them whichever way you wish; they are so elastic you can always effect your purpose; but then they are not fixed in their character, and soon return to be what they were before. O sirs, too many of you have done the same; you have bowed your heads in church, and said, “We have erred and strayed from thy ways:” and you did not mean what you said. You have come to your minister; you have said, “I repent of my sins;” you did not then feel you were a sinner; you only said it to please him. And now you attend the house of God: no one more impressible than you; the tear will run down your cheek in a moment, but yet, notwithstanding all that, the tear is dried as quickly as it is brought forth, and you remain to all intents and purposes the same as you were before. To say, “I have sinned,” in an unmeaning manner, is worse than worthless, for it is a mockery of God thus to confess with insincerity of heart.

I have been brief upon this character, for it seemed to touch upon that of Balaam; though any thinking man will at once see there was a real contrast between Saul and Balaam, even though there is an affinity between the two. Balaam was the great bad man, great in all he did; Saul was little in every thing, except in stature—little in his good and little in his vice; and he was too much of a fool to be desperately bad, though too wicked to be at any time good: while Balaam was great in both: the man who could at one time defy Jehovah, and yet at another time could say, “If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I can not go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more.”

## THE DOUBTFUL PENITENT.

A CHAN—"I have sinned."—JOSHUA, vii. 20

IV. And now I have to introduce to you a very interesting case; it is the case of the doubtful penitent, in the case of *Achan*, in the book of Joshua, the 7th chapter and the 20th verse: "And Achan answered Joshua, Indeed I have sinned."

You know that Achan stole some of the prey from the city of Jericho—that he was discovered by lot, and put to death. I have singled his case out as the representative of some whose characters are doubtful on their death-beds; who do repent apparently, but of whom the most we can say is, that we hope their souls are saved at last, but indeed we can not tell. Achan, you are aware, was stoned with stones, for defiling Israel. But I find in the Mishna, an old Jewish exposition of the Bible, these words, "Joshua said to Achan, The Lord shall trouble thee *this* day." And the note upon it is—"He said *this* day, implying that he was only to be troubled in this life, by being stoned to death, but that God would have mercy on his soul, seeing that he had made a full confession of his sin." And I, too, am inclined, from reading the chapter, to concur in the idea of my venerable and now glorified predecessor, Dr. Gill, in believing that Achan really was saved, although he was put to death for the crime, as an example. For you will observe how kindly Joshua spoke to him. He said, "My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him; and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me." And you find Achan making a very full confession. He says, "Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done: when I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it." It seems so full a confession, that if I might be allowed to judge, I should say, "I hope to meet Achan, the sinner, before the throne of God." But I find Matthew Henry has no such opinion; and many other expositors consider that

as his body was destroyed, so was his soul. I have, therefore, selected his case, as being one of doubtful repentance. Ah! dear friends, it has been my lot to stand by many a death-bed, and to see many such a repentance as this. I have seen the man, when worn to a skeleton, sustained by pillows in his bed, and he has said, when I have talked to him of judgment to come, "Sir, I feel I have been guilty, but Christ is good; I trust in him." And I have said within myself, "I believe the man's soul is safe." But I have always come away with the melancholy reflection that I had no proof of it beyond his own words; for it needs proof in acts and in future life, in order to sustain any firm conviction of a man's salvation. You know that great fact, that a physician once kept a record of a thousand persons who thought they were dying, and whom he thought were penitents; he wrote their names down in a book as those who, if they had died, would go to heaven—they did not die, they lived; and he says that out of the whole thousand he had not three persons who turned out well afterward, but they returned to their sins again, and were as bad as ever. Ah! dear friends, I hope none of you will have such a death-bed repentance as that; I hope your minister or your parents will not have to stand by your bedside, and then go away and say, "Poor fellow! I hope he is saved." But alas! death-bed repentances are such flimsy things; such poor, such trivial grounds of hope, that I am afraid, after all, his soul may be lost." O! to die with a full assurance; O! to die with an abundant entrance, leaving a testimony behind that we have departed this life in peace! That is a far happier way than to die in a doubtful manner, lying sick, hovering between two worlds, and neither ourselves nor yet our friends knowing to which of the two worlds we are going. May God grant us grace to give in our lives evidences of true conversion, that our case may not be doubtful.

#### THE REPENTANCE OF DESPAIR.

JUDAS—"I have sinned."—MATTHEW, xxvii. 4.

V. I shall not detain you too long, I trust, but I must now give you another bad case; the worst of all. It is the *repent*



*unce of despair.* Will you turn to the 27th chapter of Matthew and the 4th verse? There you have the dreadful case of the repentance of despair. You will recognize the character the moment I read the verse: "And Judas said, I have sinned." Yes, Judas the traitor, who had betrayed his Master, when he saw that his Master was condemned, "repented, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood, and cast down the pieces in the temple, and went" and what?—"and *hanged himself.*" Here is the worst kind of repentance of all; in fact, I know not that I am justified in calling it repentance; it must be called remorse of conscience. But Judas did confess his sin, and then went and hanged himself. O! that dreadful, that terrible, that hideous confession of despair. Have you never seen it? If you never have, then bless God that you never were called to see such a sight. I have seen it once in my life, I pray God I may never see it again—the repentance of the man who sees death staring him in the face, and who says, "I have sinned." You tell him that Christ has died for sinners; and he answers, "There is no hope for me; I have cursed God to his face; I have defied him; my day of grace I know is past; my conscience is seared with a hot iron; I am dying, and I know I shall be lost!" Such a case as that happened long ago, you know, and is on record—the case of Francis Spira—the most dreadful case, perhaps, except that of Judas, which is upon record in the memory of man. O! my hearers, will any of you have such a repentance? If you do, it will be a beacon to all persons who sin in future; if you have such a repentance as that, it will be a warning to generations yet to come. In the life of Benjamin Keach—and he also was one of my predecessors—I find the case of a man who had been a professor of religion, but had departed from the profession, and had gone into awful sin. When he came to die, Keach, with many other friends went to see him, but they could never stay with him above five minutes at a time; for he said, "Get ye gone; it is of no use your coming to me; I have sinned away the Holy Ghost; I am like Esau, I have sold my birthright, and though I seek it carefully with tears, I can never find it again."

And then he would repeat dreadful words, like these: "My mouth is filled with gravel-stones, and I drink wormwood day and night. Tell me not, tell me not of Christ! I know he is a Saviour, but I hate him, and he hates me. I know I must die; I know I must perish!" And then followed doleful cries, and hideous noises, such as none could bear. They returned again in his placid moments, only to stir him once more, and make him cry out in his despair, "I am lost! I am lost! It is of no use your telling me any thing about it!" Ah! there may be a man here who may have such a death as that; let me warn him, ere he come to it; and may God the Holy Spirit grant that that man may be turned unto God, and made a true penitent, and then he need not have any more fear; for he who has had his sins washed away in a Saviour's blood, need not have any remorse for his sins, for they are pardoned through the Redeemer.

#### THE REPENTANCE OF THE SAINT.

JOB—"I have sinned."—JOB, vii. 20.

VI. And now I come into daylight. I have been taking you through dark and dreary confessions; I shall detain you there no longer, but bring you out to the two good confessions which I have read to you. The first is that of Job in 7th chapter at the 20th verse: "I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men?" This is the *repentance of the saint*. Job was a saint, but he sinned. This is the repentance of the man who is a child of God already, an acceptable repentance before God. But as I intend to dwell upon this in the evening, I shall now leave it, for fear of wearying you. David was a specimen of this kind of repentance, and I would have you carefully study his penitential Psalms, the language of which is ever full of weeping humility and earnest penitence

#### THE BLESSED CONFESSION.

THE PRODIGAL—"I have sinned."—LUKE, xv. 18

VII. I come now to the last instance, which I shall mention; it is the case of the prodigal. In Luke xv. 18, we find

the prodigal says: "Father, I have sinned." O, here is a *blessed confession!* Here is that which proves a man to be a regenerate character—"Father, I have sinned." Let me picture the scene. There is the prodigal; he has run away from a good home and a kind father, and he has spent all his money with harlots, and now he has none left. He goes to his old companions, and asks them for relief. They laugh him to scorn. "O," says he, "you have drunk my wine many a day; I have always stood paymaster to you in all our revelries; will you not help me?" "Get you gone," they say; and he is turned out of doors. He goes to all his friends with whom he had associated, but no man gives him any thing. At last a certain citizen of the country said,—"You want something to do, do you? Well, go and feed my swine." The poor prodigal, the son of a rich landowner, who had a great fortune of his own, has to go out to feed swine; and he a Jew, too! the worst employment (to his mind), to which he could be put. See him there, in squalid rags, feeding swine; and what are his wages? Why, so little that he "would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat, but no man gave to him." Look, there he is, with the fellow-commoners of the sty, in all his mire and filthiness. Suddenly a thought, put there by the good Spirit, strikes his mind. "How is it," says he, "that in my father's house there is bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger? I will arise and go to my father, and say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants." Off he goes. He begs his way from town to town. Sometimes he gets a lift on a coach perhaps, but at other times he goes trudging his way up barren hills and down desolate vales all alone. And now at last he comes to the hill outside the village, and sees his father's house down below. There it is; the old poplar tree against it, and there are the stacks round which he and his brother used to run and play; and at the sight of the old homestead all the feelings and associations of his former life rush upon him, and tears run down his cheeks, and he is almost ready to run away again. He says, "I wonder whether father's dead. I dare say mother broke her heart"

when I went away, I always was her favorite. And if they are either of them alive, they will never see me again; they will shut the door in my face. What am I to do? I can not go back, I am afraid to go forward." And while he was thus deliberating his father had been walking on the house-top looking out for his son; and though he could not see his father his father could see him. Well, the father comes down stairs with all his might, runs up to him, and whilst he is thinking of running away, his father's arms are round his neck, and he falls to kissing him, like a loving father indeed, and then the son begins,—“Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son,” and he was going to say, “Make me as one of thy hired servants.” But his father put his hand on his mouth. “No more of that,” says he; “I forgive you all; you shall not say any thing about being my servant—I will have none of that. Come along,” says he, “come in, poor prodigal. Ho,” said he to the servants, “bring hither the best robe, and put it on him, and put shoes on his poor bleeding feet; and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again, he was lost, and is found. And then they began to be merry.” O, what a precious reception for one of the chief of sinners! Good Matthew Henry says—“His father saw him, there were eyes of mercy; he ran to meet him, there were legs of mercy; he put his arms round his neck, there were arms of mercy; he kissed him, there were kisses of mercy; he said to him—there were words of mercy—‘Bring hither the best robe,’ there were deeds of mercy, wonders of mercy—all mercy. O, what a God of mercy he is!”

Now, prodigal, you do the same. Has God put it into your heart? There are many who have been running away a long time now. Does God say “return?” O, I bid you return, then, for as surely as ever thou dost return he will take thee in. There never was a poor sinner yet who came to Christ, whom Christ turned away. If he turns you away you will be the first. O, if you could but try him! “Ah, sir, I am so black, so filthy, so vile.” Well, come along with you—you can not be blacker than the prodigal. Come to your father's house,

and as surely as he is God he will keep his word—"Him that cometh unto me I will no wise cast out."

O, if I might hear that some had come to Christ this morning, I would indeed bless God! I must tell here, for the honor of God and Christ, one remarkable circumstance, and then I have done. You will remember that one morning I mentioned the case of an infidel who had been a scorner and scoffer, but who, through reading one of my printed sermons, had been brought to God's house and then to God's feet. Well, last Christmas day, the same infidel gathered together all his books, and went into the market-place at Norwich, and there made a public recantation of all his errors, and a profession of Christ, and then taking up all his books which he had written, and had in his house, on evil subjects, burned them in the sight of the people. I have blessed God for such a wonder of grace as that, and pray that there may be many more such, who, though they be born prodigal, will yet return home, saying, "I have sinned"

## SERMON XVII.

### FAITH.

“Without faith it is impossible to please God.”—HEBREWS, x 6.

THE old Assembly's Catechism asks, “What is the chief end of man?” and its answer is, “To glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever.” The answer is exceedingly correct; but it might have been equally truthful if it had been shorter. The chief end of man is “to please God;” for in so doing—we need not say it, because it is an undoubted fact—in so doing he will please himself. The chief end of man, we believe, in this life and in the next, is to please God his Maker. If any man pleases God, he does that which conduces most to his own temporal and eternal welfare. Man can not please God without bringing to himself a great amount of happiness; for if any man pleases God, it is because God accepts him as his son, gives him the blessings of adoption, pours upon him the bounties of his grace, makes him a blessed man in this life, and insures him a crown of everlasting life, which he shall wear, and which shall shine with unfading luster, when the wreaths of earth's glory have all been melted away; while, on the other hand, if a man does not please God, he inevitably brings upon himself sorrow and suffering in this life; he puts a worm and a rottenness in the core of all his joys; he fills his death-pillow with thorns, and he supplies the eternal fire with faggots of flame which shall for ever consume him. He that pleases God is, through divine grace, journeying onward to the ultimate reward of all those that love and fear God; but he who is displeasing to God must, for Scripture has declared it, be banished from the presence of God, and consequently from the enjoyment of happiness. If, then, we be right in saying that to please God is to be happy, the one important question is,

how can I please God? and there is something very solemn in the utterance of our text: "Without faith it is impossible to please God." That is to say, do what you may, strive as earnestly as you can, live as excellently as you please, make what sacrifices you choose, be as eminent as you can for every thing that is lovely and of good repute, yet none of these things can be pleasing to God unless they be mixed with faith. As the Lord said to the Jews, "With all your sacrifices you must offer salt;" so he says to us, "With all your doings you must bring faith, or else 'without faith it is impossible to please God.'"

This is an old law; it is as old as the first man. No sooner were Cain and Abel born into this world, and no sooner had they attained to manhood, than God gave a practical proclamation of this law, that "without faith it is impossible to please him." Cain and Abel, one bright day, erected an altar side by side with each other. Cain fetched of the fruits of the trees and of the abundance of the soil, and placed them upon his altar; Abel brought of the firstlings of the flock, and laid it upon his altar. It was to be decided which God would accept. Cain had brought his best, but he brought it without faith; Abel brought his sacrifice, but he brought it with faith in Christ. Now, then, which shall best succeed? The offerings are equal in value; so far as they themselves are concerned they are alike good. Upon which will the heavenly fire descend? Which will the Lord God consume with the fire of his pleasure? O! I see Abel's offering burning, and Cain's countenance has fallen, for unto Abel and unto his offering the Lord had respect, but unto Cain and his offering the Lord had no respect. It shall be the same till the last man shall be gathered into heaven. There shall never be an acceptable offering which has not been seasoned with faith. Good though it may be, as apparently good in itself as that which has faith, yet unless faith be with it God never can and never will accept it, for he here declares, "Without faith it is impossible to please God."

I shall endeavor to pack my thoughts closely this morning, and be as brief as I can, consistently with a full explanation of the theme. I shall first have an *exposition* of what is faith

secondly, I shall have an *argument*, that without faith it is impossible to be saved; and thirdly, I shall ask a *question*—Have you that faith which pleases God? We shall have, then, an exposition, an argument, and a question.

I. First, for the EXPOSITION. What is faith?

The old writers, who are by far the most sensible—for you will notice that the books that were written about two hundred years ago by the old Puritans have more sense in one line than there is in a page of our new books, and more in a page than there is in a whole volume of our modern divinity—the old writers tell you, that faith is made up of three things: first, knowledge, then assent, and then what they call affiance, or the laying hold of the knowledge to which we give assent and making it our own by trusting in it.

1. Let us begin, then, at the beginning. The first thing in faith is *knowledge*. A man can not believe what he does not know. That is a clear, self-evident axiom. If I have never heard of a thing in all my life, and do not know it, I can not believe it. And yet there are some persons who have a faith like that of the fuller, who when he was asked what he believed, said, “I believe what the church believes.” “What does the church believe?” “The church believes what I believe.” “And pray what do you and the church believe?” “Why we both believe the same thing.” Now this man believed nothing, except that the church was right, but in what he could not tell. It is idle for a man to say, “I am a believer,” and yet not to know what he believes; but yet I have seen some persons in this position. A violent sermon has been preached, which has stirred up their blood; the minister has cried, “Believe! believe! believe!” and the people on a sudden have got it into their heads that they were believers, and have walked out of their place of worship and said, “I am a believer.” And if they were asked, “Pray what do you believe?” they could not give a reason for the hope that was in them. They believe they intend to go to chapel next Sunday; they intend to join that class of people; they intend to be very violent in their singing and very wonderful in their rant; therefore they believe they shall be saved; but what they believe they can not tell. Now, I hold no man’s faith to be sure



faith, unless he knows what he believes. If he says, "I believe," and does not know what he believes, how can that be true faith? The apostle has said, "How can they believe on him of whom they have not heard? and how can they hear without a preacher? and how can they preach except they be sent?" It is necessary, then, to true faith, that a man should know something of the Bible. Believe me, this is an age when the Bible is not so much thought of as it used to be. Some hundred years ago the world was covered with bigotry, cruelty, and superstition. We always run to extremes, and we have just gone to the other extreme now. It was then said, "One faith is right, down with all others by the rack and by the sword!" Now it is said, "However contradictory our creeds may be, they are all right." If we did but use our common sense we should know that it is not so. But some reply, "Such-and-such a doctrine need not be preached, and need not be believed." Then, sir, if it need not be preached it need not be revealed. You impugn the wisdom of God, when you say a doctrine is unnecessary; for you do as much as say that God has revealed something which was not necessary, and he would be as unwise to do more than was necessary as if he had done less than was necessary. We believe that every doctrine of God's Word ought to be studied by men, and that their faith should lay hold of the whole matter of the sacred Scriptures, and more especially upon all that part of Scripture which concerns the person of our all-blessed Redeemer. There must be some degree of knowledge before there can be faith. "Search the Scriptures," then, "for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of Christ;" and by searching and reading cometh knowledge, and by knowledge cometh faith, and through faith cometh salvation.

2. But a man may know a thing, and yet not have faith. I may know a thing, and yet not believe it. Therefore *assent* must go with faith: that is to say, what we know we must also agree unto, as being most certainly the verity of God. Now, in order to faith it is necessary that I should not only read the Scriptures and understand them, but that I should receive them in my soul as being the very truth of the living God,

and should devoutly with my whole heart receive the whole of Scripture as being inspired of the Most High, and the whole of the doctrine which he requires me to believe to my salvation. You are not allowed to halve the Scriptures, and to believe what you please; you are not allowed to believe the Scriptures with a half-heartedness, for if you do this willfully, you have not the faith which looks alone to Christ. True faith gives its full assent to the Scriptures; it takes a page and says, "No matter what is in the page, I believe it;" it turns over the next chapter and says, "Herein are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable do wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, to their destruction; but, hard though it be, I believe it." It sees the Trinity; it can not understand the Trinity in Unity, but it believes it. It sees an atoning sacrifice; there is something difficult in the thought, but it believes it; and whatever it be which it sees in revelation, it devoutly puts its lips to the book, and says, "I love it all; I give my full, free, and hearty assent to every word of it, whether it be the threatening, or the promise, the proverb, the precept, or the blessing. I believe that since it is all the word of God it is all most assuredly true." Whosoever would be saved must know the Scriptures, and must give full assent unto them.

3. But a man may have all this, and yet not possess true faith; for the chief part of faith lies in the last head, namely, in an *affiance* to the truth; not the believing it merely, but the taking hold of it as being ours, and in the resting on it for salvation. Recumbency on the truth was the word which the old preachers used. You will understand that word. Leaning on it; saying, "This is truth, I trust my salvation on it." Now, true faith in its very essence rests in this—a leaning upon Christ. It will not save me to know that Christ is a Saviour; but it will save me *to trust* him to be *my* Saviour. I shall not be delivered from the wrath to come, by believing that his atonement is sufficient, but I shall be saved by making that atonement my trust, my refuge, and my all. The pith, the essence of faith lies in this—a casting one's-self on the promise. It is not the life-buoy on board the ship that saves the man when he is drowning, nor is it his belief that it is an ex-

cellent and successful invention. No! He must have it around his loins, or his hand upon it, or else he will sink. To use an old and hackneyed illustration, suppose a fire in the upper room of a house, and the people gathered in the street. A child is in the upper story: how is he to escape? He can not leap down—that were to be dashed to pieces. A strong man comes beneath, and cries, “Drop into my arms.” It is a part of faith to know that the man is there; it is another part of faith to believe that the man is strong; but the essence of faith lies in the dropping down into the man’s arms. That is the proof of faith, and the real pith and essence of it. So, sinner, thou art to know that Christ died for sin; thou art also to understand that Christ is able to save, and thou art to believe that; but thou art not saved, unless in addition to that thou puttest thy trust in him to be thy Saviour, and to be thine for ever. As Hart says in the hymn, which really expresses the gospel,

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

This is the faith which saves; and however unholy may have been your lives up to this hour, this faith, if given to you at this moment, will blot out all your sins, will change your nature, make you a new man in Christ Jesus, lead you to live a holy life, and make your eternal salvation as secure as if an angel should take you on his bright wings this morning, and carry you immediately to heaven. Have you that faith? That is the one all-important question; for while with faith men are saved, without it men are damned. As Brookes hath said in one of his admirable works, “He that believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ, shall be saved, be his sins never so many; but he that believeth not in the Lord Jesus must be damned, be his sins never so few.” Hast thou faith? For the text declares, “Without faith it is impossible to please God.”

II. And now we come to the ARGUMENT, why, without faith, we can not be saved.

Now there are some gentlemen present who are saying,

“Now we shall see whether Mr. Spurgeon has any logic in him.” No, you won’t, sirs, because I never pretend to exercise it. I hope I have the logic which can appeal to men’s hearts; but I am not very prone to use the less powerful logic of the head, when I can win the heart in another manner. But if it were needful, I should not be afraid to prove that I know more of logic and of many other things than the little men who undertake to censure me. It were well if they knew how to hold their tongues, which is at least a fine part of rhetoric. My argument shall be such as I trust will appeal to the heart and conscience, although it may not exactly please those who are always so fond of syllogistic demonstration,

“Who could a hair divide  
Between the west and north-west side.”

1. “Without faith it is impossible to please God.” And I gather it from the fact, that there never has been the case of a man recorded in Scripture who did please God without faith. The 11th chapter of the Hebrews is the chapter of the men who pleased God. Listen to their names: “by faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice;” “by faith Enoch was translated;” “by faith Noah built an ark;” “by faith Abraham went out into a place that he should afterward receive;” “by faith he sojourned in the land of promise;” “by faith Sarah bore Isaac;” “by faith Abraham offered up Isaac;” “by faith Moses gave up the wealth of Egypt;” “by faith Isaac blessed Jacob;” “by faith Jacob blessed the sons of Joseph;” “by faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel;” “by faith the Red Sea was dried up;” “by faith the walls of Jericho fell down;” “by faith the harlot Rahab was saved;” “and what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephtha, of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets.” But all these were men of faith. Others mentioned in Scripture have done something but God did not accept them. Men have humbled themselves, and yet God has not saved them. Ahab did, and yet his sins were never forgiven. Men have repented, and yet have not been saved, because theirs was the wrong repentance. Judas

repented, and went and hanged himself, and was not saved. Men have confessed their sins, and have not been saved. Saul did it. He said to David, "I have sinned against thee, my son David;" and yet he went on as he did before. Multitudes have confessed the name of Christ, and have done many marvelous things, and yet they have never been pleasing to God, from this simple reason, that they had not faith. And if there be not one mentioned in Scripture, which is the history of some thousand years, it is not likely that in the other two thousand years of the world's history there would have been one, when there was not one during the first four thousand.

2. But the next argument is, *faith is the stooping grace*, and nothing can make a man stoop without faith. Now, unless man does stoop, his sacrifice can not be accepted. The angels know this. When they praise God, they do it vailing their faces with their wings. The redeemed know it. When they praise God, they cast their crowns before his feet. Now, a man that has not faith proves that he can not stoop; for he has not faith for this reason, because he is too proud to believe. He declares he will not yield his intellect, he will not become a child and believe meekly what God tells him to believe. He is too proud, and he can not enter heaven, because the door of heaven is so low that no one can enter in by it unless they will bow their heads. There never was a man who could walk into salvation erect. We must go to Christ on our bended knees; for though he is a door big enough for the greatest sinner to come in, he is a door so low that men must stoop if they would be saved. Therefore, it is that faith is necessary, because a want of faith is certain evidence of absence of humility.

3. But now for other reasons. Faith is necessary to salvation, because we are told in Scripture that *works can not save*. To tell a very familiar story, that even the poorest may not misunderstand what I say. A minister was one day going to preach. He climbed a hill on his road. Beneath him lay the villages, sleeping in their beauty, with the corn fields motionless in the sunshine; but he did not look at them, for his attention was arrested by a woman standing at her door, and

who, upon seeing him, came up to him with the greatest anxiety, and said, "O, sir, have you any keys about you? I have broken the key of my drawers, and there are some things that I must get directly." Said he, "I have no keys." She was disappointed, expecting that every one would have keys. "But suppose," he said, "I had some keys, they might not fit your lock, and therefore you could not get the articles you want. But do not distress yourself, wait till some one else comes up. But," said he, wishing to improve the occasion, "have you never heard of the key of heaven?" "Ah! yes," she said, "I have lived long enough and have gone to church long enough to know that if we work hard and get our bread by the sweat of our brow, and act well toward our neighbors, and behave, as the catechism says, lowly and reverently to all our betters, and if we do our duty in that station of life in which it has pleased God to place us, and say our prayers regularly, we shall be saved." "Ah!" said he, "my good woman, that is a broken key, for you have broken the commandments, you have not fulfilled all your duties. It is a good key, but you have broken it." "Pray, sir," said she, believing that he understood the matter, and looking frightened, "what have I left out?" "Why," said he, "the all-important thing, the blood of Jesus Christ. Don't you know it is said, the key of heaven is at his girdle; he openeth, and no man shutteth; he shutteth, and no man openeth?" And explaining it more fully to her, he said, "It is Christ, and Christ alone, that can open heaven to you, and not your good works." "What, minister," said she, "are our good works useless then?" "No," said he, "not after faith. If you believe first, you may have as many good works as you please; but if you believe you will never trust in them, for if you trust in them you have spoiled them, and they are not good works any longer. Have as many good works as you please; still, put your trust wholly in the Lord Jesus Christ, for if you do not, your key will never unlock heaven's gate." So, then, my hearers, we must have true faith, because the old key of works is so broken by us all that we never shall enter Paradise by it. If any of you pretend that you have no sins, to be very plain with you, you deceive yourselves, and the truth is not in you. If you conceive

that by your good works you shall enter heaven, never was there a more fell delusion, and you shall find at the last great day that your hopes are worthless, and that like sere leaves from the autumn trees your noblest doings shall be blown away, or kindled into a flame wherein you yourselves must suffer for ever. Take heed of your good works; get them after faith, but remember, the way to be saved is simply to believe in Jesus Christ.

4. Again: without faith it is impossible to be saved, and to please God, because without faith there is *no union to Christ*. Now, union to Christ is indispensable to our salvation. If I come before God's throne with my prayers, I shall never get them answered unless I bring Christ with me. The Molossians of old, when they could not get a favor from their king, adopted a singular expedient; they took the king's only son in their arms, and falling on their knees, cried, "O king, for thy son's sake grant our request." He smiled and said, "I deny nothing to those who plead my son's name." It is so with God. He will deny nothing to the man who comes, having Christ at his elbow; but if he comes alone he must be cast away. Union to Christ is, after all, the great point in salvation. Let me tell you a story to illustrate this. The stupendous falls of Niagara have been spoken of in every part of the world; but while they are marvelous to hear of, and wonderful as a spectacle, they have been very destructive to human life, when by accident any have been carried down the cataract. Some years ago two men, a bargeman and a collier, were in a boat, and found themselves unable to manage it, it being carried so swiftly down the current that they must both inevitably be borne down and dashed to pieces. Persons on the shore saw them, but were unable to do much for their rescue. At last, however, one man was saved by floating a rope to him, which he grasped. The same instant that the rope came into his hand a log floated by the other man. The thoughtless and confused bargeman instead of seizing the rope laid hold on the log. It was a fatal mistake; they were both in imminent peril, but the one was drawn to shore because he had a connection with the people on the land, whilst the other, clinging to the log, was borne irresistibly along and never heard of

afterward. Do you not see that here is a practical illustration? Faith is a connection with Christ. Christ is on the shore, so to speak, holding the rope of faith, and if we lay hold of it with the hand of our confidence he pulls us to shore; but our good works, having no connection with Christ, are drifted along down the gulf of fell despair. Grapple them as tightly as we may, even with hooks of steel, they can not avail us in the least degree. You will see, I am sure, what I wish to show you. Some object to anecdotes; I shall use them till they have done objecting to them. The truth is never more powerfully set forth to men than by telling them, as Christ did, a story of a certain man with two sons, or a certain householder who went a journey, divided his substance, and gave to some ten talents, to another one.

Faith, then, is a union with Christ. Take care you have it; for if not, cling to your works, and there you go floating down the stream! Cling to your works, and there you go dashing down the gulf! Lost because your works have no hold on Christ and no connection with the blessed Redeemer! But thou, poor sinner, with all thy sin about thee, if the rope is round thy loins, and Christ has a hold of it, fear not!

“ His honor is engaged to save  
The meanest of his sheep;  
All that his heavenly Father gave,  
His hands securely keep.”

5. Just one more argument, and then I have done with it. “Without faith it is impossible to please God,” because it is impossible to preserve holiness without faith. What a multitude of fair-weather Christians we have in this age! Many Christians resemble the nautilus, which in fine smooth weather swims on the surface of the sea, in a splendid little squadron, like the mighty ships; but the moment the first breath of wind ruffles the waves, they take in their sails and sink into the depths. Many Christians are the same. In good company, in evangelical drawing-rooms, in pious parlors, in chapels and vestries, they are tremendously religious; but if they are exposed to a little ridicule, if some should smile at them and call them Methodist or Presbyterian, or some name of re-



proach, it is all over with religion till the next fine day. Then when it is fine weather, and religion will answer their purpose, up go the sails again, and they are as pious as before. Believe me, that kind of religion is worse than irreligion. I do like a man to be thoroughly what he is—a downright man; and if a man does not love God, do not let him say he does; but if he be a true Christian, a follower of Jesus, let him say it and stand up for it; there is nothing to be ashamed of in it; the only thing to be ashamed of is to be hypocritical. Let us be honest to our profession, and it will be our glory. Ah! what would you do without faith in times of persecution? You good and pious people that have no faith, what would you do if the stake were again erected in Smithfield, and if once more the fires consumed the saints to ashes—if the Lollard's tower were again opened, if the rack were again plied, or even if the stocks were used, as they have been used by a Protestant church, as witness the persecution of my predecessor, Benjamin Keach, who was once set in the stocks at Aylesbury for writing a book against infant baptism. If even the mildest form of persecution were revived, how would the people be scattered abroad! And some of the shepherds would be leaving their flocks.

III. And now, in conclusion, THE QUESTION, the vital question. Dear hearer, have you faith? Dost thou believe on the Lord Jesus Christ with all thy heart? If so, thou mayest hope to be saved. Ay, thou mayest conclude with absolute certainty that thou shalt never see perdition. Have you faith? Shall I help you to answer that question? I will give you three tests, as briefly as ever I can, not to weary you, and then farewell this morning. He that has faith has renounced his own righteousness. If thou puttest one atom of trust in thyself thou hast no faith; if thou dost place even a particle of reliance upon any thing else but what Christ did, thou hast no faith. If thou dost trust in thy works, then thy works are antichrist, and Christ and antichrist can never go together. Christ will have all or nothing; he must be a whole Saviour or no Saviour at all. If then, you have faith, you can say,

“Nothing in my hands I bring,  
Simply to the cross I cling”

Then true faith may be known by this, that it begets a great esteem for the person of Christ. Dost thou love Christ? Couldst thou die for him? Dost thou seek to serve him? Dost thou love his people? Canst thou say

“Jesus, I love thy charming name,  
’Tis music to my ear.”

O! if thou dost not love Christ thou dost not believe in him; for to believe in Christ, begets love. And yet more: he that has true faith will have true obedience. If a man says he has faith and has no works, he lies; if any man declares that he believes on Christ, and yet does not lead a holy life, he makes a mistake; for while we do not trust in good works, we know that faith always begets good works. Faith is the father of holiness, and he has not the parent who loves not the child. God’s blessings are blessings with both his hands. In the one hand he gives pardon: but in the other hand he always gives holiness; and no man can have the one, unless he has the other.

And now, dear hearers, shall I down upon my knees, and entreat you for Christ’s sake to answer this question in your own silent chamber: Have you faith? O! answer it, Yes—or No. Leave off saying, “I do not know,” or “I do not care.” Ah! ye *will* care one day, when the earth is reeling, and the world is tossing to and fro; ye will care when God shall summon you to judgment, and when he shall condemn the faithless and the unbelieving. O! that ye were wise—that ye would care now, and if any of you feel your need of Christ, let me beg of you, for Christ’s sake, now to seek faith in him who is exalted on high to give repentance and remission, and who, if he has given you repentance, will give you remission too. O sinners, who know your sins! “believe on the Lord Jesus, and ye shall be saved.” Cast yourselves upon his love and blood, his doing and his dying, his miseries and his merits; and if you do this you shall never fall, but you shall be saved now, and saved in that great day, when not to be saved will be horrible indeed. “Turn ye, turn ye; why will ye die, O house of Israel?” Lay hold on him, touch the hem of his garment, and ye shall be healed. May God help you so to do; for Christ’s sake! Amen and Amen.

# S E R M O N   X V I I I .

## R A H A B ' S   F A I T H .

'By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace. —HEBREWS, xi. 31.

IN almost every capital of Europe there are varieties of triumphal arches or columns, upon which are recorded the valiant deeds of the country's generals, its emperors, or its monarchs. You will find, in one case, the thousand battles of a Napoleon recorded, and in another, you find the victories of a Nelson pictured. It seems, therefore, but right, that faith, which is the mightiest of the mighty, should have a pillar raised to its honor, upon which its valiant deeds should be recorded. The apostle Paul undertook to raise the structure, and he erected a most magnificent pillar in the chapter before us. It recites the victories of faith. It begins with one triumph of faith, and then proceeds to others. We have, in one place, faith triumphing over *death*; Enoch entered not the gates of hades, but reached heaven by another road from that which is usual to men. We have faith, in another place, wrestling with *time*; Noah, warned of God concerning things not seen as yet, wrestled with time, which placed his deluge a hundred and twenty years away; and yet, in the confidence of faith, he believed against all rational expectation, against all probability, and his faith was more than a match for probability and time too. We have faith triumphing over *infirmity*—when Abraham begetteth a son in his old age. And then we have faith triumphing over *natural affection*, as we see Abraham climbing to the top of the hill and raising the knife to slay his only and beloved son at the command of God. We see faith, again, entering the lists with the infirmities of *old age* and the pains of the last struggle, as we read, "By faith Jacob

when he was dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph, and worshipped, leaning on the top of his staff." Then we have faith combating the allurements of a wealthy court. "By faith Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." We see faith dauntless in courage when Moses forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, and equally patient in suffering when he endured as seeing him who is invisible. We have faith dividing seas, and casting down strong walls. And then, as though the greatest victory should be recorded last, we have faith entering the lists with sin, holding a tournament with iniquity, and coming off more than a conqueror. "Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace." That this woman was no mere hostess, but a real harlot, I have abundantly proved to every candid hearer while reading the chapter. I am persuaded that nothing but a spirit of distaste for free grace would ever have led any commentator to deny her sin.

I do think this triumph of faith over sin is not the least here recorded, but that if there be any superiority ascribable to any one of faith's exploits, this is, in some sense, the greatest of all. What! faith, didst thou fight with hideous lust? What! wouldst thou struggle with the fiery passion which sendeth forth flame from human breasts? What! wouldst thou touch with thy hallowed fingers foul and bestial debauchery? "Yea," says faith, "I did encounter this abomination of iniquity; I delivered this woman from the loathsome chambers of vice, the wily snares of enchantment, and the fearful penalty of transgression; yea, I brought her off saved and rescued, gave her purity of heart, and renewed in her the beauty of holiness; and now her name shall be recorded in the roll of my triumphs as a woman full of sin, yet saved by faith."

I shall have some things to say this morning concerning this notable victory of faith over sin, such as I think will lead you to see that this was indeed a supereminent triumph of faith. I will make my divisions alliterative, that you may recollect them. This woman's faith was *saving faith*, *singular faith*, *stable faith*, *self-denying faith*, *sympathising faith*, and *sanctifying faith*. Let no one run away, when I shall have ex-

sounded the first point, and miss the rest, for you can not apprehend the whole power of her faith unless you remember each of those particulars I am about to mention.

I. In the first place, this woman's faith was SAVING FAITH. All the other persons mentioned here were doubtless saved by faith; but I do not find it specially remarked concerning any of them that they perished not through their faith; while it is particularly said of this woman, that she was delivered amid the general destruction of Jericho purely and only through her faith. And, without doubt, her salvation was not merely of a temporal nature, not merely a deliverance of her body from the sword, but redemption of her soul from hell. O! what a mighty thing faith is, when it saves the soul from going down to the pit! So mighty is the ever-rushing torrent of sin, that no arm but that which is as strong as Deity can ever stop the sinner from being hurried down to the gulf of black despair, and, when nearing that gulf, so impetuous is the torrent of divine wrath, that nothing can snatch the soul from perdition but an atonement which is as divine as God himself. Yet faith is the instrument of accomplishing the whole work. It delivers the sinner from the stream of sin, and so, laying hold upon the omnipotence of the Spirit, it rescues him from that great whirlpool of destruction into which his soul was being hurried. What a great thing it is to save a soul! You can never know how great it is unless you have stood in the capacity of a saviour to other men. Yon heroic man who, yesterday, when the house was burning, climbed the creaking stair-case, and, almost suffocated by the smoke, entered an upper chamber, snatched a babe from its bed and a woman from the window, bore them both down in his arms, and saved them at the peril of his own life, *he* can tell you what a great thing it is to save a fellow-creature. Yon noble-hearted youth who, yesterday, sprang into the river, at the hazard of himself, and snatched a drowning man from death, he felt, when he stood upon the shore, what a great thing it was to save life. Ah! but you can not tell what a great thing it is to save a soul. It is only our Lord Jesus Christ who can tell you that, for he is the only one who has ever been the Saviour of sinners. And remember, you can only know how great a thing faith is by

knowing the infinite value of the salvation of a soul. "Now by faith, the harlot Rahab was delivered." That she was really saved in a gospel sense as well as temporally, seems to me to be proved from her reception of the spies which was an emblem of the entrance of the word into her heart, and her hanging out of the scarlet thread was an evidence of faith, not unaptly picturing faith in the blood of Jesus the Redeemer. But who can measure the length and breadth of that word—*salvation*. Ah! it was a mighty deed which faith accomplished when it bore her off in safety. Poor sinner! take comfort. The same faith which saved Rahab can save thee. Art thou literally one of Rahab's sisters in guilt? She was saved, and so mayest thou be, if God shall grant thee repentance. Woman! art thou loathsome to thyself? Dost thou stand at this moment in this assembly, and say, "I am ashamed to be here; I know I have no right to stand among people who are chaste and honest?" I bid thee still remain; yea, come again and make this thy Sabbath house of prayer. Thou art no intruder! Thou art welcome! For thou hast a sacred right to the courts of mercy. Thou hast a sacred right; for here *sinners* are invited, and thou art such. Believe in Christ, and thou, like Rahab, shalt not perish with the disobedient, but even thou shalt be saved.

And now there is some gentleman in the audience who says, "There's a gospel for you; it is a kind of sanctuary for wicked men, unto which the worst of people may run and be saved." Yes, that is the stale objection which Celsus used against Origen in his discussion. "But," said Origen, "it is true, Celsus that Christ's gospel is a sanctuary for thieves, robbers, murderers, and harlots. But know this, it is not a sanctuary merely, it is an hospital too; for it heals their sins, delivers them from their diseases, and they are not afterwards what they were before they received the gospel." I ask no man to-day to come to Christ, and then continue his sins. If so, I should ask him to do an absurdity. As well might I talk of delivering a Prometheus, while his chains are allowed to remain upon him and bind him to his rock. It can not be. Christ taketh away the vulture from the conscience, but he taketh away the chains too, and maketh the man wholly free

when he doeth it all. Yet, we repeat it again, the chief of sinners are as welcome to Christ as the best of saints. The fountain filled with blood was opened for black ones; the robe of Christ was woven for naked ones; the balm of Calvary was compounded for sick ones; life came into the world to raise the dead. And O! ye perishing and guilty souls, may God give you Rahab's faith, and you shall have this salvation, and shall with her stand yonder, where the white-robed spotless hosts sing unending hallelujah to God and the Lamb.

II. But mark, Rahab's faith was a SINGULAR FAITH. The city of Jericho was about to be attacked; within its walls there were hosts of people of all classes and characters, and they knew right well that if their city should be sacked and stormed they would all be put to death; but yet, strange to say, there was not one of them who repented of sin, or who even asked for mercy, except this woman who had been a harlot. She, and she alone was delivered, a solitary one among a multitude. Now, have you ever felt that it is a very hard thing to have a singular faith? It is the easiest thing in the world to believe as every body else believes, but the difficulty is to believe a thing alone, when no one else thinks as you think; to be the solitary champion of a righteous cause when the enemy mustereth his thousands to the battle. Now, this was the faith of Rahab. She had not one who felt as she did, who could enter into her feelings and realize the value of her faith. She stood alone. O! it is a noble thing to be the lonely follower of despised truth. There be some who could tell you a tale of standing up alone. There have been days when the world poured continually a river of infamy and calumny upon them, but they stemmed the torrent, and, by continued grace, made strong in weakness, they held their own until the current turned, and they, in their success, were praised and applauded by the very men who sneered before. Then did the world accord them the name of "great." But where lay their greatness? Why, in this, that they stood as firm in the storm as they stood in the calm—that they were as content to serve God alone as they were to run by fifties. To be good we must be singular. Christians must swim against the stream. Dead fish always float down the stream, but the living fish forces it

way against the current. Now, worldly religious men will go just as every body else goes. That is nothing. The thing is to stand alone. Like Elijah, when he said, "I only am left, and they seek my life;" to feel in one's self that we believe as firmly as if a thousand witnesses stood up by our side. O! there is no great right in a man, no strong-minded right, unless he dares to be singular. Why, the most of you are as afraid as you ever can be to go out of the fashions, and you spend more money than you ought because you think you must be respectable. You dare not move in opposition to your brethren and sisters in the circle in which you move; and therefore you involve yourselves in difficulties. You are blindfolded by the rich fabric of fashion, and therefore many a wrong thing is tolerated because it is customary. But a strong-minded man is one who does not try to be singular, but who *dares* to be singular, when he knows that to be singular is to be right. Now, Rahab's faith, sinner as she was, had this glory, this crown about its head, that she stood alone, "faithful among the faithless found."

And why should not God vouchsafe the same faith to thee my poor, sinning, but contrite hearer? You live in a back street, in a house which contains none but Sabbath breakers, and irreligious men and women. But if you have grace in your heart you will dare to do right. You belong to an infidel club; if you should make them a speech after your own conscience, they would hiss you; and if you forsook their company, they would persecute you. Go and try them. Dare them. See, whether you can do it; for if you are afraid of men, you are taken in a snare which *may prove* your *grief* and *is now* your *sin*. Mark you, the chief of sinners can make the most daring of saints; the worst men in the devil's army, when they are converted, make the truest soldiers for Jesus. The forlorn hope of Christendom has generally been led by men who have proved the high efficacy of grace to an eminent degree by having been saved from the deepest sins. Go on, and the Lord give you that high and singular faith!

III. Furthermore, this woman's faith was A STABLE FAITH, which stood firm in the midst of trouble. I have heard of a church clergyman who was once waited upon by his church



warden, after a long time of drought, and was requested to put up the prayer for rain. "Well," said he, "my good man, I will offer it, but it's not a bit of use while the wind is in the east, I'm sure." There are many who have that kind of faith: they believe just so far as probabilities go with them, but when the promise and the probability part, then they follow the probability and part with the promise. They say, "The thing is likely, therefore I believe it." But that is no faith, it is sight. True faith exclaims, "The thing is unlikely, yet I believe it." This is real faith. Faith is to say, that "mountains, when in darkness hidden, are as real as in day." Faith is to look through that cloud, not with the eye of sight, which seeth naught, but with the eye of faith, which seeth every thing, and to say, "I trust him when I can not trace him; I tread the sea as firmly as I would the rock; I walk as securely in the tempest as in the sunshine, and lay myself to rest upon the surging billows of the ocean as contentedly as upon my bed." The faith of Rahab was the right sort of faith, for it was firm and enduring.

I will just have a little talk with Rahab this morning, as I suppose old Unbelief did commune with her. Now, my good woman, don't you see the absurdity of this thing? Why, the people of Israel are on the other side of Jordan, and there is no bridge: how are they to get over? Of course they must go up higher toward the fords; and then Jericho will be for a long time secure. They will take other cities before coming to Jericho; and, besides, the Canaanites are mighty, and the Israelites are only a parcel of slaves; they will soon be cut in pieces, and there will be an end of them; therefore, do not harbor these spies. Why put your life in jeopardy for such an improbability? "Ah," says she, "I do not care about the Jordan; my faith can believe across the Jordan, or else it were only a dry-land faith." By-and-by, they march through the Jordan dry shod, and then faith gets firmer confidence. "Ah!" says she, secretly within herself, what she would willingly have said to her neighbors, "will you not now believe? will you not now sue for mercy?" "No," they say; "the walls of Jericho are strong; can the feeble host resist us? And lo on the morrow the troops are out, and what do they

do? They simply blow a number of rams' horns; her neighbors say, "Why, Rahab, you do not mean to say you believe now? They are mad." The people just go round the city, and all hold their tongues, except the few priests blowing rams' horns. "Why, it is ridiculous. It were quite a new thing in warfare to hear of men taking a city by blowing rams' horns." That was the first day; probably the next day Rahab thought they would come with scaling-ladders and mount the walls; but no, rams' horns again, up to the seventh day—and this woman kept the scarlet thread in the window all the time, kept her father and mother, and brothers and sisters in the house, and would not let them go out; and on the seventh day, when the people made a great shout, the wall of the city fell flat to the ground; but her faith overcame her womanly timidity, and she remained within, although the wall was crumbling to the ground. Rahab's house stood alone upon the wall, a solitary fragment amid a universal wreck, and she and her household were all saved. Now would you have thought that such a rich plant would grow in such poor soil—that strong faith could grow in such a sinful heart as that of Rahab? Ah! but here it is that God exercises his great husbandry. "My Father is the husbandman," said Christ. Any husbandman can get a good crop out of good soil; but God is the husbandman who can grow cedars on rocks, who can not only put the hyssop upon the wall, but put the oak there too and make the greatest faith spring up in the most unlikely position. All glory to his grace! the great sinner may become great in faith. Be of good cheer, then, sinner! If Christ should make thee repent, thou hast no need to think that thou shalt be the least in the family. O! no; thy name may yet be written among the mightiest of the mighty, and thou mayest stand as a memorable and triumphant instance of the power of faith.

IV. This woman's faith was a SELF-DENYING FAITH. She dared to risk her life for the sake of the spies. She knew that if they were found in her house she would be put to death; but though she was so weak as to do a sinful deed to preserve them, yet she was so *strong* that she would run the risk of being put to death to save these two men. It is some-

thing to be able to deny ourselves. An American once said "I have got a good religion; it's the right sort of religion; I do not know that it costs me a cent a year; and yet I believe I am as truly a religious man as any body." "Ah!" said one who heard it, "the Lord have mercy on your miserable stingy soul: for if you had been saved you would not have been content with a cent a year"—a halfpenny per annum! I hazard this assertion, that there is nothing in the faith of that man who does not exercise self-denial. If we never give any thing to Christ's cause, work for Christ, deny ourselves for Christ, the root of the matter is not in us. I might call some of you hypocrites: you sing,

"And if I might make some reserve,  
 And duty did not call,  
 I love my God with zeal so great,  
 That I could give him all."

Yes, *but you would not, though*; you know better than that, for you do not, as it is, give all, no, nor yet half, nor yet the thousandth part. I suppose you think you are *poor* yourselves, though you have got some thousand pounds odd a year, and so you keep it yourself, under the notion that "he that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord." I don't know how else it is you make your religion square with itself, and be at all consistent. This woman said, "If I must die for these men, I will; I am prepared, bad name as I have, to have a worse name still; as a traitor to my country I am prepared to be handed down to infamy, if it be necessary, for having betrayed my country in taking in these spies, for I know it is God's will it should be done, and do it I will at every hazard." O men and brethren, trust not your faith, unless it has self-denial with it. Faith and self-denial, like the Siamese twins, are born together, and must live together, and the food that nourisheth one must nourish both. But this woman, poor sinner as she was, would deny herself. She brought her life, even as that other woman, who was a sinner, brought the alabaster box of precious ointment, and broke it on the head of Christ.

V. Not to detain you too long, another point very briefly. This woman's faith was A SYMPATHISING FAITH. She did not

believe for herself only ; she desired mercy for her relations. Said she, "I want to be saved, but that very desire makes me want to have my father saved, and my mother saved, and my brother saved, and my sister saved." I know a man who walks seven miles every Sabbath to hear the gospel preached at a certain place—a place where they preach *the* gospel. You know that very particular, superfine sort—*the* gospel, a gospel, the spirit of which consists in bad temper, carnal security, arrogance, and a seared conscience. But this man was one day met by a friend, who said to him, "Where is your wife?" "*Wife?*" said he to him. "What! does she not come with you?" "O! no," said the man; "she never goes anywhere." "Well, but," said he, "don't you try to get her to go, and the children?" "No; the fact of it is, I think, if I look to myself, that is quite enough." "Well," said the other, "and you believe that you are God's elect, do you?" "Yes." "Well, then," said the other, "I don't think you are, because you are worse than a heathen man and a publican, for you don't care for your own household; therefore I don't think you give much evidence of being God's elect, for they love their fellow-creatures." So sure as our faith is real, it will want to bring others in. You will say, "You want to make proselytes." Yes; and you will reply, that Christ said to the Pharisees, "Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte." Yes, and Christ did not find fault with them for doing so: what he found fault with them for was this—"When ye have found him ye make him tenfold more the child of hell than yourselves."

The spirit of proselyting is the spirit of Christianity, and we ought to be desirous of possessing it. If any man will say, "I believe such and such a thing is true, but I do not wish any one else to believe it, I will tell you, it is a lie; he does not believe it, for it is impossible, heartily and really to believe a thing, without desiring to make others believe the same. And I am sure of this, moreover, it is impossible to know the value of salvation without desiring to see others brought in. Said that renowned preacher, Whitefield, "As soon as I was converted, I wanted to be the means of the conversion of all that I had ever known. There were a number of young men that

I had played cards with, that I had sinned with, and transgressed with : the first thing I did was, to go to their houses to see what I could do for their salvation, nor could I rest until I had the pleasure of seeing many of them brought to the Saviour." This is a first-fruit of the Spirit. It is a kind of instinct in a young Christian. He must have other people feel what he feels. Says one young man, in writing to me this week, "I have been praying for my fellow-clerk in the office ; I have desired that he might be brought to the Saviour, but at present there is no answer to my prayers."

Do not give a penny for that man's piety which will not spread itself. Unless we desire others to taste the benefits we have enjoyed, we are either inhuman monsters or outrageous hypocrites ; I think the last is most likely. But this woman was so strong in faith that all her family were saved from destruction. Young woman! you have a father, and he hates the Saviour. O! pray for him. Mother! you have a son: he scoffs at Christ. Cry out to God for him. Ay, my friends—young people like myself—we little know what we owe to the prayers of our parents. I feel that I shall never be able sufficiently to bless God for a praying mother. I thought it was a great nuisance to be had in at such a time to pray, and more especially to be made to cry, as my mother used to make me cry. I would have laughed at the idea of any body else talking to me about these things ; but when she prayed, and said, "Lord, save my son Charles," and then was overcome, and could not get any further for crying, you could not help crying too ; you could not help feeling ; it was of no use trying to stand against it. Ah! and there you are young man! Your mother is dying, and one thing which makes her death-bed bitter is, that you scoff God and hate Christ. O! it is the last stage of impiety, when a man can think lightly of a mother's feelings. I would hope there are none such here, but that those of you who have been so blessed, as to have been begotten and brought forth by pious men and women may take this into consideration—that to perish with a mother's prayers is to perish fearfully ; for if a mother's prayers do not bring us to Christ, they are like drops of oil dropped into the flames of hell that will make them burn more

fiercely upon the soul for ever and ever. Take heed of rushing to perdition over your mother's prayers!

There is an old woman weeping—do you know why? I believe she has sons too, and she loves them. I met with a little incident in company, the other day, after preaching. There was a little boy at the corner of the table, and his father asked him, "Why does your father love you, John?" Said the dear little lad, very prettily, "Because I'm a good boy." "Yes," said the father, "he would not love you if you were not a good boy." I turned to the good father and remarked that I was not quite sure about the truth of the last remark, for I believed he would love him if he were ever so bad. "Well," he said, "I think I should." And said a minister at the table, "I had an instance of that yesterday. I stepped into the house of a woman who had a son transported for life, and she was as full of her son Richard as if he had been prime minister, or had been her most faithful and dutiful son." Well, young man, will you kick against love like that—love that will bear your kicks, and will not turn round against you, but love you straight on still? But perhaps that woman—I saw her weep just now—had a mother, who has gone long ago, and she was married to a brutal husband, and at last left a poor widow; she calls to mind the days of her childhood, when the big Bible was brought out and read around the hearth, and "Our Father which art in heaven" was their nightly prayer. Now, perhaps, God is beginning some good thing in her heart. O! that he would bring her now, though seventy years of age, to love the Saviour! Then would she have the beginning of life over again in her last days, which will be made her best days.

VI One more head, and then we have done. Rahab's faith was a SANCTIFYING FAITH. Did Rahab continue a harlot after she had faith? No, no, she did not. I do not believe she was a harlot at the time the men went to her house, though the name still stuck to her, as such ill names will; but I am sure she was not afterward, for Salmon the prince of Judah married her, and her name is put down among the ancestors of our Lord Jesus Christ. She became after that a woman eminent for piety walking in the fear of God. Now, you may have a

dead faith which will ruin your soul. The faith that will save you is a faith which sanctifies. "Ah!" says the drunkard, "I like the gospel, sir; I believe in Christ;" then he will go over to the Blue Lion to-night, and get drunk. Sir, that is not the believing in Christ that is of any use. "Yes," says another, "I believe in Christ;" and when he gets outside he will begin to talk lightly, frothy words, perhaps lascivious ones, and sin as before. Sir, you speak falsely; you do not believe in Christ. That faith which saves the soul is a real faith, and a real faith sanctifies men. It makes them say, "Lord, thou hast forgiven me my sins; I will sin no more. Thou hast been so merciful to me, I will renounce my guilt; so kindly hast thou treated me, so lovingly hast thou embraced me, Lord, I will serve thee till I die; and if thou wilt give me grace, and help me so to be, I will be as holy as thou art." You can not have faith, and yet live in sin. To believe is to be holy. The two things must go together. That faith is a dead faith, a corrupt faith, which lives in sin that grace may abound. Rahab was a sanctified woman. O that God might sanctify some that are here! The world has been trying all manner of processes to reform men: there is but one thing that ever will reform them, and that is, faith in the preached gospel. But in this age preaching is much despised. You read the newspaper you read the book; you hear the lecturer; you sit and listen to the pretty essayist; but where is the preacher? Preaching is not taking out a manuscript sermon, asking God to direct your heart, and then reading pages prepared beforehand. That is reading—not preaching. There is a good tale told of an old man whose minister used to read. The minister called to see him, and said, "What are you doing John?" "Why, I'm prophesying, sir." "Prophesying; how is that? You mean you are reading the prophecies?" "No, I don't; I'm prophesying; for you read preaching, and call it preaching, and I read prophecies, and, on the same rule, that is prophesying." And the man was not far from right. We want to have more outspoken, downright utterances of truth and appeals to the conscience, and until we get these, we shall never see any very great and lasting reforms. But by the preaching of God's word, foolishness though it seem to some, harlots are reformed,

thieves are made honest, and the worst of men brought to the Saviour. Again let me affectionately give the invitation to the vilest of men, if so they feel themselves to be,

“Come, ye needy, come and welcome,  
God's free bounty glorify:  
True belief and true repentance—  
Every grace that brings us nigh—  
Without money,  
Come to Jesus Christ and buy.”

Your sins will be forgiven, your transgressions east away, and you shall henceforth go and sin no more, God having renewed you, and he will keep you even to the end. May God give his blessing, for Jesus' sake! Amen.



## SERMON XIX.

### THE BLOOD-SHEDDING

“Without shedding of blood is no remission.”—HEBREWS, ix 22.

I WILL show you three fools. One is yonder soldier, who has been wounded on the field of battle, grievously wounded, well nigh unto death; the surgeon is by his side, and the soldier asks him a question. Listen, and judge of his folly. What question does he ask? Does he raise his eyes with eager anxiety and inquire if the wound be mortal, if the practitioner's skill can suggest the means of healing, or if the remedies are within reach and the medicine at hand? No, nothing of the sort; strange to tell, he asks, “Can you inform me with what sword I was wounded, and by what Russian I have been thus grievously mauled? I want,” he adds, “to learn every minute particular respecting the origin of my wound.” The man is delirious or his head is affected. Surely such questions at such a time are proof enough that he is bereft of his senses.

There is another fool. The storm is raging, the ship is flying impetuous before the gale, the dark scud moves swiftly over head, the masts are creaking, the sails are rent to rags, and still the gathering tempest grows more fierce. Where is the captain? Is he busily engaged on the deck, is he manfully facing the danger, and skillfully suggesting means to avert it? No, sir, he has retired to his cabin, and there with studious thoughts and crazy fancies he is speculating on the place where this storm took its rise. “It is mysterious, this wind; no one ever yet,” he says, “has been able to discover it.” And, so reckless of the vessel, the lives of the passengers, and his own life, he is careful only to solve his curious questions. The man is mad, sir; take the rudder from his hand; he is clean gone

mad! If he should ever run on shore, shut him up as a helpless lunatic.

The third fool I shall doubtless find among yourselves. You are sick and wounded with sin, you are in the storm and hurricane of Almighty vengeance, and yet the question which you would ask of me, this morning, would be, "Sir, what is the origin of evil?" You are mad, sir, spiritually mad; that is not the question you would ask if you were in a sane and healthy state of mind; your question would be, "How can I get rid of the evil?" Not, "How did it come into the world?" but "How am I to escape from it?" Not, "How is it that hail descends from heaven upon Sodom?" but "How may I, like Lot, escape out of the city to a Zoar?" Not, "How is it that I am sick?" but "Are there medicines that will heal me? Is there a physician to be found that can restore my soul to health?" Ah! you trifle with subtleties while you neglect certainties. More questions have been asked concerning the origin of evil than upon any thing else. Men have puzzled their heads, and twisted their brains into knots, in order to understand what men can never know—how evil came into this world, and how its entrance is consistent with divine goodness? The broad fact is this, there is evil; and your question should be, "How can I escape from the wrath to come, which is engendered of this evil?" In answering that question this verse stands right in the middle of the way (like the angel with the sword, who once stopped Balaam on his road to Barak), "Without shedding of blood is no remission." Your real want is to know how you can be saved; if you are aware that your sin must be pardoned or punished, your question will be, "How can it be pardoned?" and then point blank, in the very teeth of your inquiry, there stands out this fact, "Without shedding of blood there is no remission." Mark you, this is not merely a Jewish maxim; it is a world-wide and eternal truth. It pertaineth not to the Hebrews only, but to the Gentiles likewise. Never in any time, never in any place, never in any person, can there be remission apart from shedding of blood. This great fact, I say, is stamped on nature; it is an essential law of God's moral government, it is one of the fundamental principles which can neither be shaken

nor denied. Never can there be any exception to it; it stands the same in every place throughout all ages—"Without shedding of blood there is no remission." It was so with the Jews; they had no remission without the shedding of blood. Some things under the Jewish law might be cleansed by water or by fire, but in no case where absolute sin was concerned was there ever purification without blood—teaching this doctrine, that blood, and blood alone, must be applied for the remission of sin. Indeed, the very heathen seem to have an inkling of this fact. Do not I see their knives gory with the blood of victims? Have I not heard horrid tales of human immolations, of holocausts, of sacrifices; and what mean these, but that there lies deep in the human breast, deep as the very existence of man, this truth, "that without shedding of blood there is no remission." And I assert once more, that even in the hearts and consciences of my hearers there is something which will never let them believe in remission apart from a shedding of blood. This is the grand truth of Christianity, and it is a truth which I will endeavor now to fix upon your memory; and may God by his grace bless it to your souls. "Without shedding of blood is no remission."

First, let me show you the blood-shedding, before I begin to dwell upon the text. Is there not a special blood-shedding meant? Yes, there was a shedding of most precious blood, to which I must forthwith refer you. I shall not tell you now of massacres and murders, nor of rivers of blood of goats and rams. There was a blood-shedding once, which did all other shedding of blood by far outvie; it was a man—a God—that shed his blood at that memorable season. Come and see it. Here is a garden dark and gloomy; the ground is crisp with the cold frost of midnight; between those gloomy olive trees I see a man, I hear him groan out his life in prayer; hearken, angels; hearken, men, and wonder; it is the Saviour groaning out his soul! Come and see him. Behold his brow! O heavens! drops of blood are streaming down his face and from his body; every pore is open, and it sweats! but not the sweat of men that toil for bread; it is the sweat of one that toils for heaven—he "sweats great drops of blood!" That is the blood-shedding, without which there is no remission. Follow

that man further; they have dragged him with sacrilegious hands from the place of his prayer and his agony, and they have taken him to the hall of Pilate; they seat him in a chair and mock him; a robe of purple is put on his shoulders in mockery; and mark his brow—they have put about it a crown of thorns, and the crimson drops of gore are rushing down his cheeks! Ye angels! the drops of blood are running down his cheeks! But turn aside that purple robe for a moment. His back is bleeding. Tell me, demons, who did this? They lift up the thongs still dripping clots of gore; they scourge and tear his flesh, and make a river of blood to run down his shoulders! That is the shedding of blood, without which there is no remission. Not yet have I done; they hurry him through the streets; they fling him on the ground; they nail his hands and feet to the transverse wood, they hoist it in the air, they dash it into its socket, it is fixed, and there he hangs the Christ of God. Blood from his head, blood from his hands, blood from his feet! In agony unknown he bleeds away his life: in terrible throes he exhausts his soul. “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabaethani.” And then see! they pierce his side, and forthwith runneth out blood and water! This is the shedding of blood, sinners and saints, this is the awful shedding of blood, the terrible pouring out of blood, without which, for you, and for the whole human race, there is no remission.

I have then, I hope, brought my text fairly out: with out this shedding of blood there is no remission. Now I shall come to dwell upon it more particularly.

Why is it that the story doth not make men weep? I told it ill, you say. Ay, so I did; I will take all the blame. But, sirs, if it were told as ill as men could speak, were our hearts what they should be, we should bleed away our lives in sorrow. O, it was a horrid murder that! It was not an act of regicide; it was not the deed of a fratricide, or of a parricide—it was—what shall I say?—I must make a word—a deicide—the killing of a God; the slaying of him who became incarnate for our sins. O, if our hearts were but soft as iron, we must weep; if they were but tender as the marble of the mountains, we should shed great drops of grief; but they are harder than the nether millstone; we forget the griefs of him

that died this ignominious death ; we pity not his sorrows, nor do we account the interest we have in him as though he suffered and accomplished all for us. Nevertheless, here stands the principle—"Without shedding of blood is no remission."

Now, I take it, there are two things here. First, there is *a negative expressed*: "No remission without shedding of blood." And then there is *a positive implied*, forsooth, with shedding of blood there is remission.

I. First, I say, here is A NEGATIVE EXPRESSED; there is no remission without blood—without the blood of Jesus Christ. This is of divine authority ; when I utter this sentence I have divinity to plead. It is not a thing which you may doubt, or which you may believe ; it must be believed and received, otherwise you have denied the Scriptures, and turned aside from God. Some truths I utter, perhaps, have little better basis than my own reasoning and inference, which are of little value enough ; but this I utter, not with quotations from God's Word to back up my assertion, but from the lips of God himself. Here it stands in great letters, "There is no remission." So divine its authority. Perhaps you will kick at it : but remember, your rebellion is not against me, but against God. If any of you reject this truth, I shall not controvert ; God forbid I should turn aside from proclaiming his gospel, to dispute with men. I have God's irrevocable statute to plead now, here it stands : "Without shedding of blood there is no remission." You may believe or disbelieve many things the preacher utters ; but this you disbelieve at the peril of your souls. It is God's utterance : will you tell God to his face you do not believe it ? That were impious. The negative is divine in its authority ; bow yourselves to it, and accept its solemn warning.

But some men will say that God's way of saving men, by shedding of blood, is a cruel way, an unjust way, an unkind way ; and all kinds of things they will say of it. Sirs, I have nothing to do with your opinion of the matter ; it is so. If you have any faults to find with your Maker, fight your battles out with him at last. But take heed before you throw the gauntlet down ; it will go ill with a worm when he fighteth his Maker, and it will go ill with you when you contend with

him. The doctrine of atonement when rightly understood and faithfully received, is delightful, for it exhibits boundless love, immeasurable goodness, and infinite truth; but to unbelievers it will always be a hated doctrine. So it must be, sirs; you hate your own mercies; you despise your own salvation. I tarry not to dispute with you; I affirm it in God's name—  
 “Without shedding of blood there is no remission.”

And note *how decisive this is in its character*: “Without shedding of blood there is no remission.” “But, sir, can't I get my sins forgiven by my repentance? if I weep, and plead, and pray, will not God forgive me for the sake of my tears?” “No remission,” says the text, “without shedding of blood.” “But, sir, if I never sin again, and if I serve God more zealously than other men, will he not forgive me for the sake of my obedience?” “No remission,” says the text, “without shedding of blood.” “But, sir, may I not trust that God is merciful, and will forgive me without the shedding of blood?” “No,” says the text, “without shedding of blood there is no remission;” none whatever. It cuts off every other hope. Bring your hopes here, and if they are not based in blood, and stamped with blood, they are as useless as castles in the air and dreams of the night. “There is no remission,” says the text, in positive and plain words; and yet men will be trying to get remission in fifty other ways, until their special pleading becomes as irksome to us as it is useless for them. Sirs, do what you like, say what you please, but you are as far off remission when you have done your best, as you were when you began, except you put confidence in the shedding of our Saviour's blood, and in the blood-shedding alone, for without it there is no remission.

And note again, *how universal it is in its character*. “What may not I get remission without blood-shedding?” says the king; and he comes with the crown on his head; “may not I in all my robes, with this rich ransom, get pardon without the blood-shedding?” “None,” is the reply; “none.” Forthwith comes the wise man, with a number of letters after his name—“Can I not get remission by these grand titles of my learning?” “None; none.” Then comes the benevolent man—“I have dispersed my money to the poor, and given my body to feed

them ; shall not I get remission ?” “None,” says the text. “Without shedding of blood there is no remission.” How this puts every one on a level ! My lord, you are no bigger than your coachman ; Sir squire, you are no better off than John that plows the ground ; minister, your office does not serve you with any exemption—your poorest hearer stands on the very same footing. “Without shedding of blood there is no remission.” No hope for the best, any more than for the worst, without this shedding of blood ! O ! I love the gospel, for this reason among others, because it is such a leveling gospel. Some persons do not like a leveling gospel ; nor would I, in some senses of the word. Let men have their rank, and their titles, and their riches, if they will ; but I do like, and I am sure all good men like, to see rich and poor meet together, and feel that they are on a level ; the gospel makes them so. It says “Put up your money-bags, they will not procure remission ; roll up your diploma, that will not get you remission ; forget your farm and your park, they will not get you remission ; just cover up that escutcheon, that coat of arms will not get remission. Come, ye ragged beggars, filthy off-scourings of the world, penniless ; come hither ; here is remission as much for you, ill-bred and ill-mannered though ye be, as for the noble, the honorable, the titled and the wealthy. All stand on a level here ; the text is universal : “Without shedding of blood there is no remission.”

Mark, too, *how perpetual my text is*. Paul said, “there is no remission ;” I must repeat this testimony too. When thousands of years have rolled away, some minister may stand on this spot and say the same. This will never alter at all ; it will always be so, in the next world as well as this : no remission without shedding of blood. “O ! yes, there is,” says one, “the priest takes the shilling, and he gets the soul out of purgatory.” That is a mere pretense ; it never was in. But without shedding of blood there is no real remission. There may be tales and fancies, but there is no true remission without the blood of propitiation. Never, though you strained yourselves in prayer ; never, though you wept yourselves away in tears ; never, though you groaned and cried till your heart-strings break ; never in this world, nor in that which is

to come, can the forgiveness of sins be procured on any other ground than redemption by the blood of Christ, and never can the conscience be cleansed but by faith in that sacrifice. The fact is, beloved, there is no use for you to satisfy your hearts with any thing less than what satisfied God the Father. Without the shedding of blood nothing would appease his justice and without the application of that same blood nothing can purge your consciences.

II. But as there is no remission without blood-shedding, IT IS IMPLIED THAT THERE IS REMISSION WITH IT. Mark it well, this remission is a present fact. The blood having been already shed, the remission is already obtained. I took you to the garden of Gethsemane and the mount of Calvary to see the blood-shedding. I might now conduct you to another garden and another mount to show you the grand proof of the remission. Another garden, did I say? Yes, it is a garden fraught with many pleasing and even triumphant reminiscences. Aside from the haunts of this busy world, in it was a new sepulcher, hewn out of a rock where Joseph of Arimathea thought his own poor body should presently be laid. But there they laid Jesus after his crucifixion.

He had stood surety for his people, and the law had demanded his blood; death had held him with strong grasp and that tomb was, as it were, the dungeon of his captivity when, as the good Shepherd, he laid down his life for the sheep. Why, then, do I see in that garden an open, untenanted grave? I will tell you. The debts are paid, the sins are canceled, the remission is obtained. How, think you? That great Shepherd of the sheep hath been brought again from the dead by the blood of the everlasting covenant, and in him also we have obtained redemption through his blood. There, beloved, is proof the first.

Do you ask further evidence? I will take you to mount Olivet. You shall behold Jesus there with his hands raised like the high priest of old to bless his people, and while he is blessing them, he ascends, the clouds receiving him out of their sight. But why, you ask, O why hath he thus ascended, and whither is he gone? Behold he entereth, not into the holy place made with hands, but he entereth into heaven it-



self with his own blood, there to appear in the presence of God for us. Now, therefore, we have boldness to draw near by the blood of Christ. The remission is obtained, here is proof the second. O believer, what springs of comfort are there here for thee.

And now let me commend this remission by the shedding of blood to those who have not yet believed. Mr. Innis, a great Scotch minister, once visited an infidel who was dying. When he came to him the first time, he said, "Mr. Innis, I am relying on the mercy of God; God is merciful, and he will never damn a man for ever." When he got worse and was nearer death, Mr. Innis went to him again, and he said, "O! Mr. Innis, my hope is gone; for I have been thinking, if God be merciful, God is just too; and what if, instead of being merciful to me, he should be just to me? What would then become of me? I must give up my hope in the mere mercy of God; tell me how to be saved!" Mr. Innis told him that Christ had died in the stead of all believers—that God could be just, and yet the justifier through the death of Christ. "Ah!" said he, "Mr. Innis, there is something solid in that; I can rest on that; I can not rest on any thing else;" and it is a remarkable fact that none of us ever met with a man who thought he had his sins forgiven unless it was through the blood of Christ. Meet a Mussulman; he never had his sins forgiven; he does not say so. Meet an infidel; he never knows that his sins are forgiven. Meet a legalist; he says, "I hope they will be forgiven;" but he does not pretend they are. No one ever gets even a fancied hope apart from this, that Christ, and Christ alone, must save by the shedding of his blood.

Let me tell a story to show how Christ saves souls. Mr. Whitefield had a brother, who had been like him an earnest Christian, but he had backslidden; he went far from the ways of godliness; and one afternoon, after he had been recovered from his backsliding, he was sitting in a room in a chapel-house. He had heard his brother preach the day before, and his poor conscience had been cut to the very quick. Said Whitefield's brother, when he was at tea, "I am a lost man," and he groaned and cried, and could neither eat nor drink

Said Lady Huntingdon, who sat opposite, "What did you say, Mr. Whitefield?" "Madam," said he, "I said I am a lost man." "I'm glad of it," said she; "I'm glad of it." "Your ladyship, how can you say so? It is cruel to say you are glad that I am a lost man." "I repeat it, sir," said she; "I am heartily glad of it." He looked at her, more and more astonished at her barbarity. "I am glad of it," said she, "because it is written, 'The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost.'" With the tears rolling down his cheeks, he said, "What a precious Scripture; and how is it that it comes with such force to me? O! madam," said he, "madam, I bless God for that; then he will save me; I trust my soul in his hands; he has forgiven me." He went outside the house, felt ill, fell upon the ground, and expired. I may have a lost man here this morning. As I can not say much, I will leave you, good people; you do not want any thing.

Have I a lost man here? Lost man! Lost woman! Where are you? Do you feel yourself to be lost? I am so glad of it; for there is remission by the blood-shedding. O sinner, are there tears in your eyes? Look through them. Do you see that man in the garden? That man sweat drops of blood for you. Do you see that man on the cross? That man was nailed there for you. O! if I could be nailed on a cross this morning for you all, I know what you would do: you would fall down and kiss my feet, and weep that I should have to die for you. But sinner, lost sinner, Jesus died for you—for *you*; and if he died for you, you can not be lost. Christ died in vain for no one. Are you, then, a sinner? Are you convinced of sin because you believe not in Christ? I have authority to preach to you. Believe in his name and you can not be lost. Do you say you are no sinner? Then I do not know that Christ died for you. Do you say that you have no sins to repent of? Then I have no Christ to preach to you. He did not come to save the righteous; he came to save the wicked. Are you wicked? Do you feel it? Are you lost? Do you know it? Are you sinful? Will you confess it? Sinner! if Jesus were here this morning he would put out his bleeding hands, and say, "Sinner, I died for you; will you be

“Believe me?” He is not here in person; he has sent his servant to tell you. Won’t you believe him? “O!” but you say, “I am such a sinner!” “Ah!” says he, “that is just why I died for you, because you are a sinner.” “But,” you say, “I do not deserve it.” “Ah!” says he, “that is just why I did it.” Say you, “I have hated him.” “But,” says he, “I have always loved you.” “But, Lord, I have spat on thy minister, and scorned thy word.” “It is all forgiven,” says he, “all washed away by the blood which did run from my side. Only believe me; that is all I ask. And that I will give you. I will help you to believe.” “Ah!” says one, “but I do not want a Saviour.” Sir, I have nothing to say to you except this, “The wrath to come! the wrath to come!” But there is one who says, “Sir, you do not mean what you say? Do you mean to preach to the most wicked men or women in the place?” I mean what I say. There she is! She is a harlot; she has led many into sin, and many into hell. There she is; her own friends have turned her out of doors; her father called her a good-for-nothing hussey, and said she should never come to the house again. Woman! dost thou repent? Dost thou feel thyself to be guilty? Christ died to save thee, and thou shalt be saved. There he is. I can see him. He was drunk; he has been drunk very often. Not many nights ago I heard his voice in the street, as he went home at a late hour on Saturday night, disturbing every body; and he beat his wife too. He has broken the Sabbath; and as to swearing, if oaths be like soot, his throat must want sweeping bad enough, for he has cursed God often. Do you feel yourself to be guilty, my hearer? Do you hate your sins, and are you willing to forsake them? Then I bless God for you. Christ died for you. Believe! I had a letter a few days ago from a young man who heard that during this week I was going to a certain town. Said he, “Sir, when you come do preach a sermon that will fit me; for do you know, sir, I have heard it said that we must all think ourselves to be the wickedest people in the world, or else we can not be saved. I try to think so, but I can not, because I have not been the wickedest. I want to think so, but I can not. I want to be saved, but I do not know how to repent enough.” Now, if I

have the pleasure of seeing him I shall tell him, God does not require a man to think himself the wickedest in the world, because that would sometimes be to think a falsehood; there are some men who are not so wicked as others are. What God requires is this, that a man should say, "I know more of myself than I do of other people; I know little about them, and from what I see of myself, not of my actions, but of my heart, I do think that there can be few worse than I am. They may be more guilty openly, but then I have had more light, more privileges, more opportunities, more warnings, and therefore I am still guiltier." I do not want you to bring your brother with you and say, "I am more wicked than he is;" I want you to come yourself, and say, "Father, I have sinned;" you have nothing to do with your brother William, whether he has sinned more or less; your cry should be, "Father, I have sinned." You have nothing to do with your cousin Jane, whether or not she has rebelled more than you. Your business is to cry, "Lord have mercy upon me a sinner!" That is all. Do you feel yourselves lost? Again, I say,

"Come, and welcome, sinner, come!"

To conclude. There is not a sinner in this place who knows himself to be lost and ruined, who may not have all his sins forgiven, and "rejoice in the hope of the glory of God." You may, though black as hell, be white as heaven this very instant. I know that 'tis only by a desperate struggle that faith takes hold of the promise, but, the very moment a sinner believes, that conflict is past. It is his first victory and a blessed one. Let this verse be the language of your heart adopt it and make it your own:

"A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,  
 In Christ's kind arms I fall;  
 He is my strength and righteousness,  
 My Jesus and my all."

# SERMON X X.

## JUSTIFICATION BY GRACE.

“Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in **Christ Jesus.**”—ROMANS, iii. 24.

THE hill of comfort is the hill of Calvary; the house of consolation is builded with the wood of the cross; the temple of heavenly cordials is founded upon the riven rock, riven by the spear which pierced its side. No scene in sacred history ever gladdens the soul like the scene on Calvary.

“Is it not strange, the darkest hour  
That ever dawned on sinful earth  
Should touch the heart with softer power  
For comfort, than an angel's mirth?  
That to the cross the mourner's eye should turn,  
Sooner than where the stars of Bethlehem burn?”

Nowhere does the soul ever find such consolation as on that very spot where misery reigned, where woe triumphed, where agony reached its climax. There grace hath dug a fountain, which ever gusheth with waters pure as crystal, each drop capable of alleviating the woes and the agonies of mankind. Ye have had your seasons of woe, my brethren and my sisters in Christ Jesus; and ye will confess it was not at Olivet that ye ever found comfort, not on the hill of Sinai, nor on Tabor; but Gethsemane, Gabbatha, and Golgotha have been a means of comfort to you. The bitter herbs of Gethsemane have often taken away the bitters of your life; the scourge of Gabbatha hath often scourged away your cares, and the groans of Calvary have put all other groans to flight.

We have, this morning then, a subject which I trust may be the means of comforting God's saints, seeing it takes its

rise at the cross, and thence runs on in a rich stream of perennial blessings to all believers. You note, we have in our text, first of all, *the redemption of Christ Jesus* ; secondly, *the justification of sinners flowing from it* ; and then thirdly, *the manner of the giving of this justification*, “freely by his grace.”

I First, then, we have THE REDEMPTION THAT IS IN OR BY CHRIST JESUS.

The figure of redemption is very simple, and has been very frequently used in Scripture. When a prisoner has been taken captive, and has been made a slave by some barbarous power, it has been usual, before he could be set free, that a ransom price should be paid down. Now, we being, by the fall of Adam, prone to guiltiness, and, indeed, virtually guilty, we were by the irreproachable judgment of God given up to the vengeance of the law ; we were given to the hands of justice ; justice claimed us to be his bond-slaves for ever, unless we could pay a ransom, whereby our souls could be redeemed. We were, indeed, poor as owlets, we had not wherewith to bless ourselves. We were as our hymn hath worded it, “bankrupt debtors ;” an execution was put into our house ; all we had was sold ; we were left naked, and poor, and miserable, and we could by no means find a ransom ; it was just then that Christ stepped in, stood sponsor for us, and, in the room and stead of all believers, did pay the ransom price, that we might in that hour be delivered from the curse of the law and the vengeance of God, and go our way, clean, free, justified by his blood.

Let me just endeavor to show you some qualities of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. You will remember *the multitude* he has redeemed ; not me alone, nor you alone, but “a multitude that no man can number,” which shall as far exceed the stars of heaven for number, as they exceed all mortal reckoning. Christ hath bought for himself some out of every kingdom, and nation, and tongue, under heaven ; he hath redeemed from among men some of every rank, from the highest to the lowest ; some of every color—black and white ; some of every standing in society, the best and the worst. For some of all sorts hath Jesus Christ given himself a ransom that they might be redeemed unto himself.

Now, concerning this ransom, we have to observe, that it was *all paid*, and all paid *at once*. When Christ redeemed his people, he did it thoroughly; he did not leave a single debt unpaid, nor yet one farthing for them to settle afterwards. God demanded of Christ the payment for the sins of all his people; Christ stood forward, and to the utmost farthing paid whate'er his people owed. The sacrifice of Calvary was not a part payment; it was not a partial exoneration, it was a complete and perfect payment, and it obtained a complete and perfect remittal of all the debts of all believers that have lived, do live, or shall live, to the very end of time. On that day when Christ hung on the cross, he did not leave a single farthing for us to pay as a satisfaction to God; he did not leave, from a thread even to a shoe-latchet, that he had not satisfied. The whole of the demands of the law were paid down there and then by Jehovah Jesus, the great high priest of all his people. And blessed be his name, he paid it all at once too. So priceless was the ransom, so princely and munificent was the price demanded for our souls, one might have thought it would have been marvelous if Christ had paid it by instalments; some of it now, and some of it then. Kings' ransoms have sometimes been paid part at once, and part in dues afterwards, to run through years. But not so our Saviour: once for all he gave himself a sacrifice; at once he counted down the price, and said, "It is finished," leaving nothing for him to do, nor for us to accomplish. He did not drivel out a part-payment, and then declare that he would come again to die, or that he would again suffer, or that he would again obey; out down upon the nail, to the utmost farthing, the ransom of all his people was paid, and a full receipt given to them, and Christ nailed that receipt to his cross, and said, "It is done, it is done; I have taken away the handwriting of ordinances, I have nailed it to the cross; who is he that shall condemn my people, or lay any thing to their charge? for I have blotted out like a cloud their transgressions, and like a thick cloud their sins!"

And when Christ paid all this ransom, will you just notice, that *he did it all himself!* He was very particular about that. Simor the Cyrenian, might bear the cross; but Simon, the

Cyrenian, might not be nailed to it. That sacred circle of Calvary was kept for Christ alone. Two thieves were with him there; not righteous men, lest any should have said that the death of those two righteous men helped the Saviour. Two thieves hung there with him, that men might see that there was majesty in his misery, and that he could pardon men and show his sovereignty, even when he was dying. There were no righteous men to suffer; no disciples shared his death; Peter was not dragged there to be beheaded, John was not nailed to a cross side by side with him; he was left there alone. He says, "I have trodden the wine-press alone; and of the people there was none with me." The whole of the tremendous debt was put upon his shoulders; the whole weight of the sins of all his people was placed upon him. Once he seemed to stagger under it: "Father, if it be possible." But again he stood upright: "Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done." The whole of the punishment of his people was distilled into one cup; no mortal lip might give it so much as a solitary sip. When he put it to his own lips, it was so bitter, he well nigh spurned it: "Let this cup pass from me." But his love for his people was so strong, that he took the cup in both his hands, and

"At one tremendous draught of love  
He drank damnation dry,"

for all his people. He drank it all, he endured all, he suffered all; so that now for ever there are no flames of hell for them, no racks of torment; they have no eternal woes; Christ hath suffered all they ought to have suffered, and they must, they shall go free. The work was completely done by himself, without a helper.

And note, again, *it was accepted*. In truth, it was a goodly ransom. What could equal it? A soul "exceeding sorrowful even unto death;" a body torn with torture; a death of the most inhuman kind; and an agony of such a character that tongue can not speak of it, nor can even man's mind imagine its horror. It was a goodly price. But say, was it accepted? There have been prices paid sometimes, or rather offered, which never were accepted by the party to whom they



were offered, and therefore the slave did not go free. But this was accepted. The evidence I will show you. When Christ declared that he would pay the debt for all his people, God sent the officer to arrest him for it; he arrested him in the garden of Gethsemane, and seizing upon him, he dragged him to the bar of Pilate, to the bar of Herod, and to the judgment-seat of Caiaphas; the payment was all made, and Christ was put into the grave. He was there, locked up in durance vile, until the acceptance should have been ratified in heaven. He slept there a portion of three days in his tomb. It was declared that the ratification was to be this: the surety was to go his way as soon as his suretyship engagements had been fulfilled. Now let your minds picture the buried Jesus. He is in the sepulcher. 'Tis true he has paid all the debt, but the receipt is not yet given; he slumbers in that narrow tomb. Fastened in with a seal upon a giant stone, he sleeps still in his grave; not yet has the acceptance been given from God; the angels have not yet come from heaven to say, "The deed is done, God has accepted thy sacrifice." Now is the crisis of this world; it hangs trembling in the balance. Will God accept the ransom, or will he not? We shall see. An angel comes from heaven with exceeding brightness; he rolls away the stone; and forth comes the captive, with no manacles upon his hands, with the grave-clothes left behind him; free, never more to suffer, never more to die. Now,

"If Jesus had not paid the debt,  
Ho ne'er had been at freedom set."

If God had not accepted his sacrifice, he would have been in his tomb at this moment; he never would have risen from his grave. But his resurrection was a pledge of God's accepting him. He said, "I have had a claim upon thee to this hour; that claim is paid now; go thy way." And death gave up his royal captive, the stone was rolled into the garden, and the Conqueror came forth, leading captivity captive.

And, moreover, God gave a second proof of acceptance; *for he took his only-begotten Son to heaven*, and set him at his right hand, far above all principalities and powers; and therein he meant to say to him, "Sit upon the throne, for thou hast

done the mighty deed ; all thy works and all thy miseries are accepted as the ransom of men." O my beloved, think what a grand sight it must have been when Christ ascended into glory ; what a noble certificate it must have been of his Father's acceptance of him ! Do you not think you see the scene on earth ? It is very simple. A few disciples are standing upon a hill, and Christ mounts into the air in slow and solemn movement, as if an angel sped his way by gentle degrees, like mist or exhalation from the lake into the skies. Can you imagine what is going on up yonder ? Can you for a moment conceive how, when the mighty Conqueror entered the gates of heaven, the angels met him ;

" They brought his chariot from on high,  
To bear him to his throne ;  
Clapped their triumphant wings, and cried,  
' The glorious work is done ! ' "

Can you think how loud were the plaudits when he entered the gates of heaven ? Can you conceive how they pressed on one another, to behold how he came conquering and red from the fight ? Do you see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the saints redeemed, come to behold the Saviour and the Lord ? They had desired to see him, and now their eyes behold him in flesh and blood, the conqueror over death and hell ! Do you think you see him, with hell at his chariot-wheels, with death dragged as a captive through the royal streets of heaven ? O, what a spectacle was there that day ! No Roman warrior ever had such a triumph ; none ever saw such a majestic sight. The pomp of a whole universe, the royalty of entire creation, cherubim and seraphim, and all powers create, did swell the show ; and God himself, the Everlasting One, crowned all, when he pressed his Son to his bosom, and said, " Well done, well done ; thou hast finished the work which I gave thee to do. Rest here for ever, mine accepted one." Ah, but he never would have had that triumph, if he had not paid all the debt. Unless his Father had accepted the ransom-price, the ransomer had never been so honored ; but because it was accepted, therefore did he so triumph. So far, then, concerning the ransom

II. And now, by the help of God's Spirit, let me address myself to THE EFFECT OF THE RANSOM ; being justified—"justified freely by his grace through the redemption."

Now, *what is the meaning of justification?* Divines will puzzle you, if you ask them. I must try the best I can to make justification plain and simple, even to the comprehension of a child. There is not such a thing as justification to be had on earth for mortal men, except in one way. Justification, you know, is a forensic term ; it is employed always in a legal sense. A prisoner is brought to the bar of justice to be tried. There is only one way whereby that prisoner can be justified ; that is, he must be found not guilty ; and if he is found not guilty, then he is justified—that is, he is proved to be a just man. If you find that man guilty, you can not justify him. The Queen may pardon him, but she can not justify him. The deed is not a justifiable one, if he were guilty concerning it, and he can not be justified on account of it. He may be pardoned ; but not royalty itself can ever wash that man's character. He is as much a real criminal when he is pardoned as before. There is no means among men of justifying a man of an accusation which is laid against him, except by his being proved not guilty. Now, the wonder of wonders is, that we are proved guilty, and yet we are justified : the verdict has been brought in against us, guilty ; and yet, notwithstanding, we are justified. Can any earthly tribunal do that ? No ; it remained for the ransom of Christ to effect that which is an impossibility to any tribunal upon earth. We are all guilty. Read the 23d verse, immediately preceding the text—"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." There the verdict of guilty is brought in, and yet we are immediately afterward said to be justified freely by his grace.

Now, allow me to explain *the way whereby God justifies a sinner*. I am about to suppose an impossible case. A prisoner has been tried, and condemned to death. He is a guilty man ; he can not be justified, because he is guilty. But now, suppose for a moment that such a thing as this could happen—that some second party could be introduced, who could take all that man's guilt upon himself, who could change places with that man, and by some mysterious process, which, of

course, is impossible with men, become that man; or take that man's character upon himself; he, the righteous man, putting the rebel in his place, and making the rebel a righteous man. We can not do that in our courts. If I were to go before a judge, and he should agree that I should be committed for a year's imprisonment, instead of some wretch who was condemned yesterday to a year's imprisonment, I could not take his guilt. I might take his punishment, but not his guilt. Now, what flesh and blood can not do, that Jesus Christ by his redemption did. Here I stand, the sinner. I mention myself as the representative of you all. I am condemned to die. God says, "I will condemn that man; I must, I will—I will punish him." Christ comes in, puts me aside, and stands himself in my stead. When the plea is demanded, Christ says, "Guilty;" takes my guilt to be his own guilt. When the punishment is to be executed, forth comes Christ. "Punish me," he says; "I have put my righteousness on that man, and I have taken that man's sins on me. Father, punish me, and consider that man to have been me. Let him reign in heaven; let me suffer misery. Let me endure his curse, and let him receive my blessing." This marvelous doctrine of the changing of places of Christ with poor sinners, is a doctrine of revelation, for it never could have been conceived by nature. Let me, lest I should have made a mistake, explain myself again. The way whereby God saves a sinner is not, as some say, by passing over the penalty. No; the penalty has been all paid. It is the putting of another person in the rebel's place. The rebel must die; God says he must. Christ says, "I will be substitute for the rebel. The rebel shall take my place; I will take his." God consents to it. No earthly monarch could have power to consent to such a change. But the God of heaven had a right to do as he pleased. In his infinite mercy he consented to the arrangement. "Son of my love," said he, "you must stand in the sinner's place; you must suffer what he ought to have suffered; you must be accounted guilty, just as he was accounted guilty; and then I will look upon the sinner in another light. I will look at him as if he were Christ; I will accept him as if he were my only-begotten Son, full of grace and truth. I

will give him a crown in heaven, and I will take him to my heart for ever and ever." This is the way we are saved "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus."

And now, let me further go on to *explain some of the characteristics* of this justification. As soon as a repenting sinner is justified, remember, he is justified for all his sins. Here stands a man all guilty. The moment he believes in Christ, his pardon at once he receives, and his sins are no longer his; they are cast into the depths of the sea. They were laid upon the shoulders of Christ, and they are gone. The man stands a guiltless man in the sight of God, accepted in the beloved. "What!" say you, "do you mean that literally?" Yes, I do, that is the doctrine of justification by faith. Man ceases to be regarded by divine justice as a guilty being; the moment he believes in Christ his guilt is all taken away. But I am going a step further. The moment the man believes in Christ, he ceases to be guilty in God's esteem; but what is more, he becomes righteous, he becomes meritorious; for, in the moment when Christ takes his sins he takes Christ's righteousness; so that, when God looks upon the sinner who but an hour ago was dead in sins, he looks upon him with as much love and affection as he ever looked upon his Son. He himself has said it—"As the Father loved me, so have I loved you." He loves us as much as his Father loved him. Can you believe such a doctrine as that? Does it not pass all thought? Well, it is a doctrine of the Holy Spirit; the doctrine whereby we must hope to be saved. Can I to any unenlightened person illustrate this thought better? I will give him the parable we have given to us in the prophets—the parable of Joshua the high priest. Joshua comes in, clothed in filthy garments, those filthy garments representing his sins. Take away the filthy garments; that is pardon. Put a miter on his head; clothe him in royal raiment; make him rich and fair; that is justification. But where do *these* garments come from? and where do those rags go to? Why, the rags that Joshua had on go to Christ, and the garments put on Joshua are the garments that Christ wore. The sinner and Christ do just what Jonathan and David did. Jonathan put his robes

on David, David gave Jonathan his garments; so Christ takes our sins, we take Christ's righteousness; and it is by a glorious substitution and interchange of places that sinners go free and are justified by his grace.

"But," says one, "no one is justified like that till he dies." Believe me, he is.

"The moment a sinner believes  
And trusts in his crucified God,  
His pardon at once he receives;  
Salvation in full, through his blood."

If that young man over there has really believed in Christ this morning, realizing by a spiritual experience what I have attempted to describe, he is as much justified in God's sight now as he will be when he stands before the throne. Not the glorified spirits above are more acceptable to God than the poor man below, who is once justified by grace. It is a perfect washing, it is perfect pardon; perfect imputation; we are fully, freely, and wholly accepted, through Christ our Lord. Just one more word here, and then I will leave this matter of justification. Those who are once justified are justified irreversibly. As soon as a sinner takes Christ's place, and Christ takes the sinner's place, there is no fear of a second change. If Christ has once paid the debt, the debt is paid, and it will never be asked for again; if you are pardoned, you are pardoned once for ever. God does not give man a free pardon under his own sign-manual, and then afterward retract it and punish man: that be far from God so to do. He says, "I have punished Christ; you may go free." And after that we may "rejoice in hope of the glory of God," that "being justified by faith we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." And now I hear one ery, "That is an extraordinary doctrine." Well, so some may think; but let me say to you, it is a doctrine professed by all Protestant churches, though they may not preach it. It is the doctrine of the Church of England, it is the doctrine of Luther, it is the doctrine of the Presbyterian church; it is professedly the doctrine of all Christian churches; and if it seems strange in your ears, it is because your ears are estranged, and not because the doctrine is a strange one. It is the doctrine of holy writ, that none

can condemn whom God justifies, and that none can accuse those for whom Christ hath died; for they are totally free from sin. So that, as one of the prophets has it, God sees no sin in Jacob nor iniquity in Israel. In the moment they believe, their sins being imputed to Christ, they cease to be theirs, and Christ's righteousness is imputed to them and accounted theirs, so that they are accepted.

III. And now I close up with the third point, upon which I shall be brief, and I hope very earnest: THE MANNER OF GIVING THE JUSTIFICATION. John Bunyan would have it, that there are some whose mouths are set a watering for this great gift of justification. Are there not some here who are saying, "O! if I could be justified! But, sir, can I be justified? I have been a drunkard, I have been a swearer, I have been every thing that is vile. Can I be justified? Will Christ take my black sins, and am I to take his white robes?" Yes, poor soul, if thou desirest it; if God has made *thee* willing, if thou dost confess thy sins, Christ is willing to take thy rags, and give thee his righteousness, to be thine for ever. "Well, but how is it to be obtained?" says one; "must I be a holy man for many years, and then get it?" Listen! "Freely by his grace;" "freely," because there is no price to be paid for it; "by his grace," because it is not of our deservings. "But, O sir, I have been praying, and I do not think God will forgive me, unless I do something to deserve it." I tell you, sir, if you bring in any of your deservings, you shall never have it. God gives away his justification freely; and if you bring any thing to pay for it, he will throw it in your face, and will not give his justification to you. He gives it away freely. Old Rowland Hill once went preaching at a fair; he noticed the chapmen selling their wares by auction; so Rowland said, "I am going to hold an auction too, to sell wine and milk, without money and without price. My friends over there," said he, "find a great difficulty to get you up to their price; my difficulty is to bring you down to mine." So it is with men. If I could preach justification to be bought by you at a sovereign a piece, who would go out of the place without being justified? If I could preach justification to you by walking a hundred miles, would we not be pilgrims to-morrow morn-

ing, every one of us? If I were to preach justification which would consist in whippings and torture, there are very few here who would not whip themselves, and that severely too. But when it is freely, freely, freely, men turn away. "What! am I to have it for nothing at all, without doing any thing?" Yes, sir, you are to have it for nothing, or else not at all; it is "freely." "But may I not go to Christ, lay some claim to his mercy, and say, Lord, justify me because I am not so bad as others?" It will not do, sir, because it is "by his grace." "But may I not indulge a hope, because I go to church twice a-day?" No, sir, it is "by his grace." "But may I not offer this plea, I mean to be better?" No, sir; it is "by his grace." You insult God by bringing your counterfeit coin to pay for his treasures. O! what poor ideas men have of the value of Christ's gospel, if they think they can buy it! God will not have your rusty farthings to buy heaven with. A rich man once, when he was dying, had a notion that he could buy a place in heaven by building a row of alms-houses. A good man stood by his bedside, and said, "How much more are you going to leave?" "Twenty thousand pounds." Said he, "That would not buy enough for your foot to stand on in heaven; for the streets are all made of gold there, and therefore of what value can your gold be? it would be accounted nothing of, when the very streets are paved with it." Nay, friends, we can not buy heaven with gold nor good works, nor prayers, nor any thing in the world. But how is it to be got? Why it is to be got for asking only. As many of us as know ourselves to be sinners may have Christ for asking for him. Do you know that you want Christ? You may have Christ: "Whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely." But if you cleave to your own notions, and say, "No, sir, I mean to do a great many good things, and then I will believe in Christ." Sir, you will be damned if you hold by such delusions. I earnestly warn you. You can not be saved so. "Well, but are we not to do good works?" Certainly you are; but you are not to trust in them. You must trust in Christ wholly, and then do good works afterward. "But," says one, "I think if I were to do a few good works, it would be a little recommendation when I came." It would



not, sir; they would be no recommendation at all. Let a beggar come to your house in white kid gloves, and say he is very badly off, and wants some charity; would the white kid gloves recommend him to your charity? Would a good new hat that he has been buying this morning recommend him to your charity? "No," you would say, "you are a miserable impostor; you do not want any thing, and you shall not have any thing either! Out with you!"

The best livery for a beggar is rags, and the best livery for a sinner to go to Christ in, is for him to go just as he is, with nothing but sin about him. "But no," say you, "I must be a little better, and then I think Christ will save me." You can not get any better, try as long as you please. And besides—to use a paradox—if you were to get better, you would be all the worse; for the worse you are, the better to come to Christ. If you are all unholy, come to Christ; if you feel your sin, and renounce it, come to Christ; though you have been the most debased and abandoned soul, come to Christ; if you feel yourself to have nothing about you to recommend you come to Christ.

"Venture on him, venture wholly;  
Let no other trust intrude."

I do not say this to urge any man to continue in sin. God forbid! If you continue in sin, you must not come to Christ; you can not; your sins will hamper you. You can not be chained to your galley-oar—the oar of your sins—yet come to Christ, and be a free man. No, sir, it is repentance; it is the immediate leaving off the sin. But mark thee, neither repentance, nor leaving off thy sin, can save thee. It is Christ, Christ, Christ—Christ only.

But I know you will go away, many of you, and try to build up your own Babel-tower, to go to heaven. Some of you will go one way to work, and some another. You will go the ceremony way: you will lay the foundation of the structure with infant baptism, build confirmation on it, and the Lord's Supper. "I shall go to heaven," you say; "do not I keep Good Friday and Christmas-day? I am a better man than these dissenters. I am a most extraordinary man. Do I not

say more prayers than any one?" You will be a long while going up that treadmill before you get an inch higher. That is not the way to get to the stars. One says, "I will go and study the Bible, and believe right doctrine; and I have no doubt that by believing right doctrine I shall be saved." Indeed you will not! You can be no more saved by believing right doctrine than you can by doing right actions. "There," says another, "I like that; I shall go and believe in Christ, and live as I like." Indeed you will not! For if you believe in Christ he will not let you live as your flesh liketh; by his Spirit he will constrain you to mortify its affections and lusts. If he gives you the grace to make you believe, he will give you the grace to live a holy life afterward. If he gives you faith he gives you good works afterward. You can not believe in Christ, unless you renounce every fault, and resolve to serve him with full purpose of heart. Methinks at last I hear a sinner say, "Is that the only door? And may I venture through it? Then I will. But I do not quite understand you; I am something like poor Tiff, in that remarkable book 'Dred.' They talk a great deal about a door, but I can not see the door; they talk a great deal about the way, but I can not see the way. For if poor Tiff could see the way, he would take these children away by it. They talk about fighting, but I do not see any one to fight, or else I would fight." Let me explain it then. I find in the Bible, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." What have you to do, but to believe this and trust in him? You will never be disappointed with such a faith as that. Let me give you over again an illustration I have given hundreds of times, but I can not find another so good, so I must give it again. Faith is something like this. There is a story told of a captain of a man-of-war, whose son—a young lad—was very fond of running up the rigging of the ship; and one time, running after a monkey, he ran up the mast, till at last he got on the main-truck. Now, the main-truck, you are aware, is like a large round table put on the mast, so that when the boy was on the main-truck there was plenty of room for him; but the difficulty was—to use the best explanation I can—that he could not reach the mast that was

under the table; he was not tall enough to get down from this main-truck, reach the mast, and so descend. There he was on the main-truck; he managed to get up there, somehow or other, but down he never could get. His father saw that, and he looked up in horror; what was he to do? In a few moments his son would fall down, and be dashed to pieces. He was elinging to the main-truck with all his might, but in a little time he would fall down on the deck, and there he would be a mangled corpse. The captain called for a speaking-trumpet; he put it to his mouth, and shouted, "Boy, the next time the ship lurches, throw yourself into the sea." It was, in truth, his only way of escape; he might be picked up out of the sea, but he could not be rescued if he fell on the deck. The poor boy looked down on the sea; it was a long way; he could not bear the idea of throwing himself into the roaring current beneath him; he thought it looked angry and dangerous. How could he cast himself down into it? So he clung to the main-truck with all his might, though there was no doubt that he must soon let go and perish. The father called for a gun, and pointing it up at him, said, "Boy, the next time the ship lurches, throw yourself into the sea, or I'll shoot you!" He knew his father would keep his word; the ship lunched on one side, over went the boy splash into the sea, and out went brawny arms after him; the sailors rescued him, and brought him on deck. Now, we, like the boy, are in a position of extraordinary danger, by nature, which neither you nor I can possibly escape of ourselves. Unfortunately, we have got some good works of our own, like that main-truck, and we cling to them so fondly that we never will give them up. Christ knows that unless we do give them up, we shall be dashed to pieces at last, for that rotten trust must ruin us. He, therefore, says, "Sinner let go thine own trust, and drop into the sea of my love." We look down, and say, "Can I be saved by trusting in God? He looks as if he were angry with me, and I could not trust him." Ah! will not merey's tender cry persuade you?—"He that believeth shall be saved." Must the weapon of destruction be pointed directly at you? Must you hear the dreadful threat—"He that believeth not shall be damned?" It is with you *now* as with that boy;

your position is one of imminent peril in itself, and your slighting the Father's counsel is a matter of more terrible alarm, it makes peril more perilous. You must do it, or else you perish! Let go your hold! That is faith when the poor sinner lets go his hold, drops down, and so is saved; and the very thing which looks as if it would destroy him, is the means of his being saved. O! believe on Christ, poor sinners; believe on Christ. Ye who know your guilt and misery come, cast yourselves upon him; come, and trust my Master, and as he lives, before whom I stand, ye shall never trust him in vain; but ye shall find yourselves forgiven, and go your way rejoicing in Christ Jesus.

# SERMON XXI.

## MANASSEH.

• Then Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God.—2 CHRON. xxxiii. 13

MANASSEH is one of the most remarkable characters whose history is written in the sacred pages. We are accustomed to mention his name in the list of those who greatly sinned, and yet found great mercy. Side by side with Saul of Tarsus, with that great sinner who washed the feet of Jesus with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head, and with the thief that died upon the cross—a forgiven sinner at the eleventh hour—we are wont to write the name of Manasseh, who “shed innocent blood very much,” and notwithstanding that, was forgiven and pardoned, finding mercy through the blood of a Saviour who had not then died, but whom God foresaw should die, and the merits of whose sacrifice he therefore imputed to so great a transgressor as Manasseh.

Without preface we shall enter on the history of Manasseh this morning, and consider him in a threefold light: first, as *a sinner*, then as *an unbeliever*, and thirdly, as *a convert*. It may be there shall be some Manasseh within these walls now; and if in describing the case of this ancient king of Israel I shall in some degree describe him, I trust he will take to himself the same consoling truths which were the means of the comfort of Manasseh when in the dungeon of repentance.

I. First, then, we shall consider MANASSEH IN HIS SIN.

1. And we note, first, that he belonged to that class of sinners who stand first in the phalanx of evil—namely, those *who sin against great light, against a pious education and early training*. Manasseh was the son of Hezekiah, a mar

who had some faults, but of whom it is nevertheless said, "He did right in the sight of the Lord." To a great degree he walked before God with a perfect heart, even as did David his father. We can not suppose that he neglected the education of his son Manasseh. He was the son of his old age. You will remember that at a time of heavy sickness God promised him that he should have his life prolonged fifteen years. Three years after that event Manasseh was born, and he was, therefore, only twelve years old when his father died; still he was old enough to remember the pious prayers of a father and a mother, and had arrived at sufficient maturity to understand right from wrong, and to have received those early impressions which we believe are, in most cases, eminently useful for after life. And yet Manasseh pulled down what his father had built up, and built up the idol temples which his father had pulled down. Now, it is a notorious fact, that men who do go wrong after a good training, are the worst men in the world. You may not know, but it is a fact, that the late lamented murder of Williams at Erromanga, was brought about by the evil doings of a trader who had gone to the island, and who was also the son of a missionary. He had become reckless in his habits, and treated the islanders with such barbarity and cruelty, that they revenged his conduct upon the next white man who put his foot on their shore; and the beloved Williams, one of the last of the martyrs, died a victim of the guilt of those who had gone before him. The worst of men are those who, having much light, still run astray. You shall find among the greatest champions of the camp of hell, men who were brought up and educated in our very ranks. It is not necessary that I should mention names; but any of you that are acquainted with those who are the leaders of infidelity at the present time will at once recognize the fact. And such men actually make the very worst of infidels; while the best of Christians often come from the very worst of sinners. Our John Bunyans have come from the pot-house and the tap-room, from the bowling-alley, or places lower in the scale; our best of men have come from the very worst of places, and have been the best adapted to reclaim sinners, because they themselves had stepped into the kennel, and had never

theless been washed in a Saviour's cleansing blood. And so it is true that the worst of the enemies of Christ are those who are nourished in our midst, and like the viper of old, which the husbandman nursed in his bosom, turn round to sting the bosom which has nurtured them. Such a one was Manasseh.

2. In the next place, *Manasseh as a sinner was a very bold one.* He was one of those men who do not sin covertly, but who, when they transgress, do not seem to be at all ashamed, who are born with brazen foreheads, and lift their faces to heaven with insolence and impudence. He was a man who, if he would set up an idol, as you would see by reading this chapter, did not set it up in an obscure part of the land, but put it in the very temple of God; and when he would desecrate the name of the Most High, he did not privily go to his chapel, where he might worship some evil deity, but he put the deity into the very temple itself, as if to insult God to his very face. He was a desperado in sin, and went to the utmost limit of it, being very bold, and desperately set on mischief. Now, whether it be for right or wrong, boldness is always sure to win the day. Give me a coward—you give me nothing; give me a bold man, and you give me one that can do something, whether for Christ's cause or for the devil's. Manasseh was a man of this kind. If he cursed God, it was with a loud voice; it was not in hole or corner, but upon his throne, that he issued proclamations against the Most High, and in the most daring manner insulted the Lord God of Israel. And yet, dear friends, this man was saved, notwithstanding all this. This greatest sinner, this man who had trampled on his father's prayers, who had wiped from his brow the tears which had been shed there by an anxious parent, who had stifled the convictions of his conscience, and had gone to an extremity of guilt, in bold, open, and desperate sin, yet this man was at last, by divine grace, humbled and brought on his knees to acknowledge that God was God alone. Let no man, therefore, despair of his fellow. I never do, since I think and hope that God has saved me. I am persuaded that, live as long as I may, I shall never see the individual of whom I can say "This man is a hopeless case." I

may peradventure meet with the person who has been so exhorted and so warned, and has so put off all the sweet wooings of his conscience, that he has become seared and hardened, and consequently apparently hopeless ; but I shall never meet a man who has sinned so desperately that I can say of him he never can be saved. Ah ! no ; that arm of mercy which was long enough to save me is long enough to save you ; and if he could redeem you from your transgression, assuredly there are none sunk lower than you were, and therefore you may believe that his arm of mercy can reach them. Above all, let no man despair of himself. Whilst there is life there is hope. Give not up yourselves into Satan's arms. He tells you that your death-warrant is sealed, that your doom is cast, and that you never can be saved. Tell him to his face that he is a liar, for that Jesus Christ "is able to save unto the uttermost them that come unto God by him, seeing that he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

3. Again, Manasseh was a sinner of that peculiar caste which we suspect is not to be found very frequently. He was one of those who *had the power of leading others* to a very large extent astray from the truth and religion of God. He was a king, and had, therefore, great influence ; what he commanded was done. Among the rank of idolaters Manasseh stood first, and it was the song and glory of the false priests that the king of Judah was on the side of the gods of the heathen. He was the leader—the first man in the battle. When the troops of the ungodly went to war against the God of the whole earth, Manasseh led the vanguard and cheered them on. He was their great Goliath, challenging all the armies of the living God. Many among the wicked stood back and feared the conflict ; but he never feared. "He spake and it was done ; he commanded, and it stood fast ;" and therefore he was bold and arrogant in leading others astray. There are some such still alive—men not content with treading the broad road themselves, but seeking to entice others into it. And O, how active they are in their efforts ! They will go from house to house, and distribute those publications which are impure and polluting ; they will stand in our streets and endeavor to draw around them the young, ay, men and women just fresh come



from the house of God, or going to God's sanctuary, to tell them that dreary story that there is no God, or the dismal falsehood that there is no future, but that we must all die like dogs and suffer annihilation. There are some such who never seem to be happy unless when they are leading others astray. It is not enough for them to go alone against God, but they must sin in company. Like the woman in the Proverbs, they hunt for precious life, and like hounds thirsting for blood, they are seeking after men to destroy them. Society now is like Prometheus: it is, to a great extent, bound hand and foot by the very customs that surround it, and like Prometheus, we have upon us the winged hound of hell perpetually tapping at our heart and swallowing the life-blood of our spirit. I mean we have that accursed infidelity which seeks to lead men from God and drive them from their Maker. But, nevertheless, leaders among them have yet been saved. Manasseh, the leader of those who hated God, was yet humbled, and made to love the Most High.

Do you ask me whether such cases ever occur now? I answer, yes they do; too rarely, but they do happen. Yesterday I received something which cheered my heart very much, and made me bless my God, that notwithstanding all opposition, he had still made me of some little use in the world. I received a long letter from a certain city, from one who has been one of the leaders of the secular society in that place. The writer says, "I purchased one of the pamphlets entitled 'Who is this Spurgeon?' and also your portrait (or a portrait sold as yours) for 3d. I brought these home, and exhibited them in my shop window. I was induced to do so from a feeling of derisive pleasure. The title of the pamphlet is, naturally, suggestive of caricature, and it was especially to incite that impression that I attached it to your portrait and placed it in my window. But I also had another object in view. I thought by its attraction to improve my trade. I am not at all in the book or paper business, which rendered its exposure and my motive the more conspicuous. I have taken it down now: *I am taken down too.* \* \* \* I had bought one of your sermons of an old infidel a day or two previous. In that sermon I read these words:—'They go on; that step is safe

—they take it ; the next is safe—they take it ; their foot hangs over a gulf of darkness.’ I read on, but the word darkness staggered me. It was all dark with me. ‘True, the way has been safe so far, but I am lost in bewilderment. No, no, no, I will not risk it.’ I left the apartment in which I had been musing, and as I did so, the three words, ‘Who can tell?’ seemed to be whispered at my heart. I determined not to let another Sunday pass without visiting a place of worship. How soon my soul might be required of me I knew not, but felt that it would be mean, base, cowardly, not to give it a chance. Ay, my associates may laugh, scoff, deride, call me coward, turncoat, I will do an act of justice to my soul. I went to the chapel ; I was just stupefied with awe. What could I want there ? The doorkeeper opened his eyes wider, and involuntarily demanded, ‘It’s Mr. — isn’t it?’ ‘Yes,’ I said, ‘it is.’ He conducted me to a seat, and afterward brought me a hymn-book. I was fit to burst with anguish. ‘Now,’ I thought, ‘I am here, if it be the house of God, heaven grant me an audience, and I will make full surrender. O God, show me some token by which I may know that thou art, and that thou wilt in no wise cast out the vile deserter who has ventured to seek thy face and thy pardoning mercy.’ I opened the hymn-book to divert my mind from feelings that were rending me, and the first words that caught my eyes were,

“‘Dark, dark indeed the grave would be,  
Had we no light, O God, from thee.’”

After giving some things which he looks upon as evidences that he is a true convert of religion, he closes up by saying, “O sir, tell this to the poor wretch whose pride, like mine, has made him league with hell ; tell it to the hesitating and to the timid ; tell it to the cooling Christian, that God is a very present help to all that are in need. \* \* \* Think of the poor sinner who may never look upon you in this world, but who will live to bless and pray for you here, and long to meet you in the world exempt from sinful doubts, from human pride, and backsliding hearts.” Ah, he need not ask my forgiveness ; I am happy, too happy, in the hope of calling him “brother” in the Christian church. This letter is from a place many miles from this city

and from a man who had no small standing among the ranks of those who hate Christ. Ah! there have been Manassehs saved, and there shall be yet. There have been men who hated God, who have leaped for joy, and said,

“I'm forgiven, I'm forgiven,  
I'm a miracle of grace,”

and have kissed the very feet which once they scorned and scoffed, and could not bear to hear the mention of.

There is one fact concerning Manasseh which stamps him as being a very prince of sinners, namely this: “He caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of Hinmon,” and dedicated his sons unto Tophet. This was a dreadful sin; for though Manasseh repented, we find that his son Amon followed in the steps of his father in his wickedness but not in his righteousness. Listen! “Amon was two-and-twenty years old when he began to reign, and reigned two years in Jerusalem. But he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, as did Manasseh his father: for Amon sacrificed unto all the carved images which Manasseh his father had made, and served them; and humbled not himself before the Lord, as Manasseh his father had humbled himself; but Amon trespassed more and more.” Children will imitate their fathers in their vices, seldom in their repentance; if parents sin, their children will follow them, without much doubt; but when they repent and turn to God, it is not easy to lead a child back in the way which it has once forsaken. Are there any here, who, like that ancient Carthaginian, have dedicated their sons to the opposition of their enemy. You remember one who dedicated his son Hannibal from his very birth to be the everlasting enemy of the Romans. There may be such a man here, who has dedicated his offspring to Satan, to be the everlasting enemy of Christ's gospel, and is trying to train up and tutor him in a way which is contrary to the fear of the Lord. Is such a man hopeless? His sin is dreadful, his state is dreary, his sin without repentance will assuredly damn him; but so long as he is here, we still will preach repentance to him, knowing that Manasseh was brought to know God, and was forgiven all his manifold sins.

II. The second aspect in which we are to regard Manasseh is as an UNBELIEVER; for it appears that Manasseh did not believe that Jehovah was God alone; he was, therefore, a believer in false gods, but an unbeliever, so far as the *truth* is concerned. Now, does it not strike you at the outset, that while Manasseh was an unbeliever in the truth, he must have been a very credulous person to believe in the all imaginary deities of the heathen? In fact, the most credulous persons in the world are unbelievers. It takes ten thousand times more faith to be an unbeliever than to be a believer in revelation. One man comes to me and tells me I am credulous, because I believe in a great First Cause who created the heavens and the earth, and that God became man and died for sin. I tell him I may be, and no doubt am very credulous, as he conceives credulity, but I conceive that which I believe is in perfect consistency with my reason, and I therefore receive it. "But," saith he, "*I* am not credulous—not at all." Sir, I say, I should like to ask you one thing. You do not believe the world was created by God? "No." You must be amazingly credulous, then, I am sure. Do you think this Bible exists without being made? If you should say I am credulous because I believe it had a printer and a binder, I should say you were infinitely more credulous, if you assured me that it was made at all. And should you begin to tell me one of your theories about creation—that atoms floated through space, and came to a certain shape, I should resign the palm of credulity to you. You believe, perhaps, moreover, that man came to be in this world through the improvement of certain creatures. I have read, you say, that there were certain monads—that these monads improved themselves until they came to be small animalcule—that afterward they grew into fishes—that these fishes wanted to fly, and then wings grew—that by-and-bye they wanted to crawl, and then legs came, and they became lizards, and by divers steps they then became monkeys, and then the monkeys became men, and you believe yourself to be cousin-german to an ourang-outang. Now, I may be very credulous, but really not so credulous as you are. I may believe very strange things; I may believe that, with the jaw-bone of an ass, Samson slew a thousand men; I

may believe that the earth was drowned with water, and many other strange things, as you call them; but as for your creed, your non-creed, "'tis strange, 'tis passing strange, 'tis wonderful," and it as much outvies mine in credulity, if I be credulous, as an ocean outvies a drop. It requires the hardest faith in the world to deny the Scriptures, because the man, in his secret heart, knows they are true, and, go where he will, something whispers to him, "You may be wrong—perhaps you are," and it is as much as he can do, to say, "Lie down, conscience! down with you; I must not let you speak, or I could not deliver my lecture to-morrow, I could not go among my friends, I could not go to such-and-such a club; for I can not afford to keep a conscience, if I can not afford to keep a God."

And now let me tell you what I conceive to be the reasons why Manasseh was an unbeliever. In the first place, I conceive that the *unlimited power* which Manasseh possessed had a very great tendency to make him a disbeliever in God. I should not wonder if an autocrat—a man with absolute dominion, should deny God; I should think it only natural. You remember that memorable speech of Napoleon's. He was told that man proposed, but that God disposed. "Ah!" said Napoleon, "I propose and dispose too;" and therein he arrogated to himself the very supremacy of God. We do not wonder at it, because his victories had so speedily succeeded each other, his prowess had been so complete, his fame so great, and his power over his subjects so absolute. Power always, as I believe, except in the heart which is rightly governed by grace, has a tendency to lead us to deny God. It is that noble intellect of such-and-such a man which has led him into discussion; he has twice, thrice, four, five, six, seven times, come off more than conqueror in the field of controversy; he looks round and says, "I am, there is none beside me; let me take up whatever I please, I can defend it; there is no man can stand against the blade of my intellect; I can give him such a home thrust as will assuredly overcome him;" and then, like Dr. Johnson, who often took up the side of the question he did not believe, just because he liked to get a victory that was hard to win, so do these men espouse what they

believe to be wrong, because they conceive it gives them the finest opportunity of displaying their abilities. "Let me," says some mighty intellect, "fight with a Christian; I shall have hard enough work to prove my thesis, I know I shall have a great difficulty to undermine the bastions of truth which he opposes to bear against me; so much the better; it were worth while to be conquered by so stout an opposition and if I can overcome my antagonist, if I can prove myself to have more logic than he has, then I can say, 'tis glorious; 'tis glorious to have fought against an opponent with so much on his side, and yet to have come off more than conqueror." I do believe the best man in the world is very hard to be trusted with power; he will, unless grace keeps him, make a wrong use of it before long. Hence it is that the most influential of God's servants are almost invariably the most tried ones, because our heavenly Father knows that if it were not for great trials and afflictions we should begin to set ourselves up against him, and arrogate to ourselves a glory which we had no right to claim.

But another reason why Manasseh was an unbeliever, I take it, was *because he was proud*. Pride lieth at the root of infidelity; pride is the very germ of opposition to God. The man saith, "Why should I believe? The Sunday-school child reads his Bible, and says it is true. Am I, a man of intellect, to sit side by side with him, and receive a thing as true simply at the dictum of God's Word? No, I will not; I will find it out for myself, and I will not believe simply because it is revealed to me, for that were to make myself a child." And when he turns to the page of revelation, and reads thus, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye can in nowise enter into the kingdom of heaven," he says, "Pshaw! I shall not be converted then; I am not going to be a child; I am a man, and a man I will be, and I would rather be lost a man than saved a child. What! am I to surrender my judgment, and sit down tacitly to believe in God's Word?" "Yes," says God's Word, "thou art; thou art to become as a child, and meekly to receive my Word." "Then," says he, in his arrogance and pride, "I will not," and like Satan, he declares it were better to rule in hell than

serve in heaven, and he goes away an unbeliever, because to believe is too humbling a thing.

But perhaps the most potent reason for Manasseh's unbelief lies here *that he loved sin too well*. When Manasseh built the altars for his false gods, he could sin easily, and keep his conscience; but he felt Jehovah's laws so stringent, that if he once believed in the one God he could not sin as he did. He read it thus: "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy; thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not steal;" and so on. Manasseh wanted to do all these things, and therefore he would not believe because he could not believe and keep his sin. The very reason why we have much unbelief is because we have much love of sin. Men will have no God, because God interferes with their lusts. They could not go on in their sins, if they once believed there was an everlasting God above them, or professed to believe it, for all do believe it, whether they say so or not; and because the thought of God checks them in their impiety and their lust, therefore they cry out, "There is no God," and say it with their lips as well as in their hearts. I believe it was this that led Manasseh to persecute the saints of God; for among his sins it is written, "he shed innocent blood very much." It is a tradition among the Jews that the prophet Isaiah was sawn in sunder by Manasseh, on account of a rebuke which he gave him for his sin. Isaiah was not wont to be very timid, and he told the king of his lusts, and therefore placing him between two planks, he cut him in sunder from head to foot. It is just the reason why men hate God, and hate his servants, because the truth is too hot for them. Send you a preacher who would not tell you of your sins, and you would hear him peaceably; but when the gospel comes with power, then it is that men can not bear it; when it trenches upon that pleasure, that sin, or that lust, then they will not believe it. Ye would believe the gospel, if ye could believe it and live in your sins too. O! how many a drunken reprobate would be a Christian, if he might be a drunkard and a Christian too! How many a wicked wretch would turn believer, if he might believe and yet go on in his sins! But because faith in the everlasting God can never stand side by side with sin, and because the gospel cries, "Down with it:

down with it! Down with your sin," therefore it is that men turn round and say, "Down with the gospel." It is too hot for you, O ye sinful generation; therefore ye turn aside from it, because it will not tolerate your lusts, nor indulge your iniquity.

III. We look, then, at Manasseh as an unbeliever, and now we have our last most pleasing task of looking at Manasseh as A CONVERT. Hear it, O heavens, and listen, O earth! The Lord God hath said it. Manasseh shall be saved. He on his throne of cruelty has just appended his name to another murderous edict against the saints of God; yet he shall be humbled; he shall ask for mercy and shall be saved. Manasseh hears the decree of God; he laughs. "What! I play the hypocrite, and bend my knee? Never! It is not possible; and when the godly hear of it, they all say, 'It is not possible.' What! Saul among the prophets? Manasseh regenerated? Manasseh made to bow before the Most High? The thing is impossible." Ah! it is impossible with man, but it is possible with God; God knows how to do it. The enemy is at the gates of the city; a hostile king has just besieged the walls of Jerusalem; Manasseh flees from his palace and hides himself among the thorns; he is there taken, carried captive to Babylon, and shut up in prison. And now we see what God can do. The proud king is proud no longer, for he has lost his power; the mighty man is mighty no more, for his might is taken from him; and now in a low dungeon listen to him. It is no more the blasphemer, no more the hater of God; but see him cold on the floor! Manasseh bows his knee, and with the tears rolling down his cheeks, he cries, "O God! my father's God! an outcast comes to thee; a hell-hound stained with blood throws himself at thy feet; I, a very demon, full of filthiness, now prostrate myself before thee! O my God, canst thou, wilt thou have mercy on such a wretch as I?" Hear it, ye heavens! Listen yet again. See, from the skies the angel flies with mercy in his hand. Ah! whither speeds he? It is to the dungeon of Babylon. The proud king is on his knee, and mercy comes and whispers in his ear—"Hope!" He starts from his knees, and cries, "Is there hope?" And down he falls again. Once more he pleads, and



mercy whispers that sweet promise, uttered once by the murdered Isaiah—"I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my name's sake, and will not remember thy sins." O! do you see him? His very heart is running over in his eyes. O! how he weeps for joy, and yet for sorrow that he ever could have sinned against a God so kind. A moment more, and the dungeon is opened; the king of Babylon, moved by God, bids him go free, and he returns to his kingdom and throne, a happier and a better man than he had ever been before. I think I see him coming into Jerusalem. There are his statesmen and favorites, crying to him, "Come in, Manasseh; the bowl shall be filled, and we will have a merry night to-night; we will bow before the shrine of Ashtaroth, and thank her that she has set thee at liberty; lo, the horses of the sun are ready; come and pay thy devotions to him that shines on the earth, and leads the host of heaven!" Methinks I see their astonishment when he cries, "Stand back! stand back! ye are my friends no longer, until ye become God's friends; I have dandled you on my knees, and, vipers, you have stung me with the poison of asps; I made you my friends, and you have led me down to the gulf of hell. But I know it now. Stand back till ye are better men; and I will find others to be my courtiers." And there the poor saints, hidden in the back streets of the city, so frightened because the king has come back, are holding meetings of solemn prayer, crying unto God that no more murderous, persecuting edicts might go forth. And lo, a messenger comes and says, "The king is returned;" and while they are looking at him, wondering what the messenger is about to say, he adds, "He has returned, not Manasseh as he went, but as a very angel. I saw him with his own hands dash Ashtaroth in pieces; I heard him cry, 'The horses of the sun shall be hoofed; sweep out the house of God; we will hold a pass-over there; the morning and evening lamb shall again burn on Jehovah's altars, for he is God, and beside him there is none else.'" O! can you conceive the joy of believers on that auspicious day? Can you think how they went up to God's house with joy and thanksgiving? And on the next Sabbath they sung, as they had never sung before, "O come let us

sing unto the Lord, let us make a joyful noise unto the rock of our salvation," while they remembered that he who had persecuted the saints of God aforetime, now defended that very truth which once he abhorred. There was joy on earth, ay, and there was joy in heaven too; the bells of heaven rang merry peals the day Manasseh prayed; the angels of heaven flapped their wings with double alacrity the day Manasseh repented; earth and heaven were glad, and even the Almighty on his throne smiled gracious approbation, while he again said, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my name's sake, and will not remember thy sins."

And now are you curious to know what were the bases of the faith of Manasseh—what were the rocks on which he built his trust in God? I think they were two. He believed in God, first, *because he had answered his prayer*; and secondly, *because he had forgiven his sin*. I have sometimes said, when I have become the prey of doubting thoughts, "Well, now I dare not doubt whether there be a God, for I can look back in my diary and say, on such a day in the depths of trouble I bent my knee to God, and or ever I had risen from my knees the answer was given me." And so can many of you say; and therefore whatever others may say, you know there is a God, because he answered your prayer. You heard of that holy man, Mr. Müller, of Bristol. If you were to tell George Müller there was not a God, he would weep over you. "Not a God?" he would say; "why, I have seen his hand. Whence came those answers to my prayers?" Ah! sirs, ye may laugh at us for credulity; but there are hundreds here who could most solemnly assert that they have asked of God for divers matters, and that God has not failed them, but granted their request. This was one reason why Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God.

The other reason was, that *Manasseh had a sense of pardoned sin*. Ah! that is a delightful proof of the existence of a God. Here comes a poor miserable wretch: his knees are knocking together, his heart is sinking within him, he is giving himself up to despair. Bring the physicians to him! they cry, "We fear his mind is infirm. We believe he will at last have to be taken to some lunatic asylum;" and they apply their

remedies, but he is none the better, but rather grows worse. On a sudden this poor creature, afflicted with a sense of sin, groaning on account of guilt, is brought within the sound of the sacred Word; he hears it—it increases his misery; he hears again—his pain becomes doubled; till at last every one says his case is utterly hopeless. Suddenly, on a happy morning which God had ordained, the minister is led to some sweet passage. Perhaps it is this: “Come now, and let us reason together; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” The Spirit applies it, and the poor man goes home light as air, and says to his wife and children, “Come rejoice with me.” “Why?” say they. “Because,” says he, “my sins are forgiven.” “How do you know that?” “O!” says he, “I have a sense of pardoning love within my heart, which all the doubters in the world could not gainsay; and if all the earth should rise up against me and say I should be condemned, I could say, ‘I know there is now no condemnation for me.’” Have you ever felt pardoning blood applied? You will never doubt God, I know, if you have. Why, dear friends, if the poorest old woman in the world should be brought before an infidel of the wisest order, having a mind of the greatest caliber, and he should endeavor to pervert her, I think I see her smile at him, and say, “My good man, it is of no use at all, for the Lord has appeared unto me of old, saying, ‘Yea I have loved thee with an everlasting love,’ and so you may tell me what you please: I have had a sense of blood-bought pardon shed abroad in my heart, and I know that he is God, and you can never beat it out of me.” As good Watts says, when we have once such an assurance as that,

“Should all the forms that men devise  
Assault my faith with treacherous art,  
I’d call them vanity and lies,  
And bind the gospel to my heart.”

O! if you have a sense that sin is forgiven, you can never doubt the existence of a God; for it will be said of you, “Then *he* knew that the Lord he was God.”

And now I gather up my strength for just one moment, to

Speak to those of you who desire to know what you must do to be saved. My hearer, no question can be more important than that; none is so requisite to ask. Alas! there are too many who never ask it, but who go sailing down to the gulf of black despair, listening to the syren song of procrastination and delay. But if you have been brought to ask the question solemnly and seriously, "What must I do to be saved?" I am happy, thrice happy to be able to tell you God's own word, "He that believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ and is baptized, shall he saved; he that believeth not," the Scripture saith, "shall be damned." "Not of works, lest any man should boast." "But sir," you say, "I have many good works, and would trust in them." If you do, you are a lost man. As old Matthew Wilks most quaintly said once, speaking in his usual tone—"You might as well try to sail to America in a paper boat, as to go to heaven by your own works; you will be swamped on the passage if you attempt it." We can not spin a robe that is long enough to cover us; we can not make a righteousness that is good enough to satisfy God. If you would be saved, it must be through what Christ did, and not what you did. You can not be your own Saviour; Christ must save you, if you are saved at all. How then can you be saved by Christ? Here is the plan of salvation. It is written-- "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Do you feel that you are a sinner? Then believe that Jesus Christ came to save you; for so sure as ever you feel you are a sinner, it is a fact that Christ died for you; and if he died for you, you shall not perish, for I can not conceive that Christ would die in vain. If he did die for you, you shall most assuredly be pardoned and saved, and shall one day sing in heaven. The only question is, Did he die for you? He most certainly did if you are a sinner; for it is written—I will repeat it again—"It is a faithful saying, that Christ Jesus came to save sinners." Poor sinner, believe! My dear friend, give me thine hand! I wish I could put it inside Christ's hand. O! embrace him! embrace him! lest haply the clouds of night should come upon thee, and the sun should set ere thou hast found him. O! lay hold on him, lest death and destruction should

overtake thee; fly to this mountain, lest thou be consumed and remember, once in Christ, thou art safe beyond hazard.

“Once in Christ, in Christ for ever,  
Nothing from his love can sever.”

O! believe him! believe him, my dear, dear hearers for Jesus  
sake! **Amen.**

## SERMON XXII.

### WHY ARE MEN SAVED?

Nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake."—PSALM :vi. 8

IN looking upon the works of God in creation, there are two questions which at once occur to the thoughtful mind, and which must be answered before we can procure a clew to the philosophy and science of creation itself. The first one is the question of authorship: "Who made all these things?" And the next question is that of design: "For what purpose were all these things created?" The first question, "Who made all these things?" is one which is easily answered by a man who has an honest conscience and a sane mind; for when he lifts his eyes up yonder to read the stars, he will see those stars spell out in golden letters this word—*God*; and when he looks below upon the waves, if his ears are honestly opened, he will hear each wave proclaiming—*God*. If he looks to the summits of the mountains, they will not speak, but with a dignified answer of silence they seem to say,

"The hand that made us is divine."

If we listen to the rippling of the feshet at the mountain side, to the tumbling of the avalanche, to the lowing of the cattle, to the singing of the birds, to every voice and sound of nature, we shall hear this answer to the question, "God is our maker; he hath made us, and not we ourselves."

The next question, as to design—"Why were these things made?"—is not so easy to answer apart from Scripture; but when we look at Scripture we discover this fact—that as the answer to the first question is God, so the answer to the second question is the same. Why were these things made? The answer is, for God's glory, for his honor, and for his pleasure

No other answer can be consistent with reason. Whatever other replies man may propound, no other can be really sound. If they will for one moment consider that there was a time when God had no creatures—when he dwelt alone, the mighty maker of ages, glorious in an uncreated solitude, divine in his eternal loneliness—“I am and there is none beside me”—can any one answer this question—Why did God make creatures to exist?—in any other way than by answering it thus: “He made them for his own pleasure and for his own glory?” You may say he made them for his creatures; but we answer, there were then no creatures to make them for. We admit that the answer may be a sound one *now*. God makes the harvest for his creatures; he hangs the sun in the firmament to bless his creatures with light and sunshine; he bids the moon walk in her course by night, to cheer the darkness of his creatures upon earth. But the first answer, going back to the origin of all things, can be nothing else than this: “For his pleasure they are and were created.” “He made all things for himself and by himself.”

Now, this which holds good in the works of creation, holds equally good in the works of salvation. Lift up your eyes on high; higher than those stars which glimmer on the floor of heaven; look up, where spirits in white, clearer than light, shine like stars in their magnificence; look there, where the redeemed with their choral symphonies “circle the throne of God rejoicing,” and put this question: “Who saved those glorified beings, and for what purpose were they saved?” We tell you that the same answer must be given as we have previously given to the former question—“*He* saved them;” “he saved them for his name’s sake.” The text is an answer to the two great questions concerning salvation: Who saved men, and why are they saved? “He saved them for his name’s sake.”

Into this subject I shall endeavor to look this morning. May God make it profitable to each of us, and may we be found among the number who shall be saved “for his name’s sake.” Treating the text verbally—and that is the way most will understand—here are four things. First, *a glorious Saviour*—“*He* saved them;” secondly, *a favored people*—“He saved

them ;” thirdly, *a divine reason why he saved them*—“ for his name’s sake ;” and fourthly, *an obstruction conquered*, in the word “ nevertheless,” implying that there was some difficulty that was removed. “ Nevertheless he saved them for his name’s sake.” A Saviour ; the saved ; the reason ; the obstruction removed.

I. First, then, here is A GLORIOUS SAVIOUR—“ *He* saved them.” Who is to be understood by that pronoun “ he ?” Possibly many of my hearers may answer, “ Why, the Lord Jesus Christ is the Saviour of men.” Right, my friends ; but not all the truth. Jesus Christ is the Saviour ; but not more so than God the Father, or God the Holy Ghost. Some persons who are ignorant of the system of divine truth think of God the Father as being a great being full of wrath, and anger, and justice, but having no love ; they think of God the Spirit perhaps as a mere influence proceeding from the Father and the Son. Now, nothing can be more incorrect than such opinions. It is true the Son redeems me, but then the Father gave the Son to die for me, and the Father chose me in the everlasting election of his grace. The Father blots out my sin ; the Father accepts me and adopts me into his family through Christ. The Son could not save without the Father any more than the Father without the Son ; and as for the Holy Spirit, if the Son redeems, know ye not that the Holy Ghost regenerates. It is he that makes us new creatures in Christ, who begets us again unto a lively hope, who purifies our soul, who sanctifies our spirit, and who, at last, presents us spotless and faultless before the throne of the Most High, accepted in the beloved. When thou sayest “ Saviour,” remember there is a Trinity in that word—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—this Saviour being three persons under one name. Thou canst not be saved by the Son without the Father, nor by the Father without the Son, nor by the Father and Son without the Spirit. But as they are one in creation, so are they one in salvation, working together in one God for our salvation, and unto that God be glory everlasting, world without end, Amen.

But, note here, how this divine being claims salvation wholly to himself. “ Nevertheless HE saved them.” But



Moses, where art thou? Didst not thou save them, Moses Thou didst stretch thy rod over the sea, and it clave in halves thou didst lift up thy prayer to heaven, and the frogs came, and the flies swarmed, and the water was turned into blood, and the hail smote the land of Egypt. Wast not thou their Saviour, Moses? And thou, Aaron, thou didst offer the bullocks which God accepted; thou didst lead them, with Moses, through the wilderness. Wast not thou their Saviour? They answer, "Nay, we were the instruments, but *he* saved them." God made use of us, but unto his name be all the glory, and none unto ourselves. But, Israel, thou wast a strong and mighty people; didst thou not save thyself? Perhaps it was by thine own holiness that the Red Sea was dried up; perhaps the parted floods were frightened at the piety of the saints that stood upon their margin; perhaps it was Israel that delivered itself. Nay, nay, saith God's Word; *he* saved them; they did not save themselves, nor did their fellow-men redeem them. And yet, mark you, there are some who dispute this point, who think that men save themselves, or, at least, that priests and preachers can help to do it. We say that the preacher, under God, may be the instrument of arresting man's attention, of warning him and arousing him; but the preacher is nothing; God is every thing. The most mighty eloquence that ever distilled from the lips of seraphic preacher is nothing apart from God's Holy Spirit. Neither Paul, nor Apollos, nor Cephas, are any thing: God gave the increase, and God must have all the glory. There are some we meet with here and there who say, "I am Mr. So-and-so's convert; I am a convert of the Rev. Dr. this or that." Well, if you are sir, I can not give you much hope of heaven. Only God's converts go there; not proselytes of man, but the redeemed of the Lord. O! it is very little to convert a man to our own opinions; it is something to be the means of converting him to the Lord our God. I had a letter some time ago from a good Baptist minister in Ireland, who very much wanted me to come over to Ireland, as he said, to represent the Baptist interest, because it was low there, and perhaps it might lead the people to think a little more of Baptists. I told him I would not go across the street merely to do that, much less would I cross

the Irish Channel. I should not think of going to Ireland for that ; but if I might go there to make Christians, under God, and be the means of bringing men to Christ, I would leave it to them what they should be afterward, and trust to God's Holy Spirit to direct and guide them as to what denomination they should consider nearest akin to God's truth. Brethren, I might make all of you Baptists, perhaps, and yet you would be none the better for it ; I might convert you all in that way, but such a conversion would be that you would be washed to greater stains, converted into hypocrites, and not into saints. I have seen something of wholesale conversion. Great revivalists have risen up ; they have preached thundering sermons that have made men's knees knock together. "What a wonderful man !" people have said. "He has converted so many under one sermon." But look for his converts in a month, and where will they be ? You will see some of them in the alehouse, you will hear others of them swear, you will find many of them rogues and cheats, because they were not God's converts, but only man's. Brethren, if the work be done at all, it must be done of God, for if God do not convert there is nothing done that shall last, and nothing that shall be of any avail for eternity.

But some reply, "Well, sir, but men convert themselves." Yes, they do, and a fine conversion it is. Very frequently they convert themselves. But, then, that which man did, man undoes. He who converts himself one day, unconverts himself the next ; he tieth a knot which his own fingers can loosen. Remember this—you may convert yourselves a dozen times over, but "that which is born of the flesh is flesh," and "can not see the kingdom of God." It is only "that which is born of the Spirit" that "is spirit," and is therefore able to be gathered at last into the spirit realm, where only spiritual things can be found before the throne of the Most High. We must reserve this prerogative wholly to God. If any man state that God is not Creator, we call him infidel ; if any man entrench upon this doctrine, that God is not the absolute maker of all things, we hiss him down in a moment. but he is an infidel of the worst kind, because more specious, who puts God out of the mercy throne, instead of putting him out of

the creation throne, and who tells men that they may convert themselves, whereas God doth it all. "*He*" only, the great Jehovah—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—"he saved them for his name's sake."

Thus have I endeavored to set out clearly the first truth of the divine and glorious Saviour.

II. Now, secondly, THE FAVORED PERSONS—"He saved *them*." Who are they? You will reply, "They were the most respectable people that could be found in the world; they were a very prayerful, loving, holy, and deserving people; and, therefore, because they were good he saved them." Very well, that is your opinion, I will tell you what Moses says—"Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitudes of thy mercies; but provoked him at the sea, even at the Red Sea. Nevertheless he saved them." Look at the seventh verse, and you will have their character. In the first place, they were a stupid people—"Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt." In the next place, they were an ungrateful people—"they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies." In the third place, they were a provoking people—"they provoked him at the sea, even at the Red Sea." Ah, these are the people whom free grace saves, these are the men and these the women whom the God of all grace condescends to take to his bosom and to make anew.

Note, first, *that they were a stupid people*. God sends his gospel not always to the wise and prudent, but unto fools:

"He takes the fool and makes him know  
The wonders of his dying love."

Do not suppose, my hearer, because you are very unlettered and can scarcely read—do not imagine, because you have always been brought up in extreme ignorance, and have scarcely learned to spell your name, that therefore you can not be saved. God's grace can save you, and then enlighten you. A brother minister once told me a story of a man who was known in a certain village as a simpleton, and was always considered to be soft in the head; no one thought he could ever understand any thing. But one day he came to hear the

gospel preacher. He had been a drunken fellow, having wit enough to be wicked, which is a very common kind of wit. The Lord was pleased to bless the Word to his soul, so that he became a changed character ; and what was the marvel of all was, his religion gave him a something which began to develop his latent faculties. He found he had something to live for, and he began to try what he could do. In the first place he wanted to read his Bible, that he might read his Saviour's name ; and after much hammering and spelling away, at last he was able to read a chapter. Then he was asked to pray at a prayer-meeting ; here was an exercise of his vocal powers. Five or six words made up his prayer, and down he sat abashed. But by continually praying in his own family at home, he came to pray like the rest of the brethren, and he went on till he became a preacher, and singular enough, he had a fluency—a depth of understanding, and a power of thought, such as are seldom found among ministers who only occasionally occupy pulpits. Strange it was, that grace should even tend to develop his natural powers, giving him an object, setting him devoutly and firmly upon it, and so bringing out all his resources that they were fully shown. Ah, ignorant ones, ye need not despair. He saved them ; not for *their* sakes—there was nothing in them why they should be saved. He saved them, not for their wisdom's sake ; but, ignorant though they were, understanding not the meaning of his miracles, “ he saved them for his name's sake.”

Note, again, *they were a very ungrateful people*, and yet he saved them. He delivered them times without number, and worked for them mighty miracles ; but they still rebelled. Ah, that is like you, my hearer. You have had many deliverances from the borders of the grave ; God has given you house and food day after day, and provided for you, and kept you to this hour ; but how ungrateful you have been ! As Isaiah said, “ The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib ; but my people doth not know, Israel doth not consider.” How many there are of this character, who have favors from God, the history of which they could not give in a year ; but yet what have they ever done for him ? They would not keep a horse that did not work for them, nor as much as a dog

that would not notice them. But here is God; he has kept them day by day, and they have done a great deal against him, but they have done nothing for him. He has put the bread into their very mouths, nurtured them, and sustained their strength, and they have spent that strength in defying him, in cursing his name and breaking his Sabbath, "nevertheless he saved them." Some of this sort have been saved. I hope I have some here now who will be saved by conquering grace, made new men by the mighty power of God's Spirit. "Nevertheless he saved them." When there was nothing to recommend them, but every reason why they should be cast away for their ingratitude, "nevertheless he saved them."

And note, once more, *they were a provoking people*—"They provoked him at the sea, even at the Red Sea." Ah! how many people there are in this world that are a provoking people to God! If God were like man, who among us would be here to-day? If we are provoked once or twice, up goes the hand. With some men their passions stir at the very first offense; others, who are somewhat placid, will bear offense after offense, till at last they say, "there is an end of every thing, and I can bear that no longer; you must stay it, or else I must stay you!" Ah! if God had that temper, where would we be? Well might he say, "My thoughts are not as your thoughts; I am God, I change not, or else ye sons of Jacob had been consumed." They were a provoking people, "nevertheless he saved them." Have you provoked him? Take heart; if you repent, God has promised to save you; and what is more, he may this morning give you repentance, and even give you remission of sins, for he saves provoking people for his name's sake. I hear one of my hearers say, "Well, sir, that is encouraging sin with a vengeance!" Is it, indeed, sir? Why? "Because you are talking to the very worst of men, and you are saying that they may yet be saved." Pray, sirs, when I spoke to the worst of men, did I speak to *you* or not? You say "No; I am one of the most respectable and best of men." Well, then, sir, I have no need to preach to you, for you think you do not need any. "The whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick." But these poor people, whom you say I am encouraging in sin, need

to be spoken to. I will leave you. Good-morning to you! You keep to your own gospel, and I wonder whether you will find your way to heaven by it. Nay, I do not wonder, I know you will not, unless you are brought as a poor sinner to take Christ at his word, and be saved for his name's sake. But I say farewell to you, and I will keep on in my course. But why did you say I encourage men in sin? I encourage them to turn from it. I did not say he saved the provoking people, and then let them still provoke him as they had done before. I did not say he saved the wicked people, and then let them sin as they did before. But you know the meaning of the word "saved;" I explained it the other morning. The word "saved" does not merely mean taking men to heaven; it means more—it means saving them from their sin; it means giving them a new heart, new spirits, new lives; it means making them into new men. Is there any thing licentious in saying that Christ takes the worst of men to make them into saints? If there be, I can not see it. I only wish he would take the worst of this congregation and make them into the saints of the living God, and then there would be far less licentiousness. Sinner, I comfort thee; not in thy sin, but in thy repentance. Sinner, the saints of heaven were once as bad as thou hast been. Art thou a drunkard, a swearer, an unclean person? "Such were some of them; but they have been washed—but they have been sanctified." Is thy robe black? Ask them whether their robes were ever black? They will tell you, "Yes, we have washed our robes." If they had been black, they would not have wanted washing. "We have washed our robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Then, sinner, if they were black, and were saved, why not thyself?

"Are not his mercies rich and free?  
Then say, my soul, why not for thee?  
Our Jesus died upon the tree,  
Then why, my soul, why not for thee?"

Take heart, penitents; God will have mercy on you. "Nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake."

III. Now we come to the third point—THE REASON OF SALVATION. “He saved them for his name’s sake.” There is no other reason why God should save a man, but for his name’s sake; there is nothing in a sinner which can entitle him to salvation, or recommend him to mercy; it must be God’s own heart which must dictate the motive why men are to be saved. One person will say, “God will save me because I am so upright.” Sir, he will do no such thing. Says another, “God will save me because I am so talented.” Sir, he will not. *Your talent!* Why, thou driveling, self-conceited idiot, thy talent is nothing compared with that of the angel that once stood before the throne, and sinned, and who is now cast into the bottomless pit for ever! If he would save men for their talent, he would have saved Satan; for he had talents enough. As for thy morality and goodness, they are but filthy rags, and he will never save thee for aught thou doest. None of us would ever be saved, if God expected any thing of us: we must be saved purely and solely for reasons connected with himself, and lying in his own bosom. Blessed be his name, he saves us for “his name’s sake.” What does that mean? I think it means this: the name of God is his person, his attributes, and his nature. For his nature’s sake, for his very attributes’ sake, he saved men; and, perhaps, we may include this also: “My name is in him”—that is, in Christ; he saves us for the sake of Christ, who is the name of God. And what does that mean? I think it means this:

He saved them, first, that he might manifest his nature. God was all love, and he wanted to manifest it; he did show it when he made the sun, the moon, and the stars, and scattered flowers over the green and laughing earth. He did show his love when he made the air balmy to the body, and the sunshine cheering to the eye. He gives us warmth even in winter, by the clothing and by the fuel which he has stored in the bowels of the earth. But he wanted to reveal himself still more. “How can I show them that I love them with all my infinite heart? I will give my Son to die to save the very worst of them, and so I will manifest my nature.” And God has done it; he has manifested his power, his justice, his love, his faithfulness, and his truth; he has manifested his whole

self on the great platform of salvation. It was, so to speak, the balcony on which God stepped to show himself to man—the balcony of salvation—here it is he manifests himself by saving men's souls.

He did it, again, to vindicate his name. Some say God is cruel; they wickedly call him tyrant. "Ah!" says God, "but I will save the worst of sinners, and vindicate my name; I will blot out the stigma; I will remove the slur; they shall not be able to say that, unless they be filthy liars, for I will be abundantly merciful. I will take away this stain, and they shall see that my great name is the name of Love." And said he again, "I will do this for my name's sake; that is, to make these people love my name. I know if I take the best of men, and save them, they will love my name; but if I take the worst of men, O, how they will love me! If I go and take some of the offscouring of the earth, and make them my children, O, how they will love me! Then they will cleave to my name; they will think it more sweet than music; it will be more precious to them than the spikenard of the eastern merchants; they will value it as gold, yea, as much fine gold. The man who loves me best is the man who hast most sins forgiven: he owes much, therefore he will love much." This is the reason why God often selects the worst of men to make them his. Saith an old writer, "All the carvings of heaven were made out of knots; the temple of God, the King of heaven, is a cedar one, but the cedars were all knotty trees before he cut them down." He chose the worst, that he might display his workmanship and his skill, to make unto himself a name; as it is written, "It shall be unto me for a name; for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off." Now, dear hearers, of whatever class you are, here is something I have to offer well worthy of your consideration, namely— that if saved, we are saved for the sake of God, for his name's sake, and not for our own.

Now, this puts all men on a level with regard to salvation. Suppose that in coming into this garden, the rule had been that every one should have made mention of my name as the key of admittance; the law is, no man is to be admitted for his rank or title, but only by the use of a certain name. Uf



comes a lord ; he makes use of the name and comes in ; up comes a beggar, all in patches ; he makes use of the name—the law says it is only the use of the name that will admit you—he makes use of it and he enters, for there is no distinction. So, my lady, if you come, with all your morality, you must make use of his name ; if you come, poor, filthy inhabitant of a cellar or a garret, and make use of his name, the doors will fly wide open, for there is salvation for every one who makes mention of the name of Christ, and for none other. This pulls down the pride of the moralist, abases the self-exaltation of the self-righteous, and puts us all, as guilty sinners, on an equal footing before God, to receive mercy at his hands, “for his name’s sake,” and for that reason alone.

IV. I have detained you too long ; let me close by noticing obstacles removed, in the word “nevertheless.” I shall do that in somewhat of an interesting form by way of parable.

Once on a time, Mercy sat upon her snow-white throne, surrounded by the troops of love. A sinner was brought before her, whom Mercy designed to save. The herald blew the trumpet, and after three blasts thereof, with a loud voice, he said, “O heaven, and earth, and hell, I summon you this day to come before the throne of Mercy, to tell why this sinner should not be saved.” There stood the sinner, trembling with fear ; he knew that there were multitudes of opponents, who would press into the hall of Mercy, and with eyes full of wrath, would say, “He must not, and he shall not escape ; he must be lost !” The trumpet was blown, and Mercy sat placidly on her throne, until there stepped in one with a fiery countenance ; his head was covered with light ; he spoke with a voice like thunder, and out of his eyes flashed lightning ! “Who art thou ?” said Mercy. He replied, “I am Law ; the law of God.” “And what hast thou to say ?” “I have this to say,” and he lifted up a stony tablet, written on both sides ; “these ten commands this wretch has broken. My demand is blood ; for it is written, ‘The soul that sinneth it shall die.’ Die he, or Justice must.” The wretch trembles, his knees knock together, the marrow of his bones melts within him, as if it were ice dissolved by fire, and he shakes with very fright. Already he thought he saw the thunderbolt launched at him, he saw the

lightning penetrate into his soul, hell yawned before him in imagination, and he thought himself cast away for ever. But Mercy smiled, and said, "Law, I will answer thee. This wretch deserves to die; Justice demands that he should perish—I award thee thy claim." And, O! how the sinner trembles. "But there is one yonder who has come with me to-day, my King, my Lord; his name is Jesus; he will tell you how the debt can be paid, and the sinner can go free." Then Jesus spake, and said, "O Mercy, I will do thy bidding. Take me, Law; put me in a garden; make me sweat drops of blood; then nail me to a tree; scourge my back before you put me to death; hang me on the cross; let blood run from my hands and feet; let me descend into the grave; let me pay all the sinner oweth; I will die in his stead." And the Law went out and scourged the Saviour, nailed him to the cross, and coming back with his face all bright with satisfaction, stood again at the throne of Mercy, and Mercy said, "Law, what hast thou now to say?" "Nothing," said he; "fair angel, nothing." "What! not one of these commands against him?" "No, not one. Jesus, his substitute, has kept them all—has paid the penalty for his disobedience; and now, instead of his condemnation, I demand, as a debt of Justice, that he be acquitted." "Stand thou here," said Mercy; "sit on my throne; I and thou together will now send forth another summons." The trumpet rang again. "Come hither, all ye who have aught to say against this sinner, why he should not be acquitted;" and up comes another—one who often troubled the sinner—one who had a voice not so loud as that of the Law, but still piercing and thrilling—a voice whose whispers were like the cuttings of a dagger. "Who art thou?" says Mercy. "I am Conscience; this sinner must be punished; he has done so much against the law of God that he must be punished; I demand it; and I will give him no rest till he is punished, nor even then, for I will follow him even to the grave, and persecute him after death with pangs unutterable." "Nay," said Mercy, "hear me;" and while he paused for a moment, she took a bunch of hyssop and sprinkled Conscience with the blood, saying, "Hear me, Conscience, 'The blood of

Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleauseth us from all sin.' Now Last thou ought to say?" "No," said Conscience, "nothing--

"Covered is his unrighteousness;  
From condemnation he is free.'

Henceforth I will not grieve him ; I will be a good conscience unto him, through the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ." The trumpet rang a third time, and growling from the innermost vaults, up there came a grim black fiend, with hate in his eyes, and hellish majesty on his brows. He is asked, "Hast thou any thing against that sinner?" "Yes," said he, "I have ; he has made a league with hell, and a covenant with the grave, and here it is, signed with his own hand. He asked God to destroy his soul in a drunken fit, and vowed he would never turn to God ; see, here is his covenant with hell!" "Let us look at it," said Mercy ; and it was handed up, while the grim fiend looked at the sinner, and pierced him through with his black looks. "Ah ! but," said Mercy, "this man had no right to sign the deed ; a man must not sign away another's property. This man was bought and paid for long before-hand ; he is not his own ; the covenant with Death is disannulled, and the league with hell is rent in pieces. Go thy way, Satan." "Nay," said he, howling again, "I have something else to say : that man was always my friend ; he listened ever to my insinuations ; he scoffed at the gospel ; he scorned the majesty of heaven : is he to be pardoned, while I repair to my hellish den, for ever to bear the penalty of guilt?" Said Mercy, "Avaunt, thou fiend ; these things he did in the days of his unregeneracy ; but this word 'nevertheless' blots them out. Go thou to thy hell ; take this for another lash upon thyself—the sinner shall be pardoned, but thou—never, treacherous fiend !" And then Mercy, smilingly turning to the sinner, said, "Sinner, the trumpet must be blown for the last time !" Again it was blown, and no one answered. Then stood the sinner up, and Mercy said, "Sinner, ask thyself the question—ask thou of heaven, of earth, of hell—whether any can condemn thee?" And the sinner stood up, and with a bold, loud voice, said, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?" And he looked into hell, and Satan lay

there, biting his iron bonds; and he looked on earth, and earth was silent; and in the majesty of faith the sinner did even climb to heaven itself, and he said, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? God?" And the answer came, "No; he justifieth." "Christ?" Sweetly it was whispered, "No; he died." Then turning round, the sinner joyfully exclaimed, "Who shall separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?" And the once condemned sinner came back to Mercy; prostrate at her feet he lay, and vowed henceforth to be hers for ever, if she would keep him to the end, and make him what she would desire him to be. Then no longer did the trumpet ring, but angels rejoiced, and heaven was glad, for the sinner was saved.

Thus, you see, I have, what is called, dramatized the thing; but I don't care what it is called; it is a way of arresting the ear, when nothing else will. "Nevertheless;" there is the obstruction taken away! Sinner, whatever be the "nevertheless," it shall never the less abate the Saviour's love; not the less shall it ever make it, but it shall remain the same.

"Come, guilty soul, and flee away  
To Christ and heal thy wounds;  
This is the glorious gospel-day  
Wherein free grace abounds:  
Come to Jesus, sinner, come."

On thy knee weep out a sorrowful confession; look to his cross, and see the substitute; believe, and live. Ye almost demons, ye that have gone furthest into sin, now, Jesus says, "If you know your need of me, turn unto me, and I will have mercy upon you: and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

## SERMON XXIII.

### PARTICULAR ELECTION.

“Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”—2 PETER, i. 10, 11.

It is exceedingly desirable that in the hours of worship and in the house of prayer our minds should be as much as possible divested of every worldly thought. Although the business of the week will very naturally struggle with us to encroach upon the Sabbath, it is our business to guard the Sabbath from the intrusion of our worldly cares, as we would guard an oasis from the overwhelming irruption of the sand. I have felt, however, that to-day we should be surrounded with circumstances of peculiar difficulty in endeavoring to bring our minds to spiritual matters; for of all times, perhaps the most unlikely for getting any good in the sanctuary, if that depends upon mental abstraction, are election times. So important, in the minds of most men, are political matters, that very naturally, after the hurry of the week, combined with the engrossing pursuit of elections, we are apt to bring the same thoughts and the same feelings into the house of prayer, and speculate, perhaps, even in the place of worship, whether a conservative or a liberal shall be returned for our borough, or whether for the city of London there shall be returned Lord John Russell, Baron Rothschild, or Mr. Currie. I thought, this morning, “Well, it is of no use my trying to stop this great train in its progress. People are just now going on at an express rate in these matters; I think I will be wise, and instead of endeavoring to turn them off the line, I will turn the points, so that they may still continue their pur-

suits with the same swiftness as ever, but in a new direction. It shall be the same line; they shall still be traveling in earnest toward election, but perhaps I may have some skill to turn the points, so that they shall be enabled to consider election in a rather different manner."

When Mr. Whitefield was once applied to to use his influence at a general election, he returned answer to his lordship who requested him, that he knew very little about *general* elections, but that if his lordship took his advice he would make his own *particular* "calling and election sure;" which was a very proper remark. I would not, however, say to any persons here present, despise the privilege which you have as citizens. Far be it from me to do it. When we become Christians, we do not leave off being Englishmen; when we become professors of religion we do not cease to have the rights and privileges which citizenship has bestowed on us. Let us, whenever we shall have the opportunity of using the right of voting, use it as in the sight of Almighty God, knowing that for every thing we shall be brought into account, and for that among the rest, seeing that we are intrusted with it. And let us remember that we are our own governors, to a great degree, and that if at the next election we should choose wrong governors, we shall have nobody to blame but ourselves, however wrongly they may afterward act, unless we exercise all prudence and prayer to Almighty God to direct our hearts to a right choice in this matter. May God so help us, and may the result be for his glory, however unexpected that result may be to any of us!

Having said so much, let me, then, turn the points, and draw you to a consideration of your own particular calling and election, bidding you in the words of the apostle, "the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." We have here, first of all, *two fundamental points in religion*—"calling and election; we have here, secondly, *some good advice*—"to make your calling and election *sure*," or, rather, to assure ourselves that we are *called and elected*; and then,

in the third place, we have *some reasons given us why we should use this diligence to be assured of our election*—because, on the one hand, we shall so be kept from falling, and on the other hand, we shall attain unto “an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”

I. First of all, then, there are the TWO IMPORTANT MATTERS IN RELIGION—secrets, both of them, to the world—only to be understood by those who have been quickened by divine grace: “CALLING AND ELECTION.”

By the word “calling” in Scripture, we understand two things—one, the *general call*, which in the preaching of the gospel is given to every creature under heaven; the second call (that which is here intended) is the *special call*—which we call the effectual call, whereby God secretly, in the use of means, by the irresistible power of his Holy Spirit, calls out of mankind a certain number, whom he himself hath before elected, calling them from their sins to become righteous, from their death in trespasses and sins to become living spiritual men, and from their worldly pursuits to become the lovers of Jesus Christ. The two callings differ very much. As Bunyan puts it, very prettily, “By his common call, he gives nothing; by his special call, he always has something to give; he has also a brooding voice, for them that are under his wing; and he has an outcry, to give the alarm when he seeth the enemy come.” What we have to obtain, as absolutely necessary to our salvation, is a special calling, made in us, not to our ears but to our hearts, not to our mere fleshly understanding, but to the inner man, by the power of the Spirit. And then the other important thing is election. As without calling there is no salvation, so without election there is no calling. Holy Scripture teaches us that God hath from the beginning chosen us who are saved unto holiness through Jesus Christ. We are told that as many as are ordained unto eternal life believe, and that their believing is the effect of their being ordained to eternal life from before all worlds. However much this may be disputed, as it frequently is, you must first deny the authenticity and full inspiration of the holy Scriptures before you can legitimately and truly deny it. And since,

without doubt, I have many here who are members of the Episcopal church, allow me to say to them what I have often said before, "You, of all men, are the most inconsistent in the world, unless you believe the doctrine of election, for if it be not taught in Scripture there is this one thing for an absolute certainty, it is taught in your Articles." Nothing can be more forcibly expressed, nothing more definitely laid down, than the doctrine of predestination in the Book of Common Prayer; although we are told what we already know, that the doctrine is a high mystery, and is only to be handled carefully by men who are enlightened. However, without doubt, it is the doctrine of Scripture, that those who are saved are saved because God chose them to be saved, and are called as the effect of that first choice of God. If any of you dispute this, I stand upon the authority of holy Scripture; ay, and if it were necessary to appeal to tradition, which I am sure it is not, and no Christian man would ever do it, yet I would take you upon that point; for I can trace this doctrine through the lips of a succession of holy men, from this present moment to the days of Calvin, thence to Augustine, and thence on to Paul himself; and even to the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ. The doctrine is, without doubt, taught in Scripture, and were not men too proud to humble themselves to it, it would universally be believed and received as being no other than manifest truth. Why, sirs, do you not believe that God loves his children? and do you not know that God is unchangeable? therefore, if he loves them now he must always have loved them. Do you not believe that if men be saved God saves them? And if so, can you see any difficulty in admitting that because he saves them there must have been a purpose to save them—a purpose which existed before all worlds? Will you not grant me that? If you will not, I must leave you to the Scriptures themselves; and if they will not convince you on the point, then I must leave you unconvinced.

It will be asked, however, why is *calling* here put before *election*, seeing election is eternal, and calling takes place in time? I reply, because calling is first to us. The first thing which you and I can know is our calling: we can not tell whether we are elect until we feel that we are called. We



must, first of all, prove our calling, and then our election is sure most certainly. "Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Calling comes first in our apprehension. We are by God's Spirit called from our evil estate, regenerated and made new creatures, and then, looking backward, we behold ourselves as being most assuredly elect because we were called.

Here, then, I think I have explained the text. There are the two things which you and I are to prove to be sure to ourselves—whether we are *called* and whether we are *elected*. And O, dear friends, this is a matter about which you and I should be very anxious. For consider what an *honorable* thing it is to be elected. In this world it is thought a mighty thing to be elected to the House of Commons; but how much more honorable to be elected to eternal life; to be elected to "the church of the first born, whose names are written in heaven;" to be elected to be a compeer of angels, to be a favorite of the living God, to dwell with the Most High, among the fairest of the sons of light, nearest to the eternal throne! Election in this world is but a short-lived thing, but God's election is *eternal*. Let a man be elected to a seat in the House: seven years must be the longest period that he can hold his election; but if you and I be elected according to the divine purpose, we shall hold our seats when the day-star shall have ceased to burn, when the sun shall have grown dim with age, and when the eternal hills shall have bowed themselves with weakness. If we be chosen of God and precious, then are we chosen for ever; for God changeth not in the objects of his election. Those whom he hath ordained he hath ordained to eternal life, "and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of his hand." It is worth while to know ourselves elect, for nothing in this world can make a man more *happy* or more valiant than the knowledge of his election. "Nevertheless," said Christ to his apostles, "rejoice not in this, but rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven"—that being the sweetest comfort, the honeycomb that droppeth with the most precious drops of all, the knowledge

of our being chosen by God. And this, too, beloved, makes a man *valiant*. When a man by diligence has attained to the assurance of his election, you can not make him a coward, you can never make him cry craven even in the thickest battle; he holds the standard fast and firm, and cleaves his foes with the cimeter of truth. "Was not I ordained by God to be the standard bearer of this truth? I must, I will stand by it, despite you all." He saith to every enemy, "Am I not a chosen king? Can floods of water wash out the sacred unction from a king's bright brow? No, never! And if God hath chosen me to be a king and a priest unto God for ever and ever, come what may or come what will—the lion's teeth, the fiery furnace, the spear, the rack, the stake, all these things are less than nothing, seeing I am chosen of God unto salvation." It has been said that the doctrine of necessity makes men weak. It is a lie. It may seem so in theory, but in practice it has always been found to be the reverse. The men who have believed in destiny, and have held fast and firm by it, have always done the most valiant deeds. There is one point in which this is akin even with Mohammed's faith. The deeds that were done by him were chiefly done from a firm confidence that God had ordained him to his work. Never had Cromwell driven his foes before him if it had not been in the stern strength of this almost omniscient truth; and there shall scarcely be found a man strong to do great and valiant deeds unless, confident in the God of providence, he looks upon the accidents of life as being steered by God, and give himself up to God's firm predestination, to be borne along by the current of his will, contrary to all the wills and all the wishes of the world. "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure."

II. Come, then, here is the second point—GOOD ADVICE. "Make your calling and election sure." Not toward God, for they are sure to him; make them sure to yourself. Be quite certain of them; be fully satisfied about them. In many of our dissenting places of worship very great encouragement is held out to doubting. A person comes before the pastor, and says, "O! sir, I am so afraid I am not converted; I tremble lest I should not be a child of God. O! I fear I am not one of

the Lord's elect." The pastor will put out his hands to him and say, "Dear brother, you are all right so long as you can doubt." Now, I hold, that is altogether wrong. Scripture never says, "He that doubteth shall be saved," but "He that believeth." It may be true that the man is in a good state; it may be true that he wants a little comfort; but his doubts are not good things, nor ought we to encourage him in his doubts. Our business is to encourage him out of his doubts, and by the grace of God to urge him to "give *all* diligence to make his calling and election *sure*;" not to doubt it, but to be sure of it. Ah! I have heard some hypocritical doubters say, "O! I have had such doubts whether I am the Lord's," and I have thought to myself, "And so have I very great doubts about you." I have heard some say they do tremble so because they are afraid they are not the Lord's people; and the lazy fellows sit in their pews on the Sunday, and just listen to the sermon; but they never think of giving diligence, they never do good, perhaps are inconsistent in their lives, and then talk about doubting. It is quite right they should doubt, it is well they should; and if they did not doubt we might begin to doubt for them. Idle men have no right to assurance. The Scripture says, "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure."

Full assurance is an excellent attainment. It is profitable for a man to be certain in this life, and absolutely sure of his own calling and election. But how can he be sure? Now, many of our more ignorant hearers imagine that the only way they have of being sure of their election is by some revelation, some dream, or some mystery. I have enjoyed very hearty laughs at the expense of some people who have trusted in their visions. Really, if you had passed among so many shades of ignorant professing Christians as I have, and had to resolve so many doubts and fears, you would be so infinitely sick of dreams and visions that you would say, as soon as a person began to speak about them, "Now, do just hold your tongue." "Sir," said a woman, "I saw blue lights in the front parlor when I was in prayer, and I thought I saw the Saviour in the corner and I said to myself, I am safe." (Mr. Spurgeon here narrated a remarkable story of a poor woman who was possessed with a

singular delusion.) And yet there are tens of thousands of people in every part of the country, and members too of Christian bodies, who have no better ground for their belief that they are called and elected, than some vision equally ridiculous, or the equally absurd hearing of a voice. A young woman came to me some time ago she wanted to join the church, and when I asked her how she knew herself to be converted, she said she was down at the bottom of the garden, and she thought she heard a voice, and she thought she saw something up in the clouds that said to her so-and-so. "Well," I said to her, "that thing may have been the means of doing good to you, but if you put any trust in it, it is all over with you." A dream, ay, and a vision, may often bring men to Christ; I have known many who have been brought to him by them, beyond a doubt, though it has been mysterious to me how it was; but when men bring these forward as a proof of their conversion, *there* is the mistake; because you may have fifty thousand dreams and see fifty thousand visions, and you may be a fool for all that, and all the bigger sinner for having seen them. There is better evidence to be had than all this: "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure."

"How then," says one, "am I to make my calling and election sure?" Why, thus:—If thou wouldst get out of a doubting state, get out of an idle state; if thou wouldst get out of a trembling state, get out of an indifferent lukewarm state; for lukewarmness and doubting, and laziness and trembling, very naturally go hand in hand. If thou wouldst enjoy the eminent grace of the full assurance of faith under the blessed Spirit's influence and assistance, do what the Scripture tells thee—"Give diligence to make your calling and election sure." Wherein shalt thou be diligent?

Note how the Scripture has given us a list. Be diligent in your *faith*. Take care that your faith is of the right kind—that it is not a creed, but a credence—that it is not a mere belief of doctrine, but a reception of doctrine into your heart, and the practical light of the doctrine in your soul. Take care that your faith results from necessity—that you believe in Christ because you have nothing else to believe in. Take care

It is simple faith, hanging alone on Christ, without any other dependence but Jesus Christ and him crucified. And when thou hast given diligence about that, give diligence next to thy *courage*. Labor to get *virtue*; plead with God that he would give thee the face of a lion, that thou mayest never be afraid of any enemy, however much he may jeer or threaten thee, but that thou mayest with a consciousness of right, go on, boldly trusting in God. And having, by the help of the Holy Spirit, obtained that, study well the Scriptures, and get *knowledge*; for a knowledge of doctrine will tend very much to confirm your faith. Try to understand God's Word, get a sensible, spiritual idea of it. Get, if you can, a system of divinity out of God's Bible. Put the doctrines together. Get real, theological knowledge, founded upon the infallible Word. Get a knowledge of that science which is most despised, but which is the most necessary of all, the science of Christ and of him crucified, and of the great doctrines of grace. And when thou hast done this, "add to thy knowledge *temperance*." Take heed to thy body: be temperate there. Take heed to thy soul: be temperate there. Be not drunken with pride; be not lifted up with self-confidence. Be temperate. Be not harsh toward thy friends, nor bitter to thine enemies. Get temperance of lip, temperance of life, temperance of heart, temperance of thought. Be not passionate: be not carried away by every wind of doctrine. Get temperance, and then add to it by God's Holy Spirit, *patience*; ask him to give thee that patience which endureth affliction, which, when it is tried, shall come forth as gold. Array yourself with patience, that you may not murmur in your sicknesses; that you may not curse God in your losses, nor be depressed in your afflictions. Pray without ceasing, until the Holy Ghost has nerved you with patience to endure unto the end. And when you have that, get *godliness*. Godliness is something more than religion. The most religious men may be the most godless men, and sometimes a godly man may seem to be irreligious. Let me just explain that seeming paradox. A real *religious* man is a man who sighs after sacraments, attends churches and chapels, and is outwardly good but goes no further. A godly man is a man who does not

ook so much to the dress as to the person: he looks not to the outward form, but to the inward and spiritual grace; he is a godly man, as well as attentive to religion. Some men, however, are godly, and to a great extent despise form; they may be godly, without some degree of religion; but a man can not be fully righteous without being godly in the true meaning of each of these words, though not in the general vulgar sense of them. Add to thy patience an eye to God; live in his sight; dwell close to him; seek for fellowship with him; and thou hast got godliness. And to that add *brotherly love*. Be loving towards all the members of Christ's church; have a love to all the saints of every denomination. And then add to that *charity*, which openeth its arms to all men, and loves them; and when you have got all these, then you will know your calling and election, and just in proportion as you practice these heavenly rules of life, in this heavenly manner, will you come to know that you are called and that you are elect. But by no other means can you attain to a knowledge of that, except by the witness of the Spirit, bearing witness with your spirit that you are born of God, and then witnessing in your conscience that you are not what you were, but are a new man in Christ Jesus, and are therefore called, and therefore elected.

A man over there says he is elect. He gets drunk. Ay, you are elect by the devil, sir; that is about your only election. Another man says, "Blessed be God, I do not care about evidences a bit; I am not so legal as you are!" No, I dare say you are not: but you have no great reason to bless God about it, for, my dear friend, unless you have these evidences of a new birth take heed to yourself. "God is not mocked: whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." "Well," says another, "but I think that doctrine of election a very licentious doctrine." Think on as long as you please; but please to bear me witness that as I have preached it to-day there is nothing licentious about it. Very likely you are licentious, and you would make the doctrine licentious if you believed it; but "to the pure all things are pure." He who receiveth God's truth in his heart doth not often pervert it and turn aside from it unto wicked ways. No man, let me

repeat, has any right to believe himself elect of God, unless he has been renewed by God; no man has any right to believe himself called, unless his life be in the main consistent with his vocation, and he walk worthy of that wherunto he is called. Out upon an election that lets you live in sin! Away with it! away with it! That was never the design of God's Word; and it never was the doctrine of Calvinists either. Though we have been lied against and our teachings perverted, we have always stood by this—that good works, though they do not procure nor in any degree merit salvation, yet are the necessary evidences of salvation; and unless they be in men the soul is still dead, uncalled, and unrenewed. The nearer you live to Christ, the more you imitate him, the more your life is conformed to him, and the more simply you hang upon him by faith, the more certain you may be of your election in Christ and of your calling by his Holy Spirit. May the Holy One of Israel give you the sweet assurance of grace, by affording you “tokens for good” in the graces which he enables you to manifest.

III. And now I shall close up by giving you THE APOSTLE'S REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD MAKE YOUR CALLING AND ELECTION SURE.

I put in one of my own to begin with. It is because, as I have said, *it will make you so happy*. Men who doubt their calling and election can not be full of joy: but the happiest saints are those who know and believe it. You know our friends say this is a howling wilderness, and you know my reply to it is, that they make all the howling themselves: there would not be much howling if they were to look up a little more and down a little less, for by faith they would make it blossom like the rose, and give to it the excellence and glory of Carmel and Sharon. But why they howl so much is because they do not believe. Our happiness and our faith are to a great degree proportionate; they are Siamese twins to the Christian; they must flourish or decay together.

“When I can say my God is mine,  
Then I can all my griefs resign;  
Can tread the world beneath my feet,  
And all that earth calls good or great.”

‘When gloomy doubts prevail,  
I fear to call him mine;  
The streams of comfort seem to fail,  
And all my hopes decline.’

Only faith can make a Christian lead a happy life.

But now for Peter’s reasons. First, because “*if ye do these things ye will never fall.*” “Perhaps,” says one, “in attention to election we may forget our daily walk, and like the old philosopher who looked up to the stars, we may walk on and tumble into the ditch!” “Nay, nay,” says Peter, “if you take care of your calling and election, you shall not trip; but with your eyes up there, looking for your calling and election, God will take care of your feet, and you shall never fall.” Is it not very notable, that, in many churches and chapels, you do not often hear a sermon about *to-day*; it is always either about old eternity, or else about the millennium; either about what God did before man was made, or else about what God will do when all are dead and buried? Pity they do not tell us something about what we are to do to-day, now in our daily walk and conversation! Peter removes this difficulty. He says, “This point is a practical point; for you can only answer your election for yourself by taking care of your practice; and while you are so taking care of your practice and assuring yourself of your election, you are doing the best possible thing to keep you from falling.” And is it not desirable that a true Christian should be kept from falling? Mark the difference between *falling* and *falling away*. The true believer can never fall away and perish; but he may fall and injure himself. He shall not fall and break his neck; but a broken leg is bad enough without a broken neck. “Though he fall he shall not be utterly cast down;” but that is no reason why he should dash himself against a stone. His desire is, that day by day he may grow more holy; that hour by hour he may be more thoroughly renewed, until, conformed to the image of Christ, he may enter into bliss eternal. If, then, you take care of your calling and election, you are doing the best thing in the world to prevent you from falling; for in so doing you shall never fall.



And now, the other reason, and then I shall have almost concluded. "*For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*" An "abundant entrance" has sometimes been illustrated in this way. You see yonder ship. After a long voyage, it has neared the haven, but is much injured; the sails are rent to ribbons, and it is in such a forlorn condition that it can not come up to the harbor: a steam-tug is pulling it in with the greatest possible difficulty. That is like the righteous being "scarcely saved." But do you see that other ship? It has made a prosperous voyage; and now, laden to the water's edge, with the sails all up and with the white canvas filled with the wind, it rides into the harbor joyously and nobly. That is an "abundant entrance;" and if you and I are helped by God's Spirit to add to our faith virtue, and so on, we shall have at the last "an abundant entrance into the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ." There is a man who is a Christian; but, alas! there are many inconsistencies in his life for which he has to mourn. He lies there, dying on his bed. The thought of his past life rushes upon him. He cries, "O Lord, have mercy upon me, a sinner;" and the prayer is answered; his faith is in Christ, and he shall be saved. But O! what griefs he has upon his bed. "O, if I had served my God better! And these children of mine—if I had but trained them up better, 'in the nurture and admonition of the Lord!' I am saved," says he; "but alas, alas! though it be a great salvation, I can not enjoy it yet. I am dying in gloom, and clouds, and darkness. I trust, I hope, I shall be gathered to my fathers, but I have no works to follow me—or very few indeed; for though I am saved, I am but just saved—saved 'so as by fire.'" Here is another one; he too is dying. Ask him what his dependence is: he tells you, "I rest in none else but Jesus." But mark him as he looks back to his past life. "In such a place," says he, "I preached the gospel, and God helped me." And though with no pride about him—he will not congratulate himself upon what he has done—yet doth he lift his hands to heaven, and he blesses God that throughout a long life he has been able to keep his garments white; that he has served his Master; and now, like a shock

of corn fully ripe, he is about to be gathered in to his Master's garner. Hark to him! It is not the feeble lisp of the trembler; but with "victory! victory! victory!" for his dying shout, he shuts his eyes, and dies like a warrior in his glory. That is the "abundant entrance." Now, the man that "gives diligence to make his calling and election sure," shall insure for himself "an abundant entrance into the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ."

What a terrible picture is hinted at in these words of the apostle—"saved so as by fire!" Let me try and present it to you. The man has come to the edge of Jordan; the time has arrived for him to die. He is a believer—just a believer; but his life has not been what he could wish; not all that he now desires that it had been. And now stern death is at him, and he has to take his first step into the Jordan. Judge of his horror when the flames surround his foot. He treads upon the hot sand of the stream; and the next step he takes, with his hair well nigh on end, with his eye fixed on heaven on the other side of the shore, his face is yet marked with horror. He takes another step, and he is all bathed in fire. Another step, and he is up to his very loins in flames—"saved, so as by fire." A strong hand has grasped him, that drags him onward through the stream. But how dreadful must be the death even of a Christian, when he is saved "so as by fire!" There on the river's brink, astonished, he looks back and sees the liquid flames through which he has been called to walk, as a consequence of his indifference in this life. Saved he is—thanks to God; and his heaven shall be great, and his crown shall be golden, and his harp shall be sweet, and his hymns shall be eternal, and his bliss unfading;—but his dying moment, the last article of death, was blackened by sin; and he was saved "so as by fire!" Mark the other man; he too has to die. He has often feared death. He dips his foot in Jordan; and his body trembles, his pulse waxes faint, and even his eyes are well nigh closed. His lips scarcely speak, but still he says "Jesus, thou art with me, thou art with me, passing through the stream!" He takes another step, and the waters now begin to refresh him. He dips his hand and tastes the stream, and tells those who are watching him in tears, that

to die is blessed. "The stream is sweet," he says, "it is not bitter : it is blessed to die." Then he takes another step, and when he is well nigh submerged in the stream, and lost to vision, he says,

" And when ye hear my heart-strings break,  
How sweet the minutes roll!  
A mortal paleness on my cheek,  
But glory in my soul!"

That is the "abundant entrance" of the man who has manfully served his God—who, by his divine grace, has had a path unclouded and serene—who, by diligence, has "made his calling and election sure;" and, therefore, as a reward, not of debt, but of grace, hath entered heaven with higher honors and with greater ease than others equally saved, but not saved in so splendid a manner.

Just one thought more. It is said that the entrance is to be "ministered to us." That gives me a sweet hint that, I find, is dwelt upon by Doddridge. Christ will open the gates of heaven; but the heavenly train of virtues—the works which follow us—will go up with us and minister an entrance to us. I sometimes think, if God should enable me to live and die for the good of these congregations, so that many of them shall be saved, how sweet it will be to enter heaven, and when I shall come there, to have an entrance ministered unto me, not by Christ alone, but by some of you for whom I have ministered. One shall meet me at the gate, and say, "Minister, thou wast the cause of my salvation!" And another, and another, and another, shall all exclaim the same. When Whitefield entered heaven—that highly honored servant of the Lord—I think I can see the hosts rushing to the gates to meet him. There are thousands there that have been brought to God by him. O how they open wide the gates; and how they praise God that he has been the means of bringing them to heaven; and how do they minister unto him an abundant entrance! There will be some of you, perhaps, in heaven, with starless crowns: for you never did good to your fellow-creatures; you never were the means of saving souls; you are to have crowns without stars. But "they that turn many to righteousness" shall "shine as the stars, for ever and ever:"

and an entrance shall be abundantly ministered to them. I do want to get a heavy crown in heaven—not to wear, but to have all the more costly gift to give to Christ. And you ought to desire the same, that you may have all the more honors, and so have the more to cast at his feet, with, “Not unto us, but unto thy name, O Christ, be the glory!” “Rather, brethren, give all diligence to make your calling and election sure.”

And now, to conclude. There are some of you with whom this text has nothing to do. You can not make “your calling and election sure,” for you have not been called; and you have no right to believe that you are elected, if you have never been called. To such of you, let me say, do not ask whether you are elected first, but ask whether you are called. And go to God’s house, and bend your knee in prayer; and may God, in his infinite mercy, call you! And mark this—if any of you can say,

“Nothing in my hands I bring,  
Simply to the cross I cling;”

if any of you, abjuring your self-righteousness, can now come to Christ and take him to be your all in all; you are called, you are elect. “Make your calling and election sure,” and go on your way rejoicing! May God bless you; and to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be glory for evermore! Amen.

## SERMON XXIV.

### MERCY, OMNIPOTENCE, AND JUSTICE.

“The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked.”—NAHUM, i. 3.

WORKS of art require some education in the beholder, before they can be thoroughly appreciated. We do not expect that the uninstructed should at once perceive the varied excellencies of a painting from some master hand; we do not imagine that the superlative glories of the harmonies of the prince of song will enrapture the ears of clownish listeners. There must be something in the man himself, before he can understand the wonders either of nature or of art. Certainly this is true of character. By reason of failures in our character and faults in our life, we are not capable of understanding all the separate beauties, and the united perfection of the character of Christ, or of God, his Father. Were we ourselves as pure as the angels in heaven, were we what our race once was in the garden of Eden, immaculate and perfect, it is quite certain that we should have a far better and nobler idea of the character of God than we can by possibility attain unto in our fallen state. But you can not fail to notice, that men, through the alienation of their natures, are continually misrepresenting God, because they can not appreciate his perfection. Does God at one time withhold his hand from wrath? Lo, they say that God hath ceased to judge the world, and looks upon it with listless phlegmatic indifference. Does he at another time punish the world for sin? They say he is severe and cruel. Men *will* misunderstand him, because they are imperfect themselves, and are not capable of admiring the character of God.

Now, this is especially true with regard to certain lights and

shadows in the character of God, which he has so marvelously blended in the perfection of his nature: that although we can not see the exact point of meeting, yet (if we have been at all enlightened by the Spirit) we are struck with wonder at the sacred harmony. In reading holy Scripture, you can say of Paul, that he was noted for his zeal—of Peter, that he will ever be memorable for his courage—of John, that he was noted for his lovingness. But did you ever notice, when you read the history of our Master, Jesus Christ, that you never could say he was notable for any one virtue at all? Why was that? It was because the boldness of Peter did so outgrow itself as to throw other virtues into the shade, or else the other virtues were so deficient that they set forth his boldness. The very fact of a man being noted for something is a sure sign that he is not so notable in other things; and it is because of the complete perfection of Jesus Christ, that we are not accustomed to say of him that he was eminent for his zeal, or for his love, or for his courage. We say of him that he was a perfect character; but we are not able very easily to perceive where the shadows and the lights blended, where the meekness of Christ blended into his courage, and where his loveliness blended into his boldness in denouncing sin. We are not able to detect the points where they meet; and I believe the more thoroughly we are sanctified, the more it will be a subject of wonder to us how it could be that virtues which seemed so diverse were in so majestic a manner united in one character.

It is just the same of God; and I have been led to make the remarks I have made on my text, because of the two clauses thereof which seem to describe contrary attributes. You will notice that there are two things in my text: he is “slow to anger,” and yet he “will not at all acquit the wicked.” Our character is so imperfect that we can not see the congruity of these two attributes. We are wondering, perhaps, and saying, “How is it he is slow to anger, and yet will not acquit the wicked?” It is because his character is perfect that we do not see where these two things melt into each other—the infallible righteousness and severity of the ruler of the world, and his loving-kindness, his long-suffering, and his tender

mercies. The absence of any one of these things from the character of God would have rendered it imperfect ; the presence of them all, though we may not see how they can be congruous with each other, stamps the character of God with a perfection elsewhere unknown.

And now I shall endeavor this morning to set forth these two attributes of God, and the connecting link. “ *The Lord is slow to anger ;*” then comes the *connecting link*, “ *great in power.*” I shall have to show you how that “ *great in power*” refers to the sentence foregoing and the sentence succeeding. And then we shall consider the next attribute—“ *He will not at all acquit the wicked ?*” *an attribute of justice.*

I. Let us begin with the first characteristic of God. He is said to be “ *SLOW TO ANGER.*” Let me declare the attribute and then trace it to its source.

God is “ *slow to anger.*” When Mercy cometh into the world, she driveth winged steeds ; the axles of her chariot-wheels are glowing hot with speed ; but when Wrath cometh, it walketh with tardy footsteps ; it is not in haste to slay, it is not swift to condemn. God’s rod of mercy is ever in his hands outstretched ; God’s sword of justice is in its scabbard : not rusted in it—it can be easily withdrawn—but held there by that hand that presses it back into its sheath, crying, “ *Sleep, O sword, sleep ; for I will have mercy upon sinners, and will forgive their transgressions.*” God hath many orators in heaven ; some of them speak with swift words. Gabriel, when he cometh down to tell glad tidings, speaketh swiftly ; angelic hosts, when they descend from glory, fly with wings of lightning, when they proclaim, “ *Peace on earth, good will toward men ;*” but the dark angel of Wrath is a slow orator ; with many a pause between, where melting Pity joins her languid notes, he speaks ; and when but half his oration is completed he often stays, and withdraws himself from his rostrum, giving way to Pardon and to Mercy ; he having but addressed the people that they might be driven to repentance, and so might receive peace from the scepter of God’s love.

Brethren, I shall just try to show you now how God’s slow to anger.

First, I will prove that he is “ *slow to anger ;*” *because he*

*never smites without first threatening.* Men who are passionate and swift in anger give a word and a blow; sometimes the blow first and the word afterward. Oftentimes kings, when subjects have rebelled against them, have crushed them first, and then reasoned with them afterward; they have given no time of threatening, no period of repentance; they have allowed no space for turning to their allegiance; they have at once crushed them in their hot displeasure, making a full end of them. Not so God: he will not cut down the tree that doth much cumber the ground, until he hath digged about it, and dugged it; he will not at once slay the man whose character is the most vile; until he has first hewn him by the prophets he will not hew him by judgments; he will warn the sinner ere he condemn him; he will send his prophets, "rising up early and late," giving him "line upon line, and precept upon precept, here a little and there a little." He will not smite the city without warning; Sodom shall not perish, until Lot hath been within her. The world shall not be drowned, until eight prophets have been preaching in it, and Noah, the eighth, cometh to prophesy of the coming of the Lord. He will not smite Nineveh until he hath sent a Jonah. He will not crush Babylon till his prophets have cried through its streets. He will not slay a man until he hath given many warnings, by sicknesses, by the pulpit, by providences, and by consequences. He smites not with a heavy blow at once; he threateneth first. He doth not in grace, as in nature, send lightnings first and thunder afterward; but he sendeth the thunder of his law first, and the lightning of execution follows it. The licitor of divine justice carries his axe bound up in a bundle of rods, for he will not cut off men, until he has reprov'd them, that they may repent. He is "slow to anger."

But again: God is also *very slow to threaten.* Although he will threaten before he condemns, yet he is slow even in his threatening. God's lips move swiftly when he promises, but slowly when he threatens. Long rolls the pealing thunder, slowly roll the drums of heaven, when they sound the death-march of sinners; sweetly floweth the music of the rapid notes which proclaim free grace, and love, and mercy. God is slow to threaten. He will not send a Jonah to Nineveh, until



Nineveh has become foul with sin ; he will not even tell Sodom it shall be burned with fire, until Sodom has become a reeking dung-hill, obnoxious to earth as well as heaven ; he will not drown the world with a deluge, or even threaten to do it, until the sons of God themselves make unholy alliances and begin to depart from him. He doth not even threaten the sinner by his conscience, until the sinner hath oftentimes sinned. He will often tell the sinner of his sins, often urge him to repent ; but he will not make hell stare him hard in the face, with all its dreadful terror, until much sin has stirred up the lion from his lair, and made God hot with wrath against the iniquities of man. He is slow even to threaten.

But, best of all, when God threatens, *how slow he is to sentence the criminal!* When he has told them that he will punish unless they repent, how long a space he gives them, in which to turn unto himself! “He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men for naught ;” he stayeth his hand ; he will not be in hot haste, when he hath threatened them, to execute the sentence upon them. Have you ever observed that scene in the garden of Eden at the time of the fall? God had threatened Adam that if he sinned he should surely die. Adam sinned: did God make haste to sentence him? ’Tis sweetly said, “The Lord God walked in the garden in the cool of the day.” Perhaps that fruit was plucked at early morn, mayhap it was plucked at noontide ; but God was in no haste to condemn ; he waited till the sun was well nigh set, and in the cool of the day came, and as an old expositor has put it very beautifully, when he did come he did not come on wings of wrath, but he “*walked* in the garden in the cool of the day.” He was in no haste to slay. I think I see him, as he was represented then to Adam, in those glorious days when God walked with man. Methinks I see the wonderful similitude in which the Unseen did veil himself: I see it walking among the trees so slowly—ay, if it were right to give such a picture—beating its breast, and shedding tears that it should have to condemn man. At last I hear its doleful voice: “Adam, where art thou? Where hast thou cast thyself, poor Adam? Thou hast cast thyself from my favor ; thou hast cast thyself into nakedness and into fear ; for thou art hiding thy-

self. Adam, where art thou? I pity thee. Thou thoughtest to be God. Before I condemn thee I will give thee one note of pity. Adam, where art thou?" Yes, the Lord was slow to anger, slow to write the sentence, even though the command had been broken, and the threatening was therefore of necessity brought into force. It was so with the flood: he threatened the earth, but he would not fully seal the sentence, and stamp it with the seal of heaven, until he had given space for repentance. Noah must come, and through his hundred and twenty years must preach the word; he must come and testify to an unthinking and an ungodly generation; the ark must be builded, to be a perpetual sermon; there it must be upon its mountain-top, waiting for the floods to float it, that it might be an every-day warning to the ungodly. O heavens, why did ye not at once open your floods? Ye fountains of the great deep, why did ye not burst up in a moment? God said, "I will sweep away the world with a flood:" why, why did ye not rise? "Because," I hear them saying with gurgling notes, "because, although God had threatened, he was slow to sentence, and he said in himself, 'Haply they may repent; peradventure they may turn from their sin;' and therefore did he bid us rest and be quiet, for he is slow to anger."

And yet once more: even when the sentence against a sinner is signed and sealed by heaven's broad seal of condemnation, even then *God is slow to carry it out*. The doom of Sodom is sealed; God hath declared it shall be burned with fire. But God is tardy. He stops. He will himself go down to Sodom, that he may see the iniquity of it. And when he gets there guilt is rife in the streets. 'Tis night, and the crew of worse than beasts besiege the door. Does he then lift his hands? Does he then say, "Rain hell out of heaven, ye skies?" No, he lets them pursue their riot all night, spares them to the last moment, and though when the sun was risen the burning hail began to fall, yet was the reprieve as long as possible. God was not in haste to condemn. God had threatened to root out the Canaanites; he declared that all the children of Ammon should be cut off; he had promised Abraham that he would give their land unto his seed for ever, and they were to be utterly slain; but he made the children of Israel wait four

hundred years in Egypt, and he let these Canaanites live all through the days of the patriarchs, and even then, when he led his avenging ones out of Egypt, he stayed them forty years in the wilderness, because he was loth to slay poor Canaan. "Yet," said he, "I will give them space. Though I have stamped their condemnation, though their death warrant has come forth from the court of King's Bench, and must be executed, yet will I reprove them as long as I can:" and he stops, until at last mercy had had enough, and Jericho's melting ashes and the destruction of Ai betokened that the sword was out of its scabbard, and God had awaked like a mighty man, and like a strong man full of wrath. God is slow to execute the sentence, even when he has declared it.

And ah! my friends, there is a sorrowful thought that has just crossed my mind. There are some men yet alive who are sentenced now. I believe that Scripture bears me out in a dreadful thought which I just wish to hint at. There are some men that are condemned before they are finally damned; there are some men whose sins go before them unto judgment, who are given over to a seared conscience, concerning whom it may be said that repentance and salvation are impossible. There are some few men in the world who are like John Bunyan's man in the iron cage, can never get out. They are like Esau—they find no place of repentance, though, unlike him, they do not seek it, for if they sought it they would find it. Many there are who have sinned "the sin unto death," concerning whom we can not pray; for we are told, "I do not say that ye shall pray for it." But why, why, why are they not already in the flame? If they be condemned, if mercy has shut its eye forever upon them, if it never will stretch out its hand, to give them pardon, why, why, why are they not cut down and swept away? Because God saith, "I will not have mercy upon them, but I will let them live a little while longer; though I have condemned them I am loth to carry the sentence out, and will spare them as long as it is right that man should live; I will let them have a long life here, for they will have a fearful eternity of wraich for ever." Yes, let them have their little whirl of pleasure; their end shall be most fearful. Let them beware, for although God is slow to anger he is sure in it.

If God were not slow to anger, would he not have smitten this huge city of ours, this behemoth city?—would he not have smitten it into a thousand pieces, and blotted out the remembrance of it from the earth? The iniquities of this city are so great, that if God should dig up her very foundations, and cast her into the sea, she well deserveth it. Our streets at night present spectacles of vice that can not be equaled. Surely there can be no nation and no country that can show a city so utterly debauched as this great city of London, if our midnight streets are indications of our immorality. You allow in your public places of resort—I mean you—my lords and ladies—you allow things to be said in your hearing, of which your modesty ought to be ashamed. Ye can sit in theaters to hear plays at which modesty should blush; I say naught of piety. That the ruder sex should have listened to the obscenities of *La Traviata* is surely bad enough, but that ladies of the highest refinement, and the most approved taste, should dishonor themselves by such a patronage of vice is indeed intolerable. Let the sins of the lower theaters escape without your censure, ye gentlemen of England, the lowest bestiality of the nethermost hell of a play-house can look to your opera-houses for their excuse. I thought that with the pretensions this city makes to piety, for sure, they would not have so far gone, and that after such a warning as they have had from the press itself—a press which is certainly not too religious—they would not so indulge their evil passions. But because the pill is gilded, ye suck down the poison; because the thing is popular, ye patronize it: it is lustful, it is abominable, it is deceitful! Ye take your children to hear what yourselves never ought to listen to. Ye yourselves will sit in gay and grand company, to listen to things from which your modesty ought to revolt. And I would fain hope it does, although the tide may for a while deceive you. Ah! God only knoweth the secret wickedness of this great city; it demandeth a loud and a trumpet voice; it needs a prophet to cry aloud, “Sound an alarm, sound an alarm, sound an alarm,” in this city; for verily the enemy groweth upon us, the power of the evil one is mighty, and we are fast going to perdition, unless God shall put forth his hand and roll back the black torrent of iniquity that

streameth down our streets. But God is slow to anger, and doth still stay his sword. Wrath said yesterday, "Unsheathe thyself, O sword;" and the sword struggled to get free. Mercy put her hand upon the hilt, and said, "Be still!" "Unsheathe thyself, O sword!" Again it struggled from its scabbard. Mercy put her hand on it, and said, "Back!"—and it rattled back again. Wrath stamped his foot, and said, "Awake, O sword, awake!" It struggled yet again, till half its blade was outdrawn; "Back, back!" said Mercy, and with manly push she sent it back rattling into its sheath; and there it sleeps still, for the Lord is "slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy."

Now I am to trace this attribute of God to its source: why is he slow to anger?

He is slow to anger because *he is infinitely good*. Good is his name; "good"-God. Good is his nature; because he is slow to anger.

He is slow to anger, again, *because he is great*. Little things are always swift in anger; great things are not so. The surly cur barks at every passer-by, and bears no insult; the lion would bear a thousand times as much; and the bull sleeps in his pasture, and will bear much, before he lifteth up his might. The leviathan in the sea, though he makes the deep to be hoary when he is enraged, yet is slow to be stirred up, while the little and puny are always swift in anger. God's greatness is one reason of the slowness of his wrath.

II. But to proceed at once to the link. A great reason why he is slow to anger, is because he is GREAT IN POWER. This is to be the connecting link between this part of the subject and the last, and therefore I must beg your attention. I say that this word *great in power* connects the first sentence to the last; and it does so in this way. The Lord is slow to anger; and he is slow to anger because he is great in power. "How say you so?" says one. I answer, he that is great in power has power over himself; and he that can keep his own temper down, and subdue himself, is greater than he who rules a city, or can conquer nations. We heard but yesterday, or the day before, mighty displays of God's power in the rolling thunder which alarmed us: and when we saw the splendor of his

might in the glistening lightning, when he lifted up the gates of heaven and we saw the brightness thereof, and then he closed them again upon the dusty earth in a moment—even then we did not see any thing but the hidings of his power, compared with the power which he has over himself. When God's power doth restrain himself, then it is power indeed, the power to curb power, the power that binds omnipotence is omnipotence surpassed. God is great in power, and therefore doth he keep in his anger. A man who has a strong mind can bear to be insulted, can bear offenses, because he is strong. The weak mind snaps and snarls at the little; the strong mind bears it like a rock; it moveth not, though a thousand breakers dash upon it, and cast their pitiful malice in the spray upon its summit. God marketh his enemies, and yet he moveth not; he standeth still, and letteth them curse him, yet is he not wrathful. If he were less of a God than he is, if he were less mighty than we know him to be, he would long ere this have sent forth the whole of his thunder, and emptied the magazines of heaven; he would long ere this have blasted the earth with the wondrous mines he hath prepared in its lower surface; the flame that burneth there would have consumed us, and we should have been utterly destroyed. We bless God that the greatness of his power is just our protection; he is slow to anger because he is great in power.

And, now, there is no difficulty in showing how this link unites itself with the next part of the text. "He is great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked." This needs no demonstration in words; I have but to touch the feelings, and you will see it. The greatness of his power is an assurance, and an assurance that he will not acquit the wicked. Who among you could witness the storm on Friday night without having thoughts concerning your own sinfulness stirred in your bosoms? Men do not think of God the punisher, or Jehovah the avenger, when the sun is shining, and the weather calm; but in times of tempest, whose cheek is not blanched? The Christian oftentimes rejoiceth in it; he can say, "My soul is well at ease, amid this revelry of earth; I do rejoice in it, it is a day of feasting in my Father's hall, a day of high-feast and carnival in heaven, and I am glad.

“The God that reigns on high,  
 And thunders when he please,  
 That rides upon the stormy sky,  
 And manages the seas,

This awful God is ours,  
 Our Father and our love,  
 He shall send down his heavenly powers  
 To carry us above.”

But the man who is not of an easy conscience will be ill at ease when the timbers of the house are creaking, and the foundations of the solid earth seem to groan. Ah! who is he then that doth not tremble? Yon lofty tree is riven in half; that lightning flash has smitten its trunk, and there it lies for ever blasted, a monument of what God can do. Who stood there and saw it? Was he a swearer? Did he swear then? Was he a Sabbath-breaker? Did he love his Sabbath-breaking then? Was he haughty? Did he then despise God? Ah! how he shook then! Saw you not his hair stand on end? Did not his cheeks blanch in an instant? Did he not close his eyes and start back in horror when he saw that dreadful spectacle, and thought God would smite him too? Yes, the power of God, when seen in the tempest, on sea or on land, in the earthquake or in the hurricane, is instinctively a proof that he will not acquit the wicked. I know not how to explain the feeling, but it is nevertheless the truth; majestic displays of omnipotence have an effect upon the mind of convincing even the hardened, that God, who is so powerful, “will not at all acquit the wicked.” Thus have I just tried to explain and make bare the link of the chain.

III. The last attribute, and the most terrible one, is, “HE WILL NOT AT ALL ACQUIT THE WICKED.” Let me unfold this, first of all; and then let me, after that, endeavor to trace it also to its source, as I did the first attribute.

God “will not acquit the wicked.” How prove I this? I prove it thus. Never once has he pardoned an unpunished sin; not in all the years of the Most High, not in all the days of his right hand, has he once blotted out sin without punishment. What! say you, were not those in heaven pardoned? Are there not many transgressors pardoned, and do they not

escape without punishment? Has he not said, "I have blotted out thy transgressions like a cloud, and like a thick cloud thine iniquities?" Yes, true, most true, and yet my assertion is true also—not one of all those sins that have been pardoned were pardoned without punishment. Do you ask me why and how such a thing as that can be the truth? I point you to yon dreadful sight on Calvary; the punishment which fell not on the forgiven sinner fell there. The cloud of justice was charged with fiery hail; the sinner deserved it; it fell on him; but, for all that, it fell, and spent its fury; it fell there, in that great reservoir of misery; it fell into the Saviour's heart. The plagues, which need should light on our ingratitude, did not fall on us, but they fell somewhere; and who was it that was plagued? Tell me, Gethsemane; tell me, O Calvary's summit, who was plagued. The doleful answer comes, "*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?*" "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" It is Jesus suffering all the plagues of sin. Sin is still punished, though the sinner is delivered.

But, you say, this has scarcely proved that he will not acquit the wicked. I hold it has proved it, and proved it clearly. But do ye want any further proof that God will not acquit the wicked? Need I lead you through a long list of terrible wonders that God has wrought—the wonders of his vengeance? Shall I show you blighted Eden? Shall I let you see a world all drowned—sea monsters whelping and stabling in the palaces of kings? Shall I let you hear the last shriek of the last drowning man as he falls into the flood and dies, washed by that huge wave from the hill-top? Shall I let you see death riding upon the summit of a crested billow, upon a sea that knows no shore, and triumphing because his work is done; his quiver empty, for all men are slain, save where life floats in the midst of death in yonder ark? Need I let you see Sodom with its terrified inhabitants, when the volcano of almighty wrath spouted fiery hail upon it? Shall I show you the earth opening its mouth to swallow up Korah, Dathan, and Abiram? Need I take you to the plagues of Egypt? Shall I again repeat the death-shriek of Pharaoh, and the drowning of his host? Surely, ye need not to be told of cities that are in ruins,



of nations that have been cut off in a day; ye need not to be told how God has smitten the earth from one side to the other, when he has been wroth, and how he has melted mountains in his hot displeasure. Nay, we have proofs enough in history, proofs enough in Scripture, that "he will not at all acquit the wicked." If ye wanted the best proof, however, ye should borrow the black wings of a miserable imagination, and fly beyond the world, through the dark realm of chaos, on, far on, where those battlements of fire are gleaming with a horrid light—if through them, with a spirit's safety, ye would fly, and would behold the worm that never dies, the pit that knows no bottom, and could you there see the fire unquenchable, and listen to the shrieks and wails of men that are banished for ever from God—if, sirs, it were possible for you to hear the sullen groans and hollow moans, and shrieks of tortured ghosts, then would ye come back to this world, amazed and petrified with horror, and you would say, "Indeed he will not acquit the wicked." You know, hell is the argument of the text; may you never have to prove the text by feeling in yourselves the argument fully carried out, "He will not at all acquit the wicked."

And now we trace this terrible attribute to its source. Why is this?

We reply, God will not acquit the wicked, *because he is good*. What! doth goodness demand that sinners shall be punished? It doth. The Judge must condemn the murderer, because he loves his nation. "I can not let you go free; I can not, and I must not; you would slay others, who belong to this fair commonwealth, if I were to let you go free; no, I must condemn you from the very loveliness of my nature." The kindness of a king demands the punishment of those who are guilty. It is not wrathful in the legislature to make severe laws against great sinners; it is but love toward the rest that sin should be restrained. You great flood-gates, which keep back the torrent of sin, are painted black, and look right horrible; like horrid dungeon gates, they affright my spirit; but are they proofs that God is not good? No, sirs; if ye could open wide those gates, and let the deluge of sin flow on us, then would you cry "O God, O God! shut to the gates of

punishment again, let law again be established, set up the pillars, and swing the gates upon their hinges; shut again the gates of punishment, that this world may not again be utterly destroyed by men who have become worse than brutes." It needs for very goodness' sake that sin should be punished. Mercy, with her weeping eyes (for she hath wept for sinners), when she finds they will not repent, looks more terribly stern in her loveliness than Justice in all his majesty; she drops the white flag from her hand, and saith—"No; I called, and they refused; I stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; let them die, let them die;" and that terrible word from the lip of Mercy's self is harsher thunder than the very damnation of Justice. O, yes, the goodness of God demands that men should perish, if they will sin.

And again, *the justice of God demands it*. God is infinitely just, and his justice demands that men should be punished, unless they turn to him with full purpose of heart. Need I pass through all the attributes of God to prove it? Methinks I need not. We must all of us believe that the God who is slow to anger and great in power is also sure not to acquit the wicked. And now just a home-thrust or two with you. What is your state this morning? My friend, man or woman, what is thy state? Canst thou look up to heaven and say, "Though I have sinned greatly I believe Christ was punished in my stead,

"My faith looks back to see  
The burden he did bear  
When hanging on the cursed tree,  
And knows her guilt was there?"

Can you by humble faith look to Jesus, and say, "My substitute, my refuge, my shield; thou art my rock, my trust; in thee do I confide?" Then, beloved, to you I have nothing to say, except this, Never be afraid when you see God's power; for now that you are forgiven and accepted, now that by faith you have fled to Christ for refuge, the power of God need no more terrify you, than the shield and sword of the warrior need terrify his wife or his child. "Nay," saith the woman, "is he strong? He is strong for me. Is his arm brawney.

and are all his sinews fast and strong? Then are they fast and strong for me. While he lives, and wears a shield, he will stretch it over my head; and while his good sword can cleave foes, it will cleave my foes too, and ransom me." Be of good cheer; fear not his power.

But hast thou never fled to Christ for refuge? Dost thou not believe in the Redeemer? Hast thou never confided thy soul to his hands? Then, my friends, hear me; in God's name, hear me just a moment. My friend, I would not stand in thy position for an hour, for all the stars twice speit in gold! For what is thy position? Thou hast sinned, and God will not acquit thee; he will punish thee. He is letting thee live; thou art reprieved. Poor is the life of one that is reprieved without a pardon! Thy reprieve will soon run out; thine hour-glass is emptying every day. I see on some of you death has put his cold hand, and frozen your hair to whiteness. Ye need your staff: it is the only barrier between you and the grave now; and you are, all of you, old and young, standing on a narrow neck of land, between two boundless seas—that neck of land, that isthmus of life, narrowing every moment, and you, and you, and you, are yet unpardoned. There is a city to be sacked, and you are in it—soldiers are at the gates; the command is given that every man in the city is to be slaughtered save he who can give the password. "Sleep on, sleep on; the attack is not to-day; sleep on, sleep on." "But it is to-morrow, sir." "Ay, sleep on, sleep on; it is not till to-morrow; sleep on, procrastinate, procrastinate." "Hark! I hear a rumbling at the gates; the battering-ram is at them; the gates are tottering." "Sleep on, sleep on; the soldiers are not yet at your doors; sleep on, sleep on; ask for no mercy yet; sleep on, sleep on!" "Ay, but I hear the shrill clarion sound; they are in the streets. Hark, to the shrieks of men and women! They are slaughtering them; they fall, they fall, they fall!" "Sleep on; they are not yet at *your* door." "But hark, they are at the gate; with heavy tramp I hear the soldiers marching up the stairs!" "Nay, sleep on, sleep on; they are not yet in your room." "Why, they are there; they have burst open the door that parted you from them, and there they stand!" "No, sleep on, sleep on; the

sword is not yet at your throat ; sleep on, sleep on !” It *is* at your throat, you start with horror. Sleep on, sleep on ! But you are gone ! “ Demon, why toldest thou me to slumber ? It would have been wise in me to have escaped the city when first the gates were shaken. Why did I not ask for the password before the troops came ? Why, by all that is wise, why did I not rush into the streets, and cry the password when the soldiers were there ? Why stood I till the knife was at my throat ? Ay, demon that thou art, be cursed ; but I am cursed with thee for ever !” You know the application ; it is a parable ye can all expound ; ye need not that I should tell you that death is after you, that justice must devour you, that Christ crucified is the only password that can save you ; and yet you have not learned it—that with some of you death is nearing, nearing, nearing, and that with all of you he is close at hand ! I need not expound how Satan is the demon, how in hell you shall curse him and curse yourselves because you procrastinated—how, that seeing God was slow to anger you were slow to repentance—how, because he was great in power, and kept back his anger, therefore you kept back your steps from seeking him ; and here you are what you are !

Spirit of God, bless these words to some souls that they may be saved ! May some sinners be brought to the Saviour’s feet, and cry for mercy ! We ask it for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

## SERMON XXV.

### CHRIST—THE POWER AND WISDOM OF GOD.

“Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.”—1 Cor., i. 24.

UNBELIEF toward the gospel of Christ is the most unreasonable thing in all the world, because the reason which the unbeliever gives for his unbelief is fairly met by the character and constitution of the gospel of Christ. Notice that before this verse we read—“The Jews required a sign, the Greeks seek after wisdom.” If you met the Jew who believed not on Christ in the apostle’s day, he said, “I can not believe, because I want a sign;” and if you met the Greek, he said, “I can not believe, because I want a philosophic system, one that is full of wisdom.” “Now,” says the apostle, “both these objections are untenable and unreasonable. If you suppose that the Jew requires a sign, that sign is given him : Christ is the power of God. The miracles that Christ wrought upon earth were signs more than sufficiently abundant ; and if the Jewish people had but the will to believe, they would have found abundant signs and reasons for believing in the personal acts of Christ and his apostles.” And let the Greeks say, “I can not believe, because I require a wise system : O Greek, Christ is the wisdom of God. If thou wouldst but investigate the subject, thou wouldst find in it profoundness of wisdom—a depth where the most gigantic intellect might be drowned. It is no shallow gospel, but a deep, and a great deep too, a deep which passeth understanding. Thine objection is ill-founded ; for Christ is the wisdom of God, and his gospel is the highest of all sciences. If thou wishest to find wisdom, thou must find it in the word of revelation.”

Now, this morning, we shall try to bring out these two

thoughts of the gospel; and it may be that God shall bless what we shall say to the removing of the objection of either Jew or Greek; that the one requiring a sign may see it in the *power* of God in Christ, and that he who requireth wisdom may behold it in the *wisdom* of God in Christ. We shall understand our text in a threefold manner: Christ, that is, *Christ personally*, is “the power of God and the wisdom of God;” Christ, that is, *Christ’s gospel*, is “the power of God and the wisdom of God;” Christ, that is, *Christ in the heart, true religion*, is “the power of God and the wisdom of God.”

I. First, to begin, then, with CHRIST PERSONALLY. Christ considered as God and man, the Son of God equal with his Father, and yet the man, born of the Virgin Mary. Christ, in his complex person, is “the power of God and the wisdom of God.” *He is the power of God from all eternity.* “By his word were the heavens made, and all the host of them.” “The Word was God, and the Word was with God.” “All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.” The pillars of the earth were placed in their everlasting sockets by the omnipotent right hand of Christ; the curtains of the heavens were drawn upon their rings of starry light by him who was from everlasting the All-glorious Son of God. The orbs that float aloft in ether, those ponderous planets, and those mighty stars, were placed in their positions, or sent rolling through space by the eternal strength of him who is “the first and the last.” “the Prince of the kings of the earth.” Christ is the power of God, for he is the Creator of all things, and by him all things exist.

But *when he came to earth*, took upon himself the fashion of a man, tabernacled in the inn, and slept in the manger, he still gave proof that he was the Son of God; not so much so when, as an infant of a span long, the immortal was the mortal, and the infinite became a babe; not so much so in his youth, but afterward when he began his public ministry, he gave abundant proofs of his power and Godhead. The winds hushed by his finger uplifted, the waves calmed by his voice, so that they became solid as marble beneath his tread; the tempest, cowering at his feet, as before a conqueror whom it knew and obeyed; these things, these stormy elements, the wind, the

tempest, and the water, gave full proof of his abundant power. The lame man leaping, the deaf man hearing, the dumb man singing, the dead rising, these, again, were proofs that he was the "power of God." When the voice of Jesus startled the shades of Hades, and rent the bonds of death, with "Lazarus, come forth!" and when the carcass rotten in the tomb woke up to life, there was proof of his divine power and Godhead. A thousand other proofs he afforded; but we need not stay to mention them to you who have Bibles in your houses, and who can read them every day. At last he yielded up his life, and was buried in the tomb. Not long, however, did he sleep; for he gave another proof of his divine power and Godhead, when starting from his slumber, he affrighted the guards with the majesty of his grandeur, not being holden by the bonds of death, they being like green withes before our conquering Samson, who had meanwhile pulled up the gates of hell, and carried them on his shoulders far away.

That he is the *power* of God *now*, Scripture very positively affirmeth; for it is written, "he sitteth at the right hand of God." He hath the reins of Providence gathered in his hands; the fleet coursers of Time are driven by him who sits in the chariot of the world, and bids its wheels run round; and he shall bid them stay when it shall please him. He is the great umpire of all disputes, the great Sovereign Head of the church, the Lord of heaven, and death, and hail; and by-and-by we shall know that he shall come,

"On fiery clouds and wings of wind,  
Appointed Judge of all mankind;"

and then the quickened dead, the startled myriads, the divided firmaments, the "Depart, ye cursed," and the "Come, ye blessed," shall proclaim him to be the power of God, who hath power over all flesh, to save or to condemn, as it pleaseth him.

But he is equally "the *wisdom* of God." The great things that he did *before all worlds* were proofs of his wisdom. He planned the way of salvation; he devised the system of atonement and substitution; he laid the foundations of the great plan of salvation. There was wisdom. But he built the heavens by wisdom, and he laid the pillars of light, whereou

the firmament is lanced, by his skill and wisdom. Mark the world; and learn, as ye see all its multitudinous proofs of the wisdom of God, and there you have the wisdom of Christ; for he was the creator of it. And *when he became a man*, he gave proofs enough of wisdom. Even in childhood, when he made the doctors sit abashed by the questions that he asked, he showed that he was more than mortal. And when the Pharisee and Sadducee and Herodian were all at last defeated, and their nets were broken, he proved again the superlative wisdom of the Son of God. And when those who came to take him, stood enchained by his eloquence, spell-bound by his marvelous oratory, there was again a proof that he was the wisdom of God, who could so enchain the minds of men. And now that he intercedeth before the throne of God, now that he is our Advocate before the throne, the pledge and surety for the blessed, now that the reins of government are in his hands, and are ever wisely directed, we have abundant proofs that the wisdom of God is in Christ, as well as the power of God. Bow before him, ye that love him; bow before him, ye that desire him! Crown him, crown him, crown him! He is worthy of it, unto him is everlasting might; unto him is unswerving wisdom: bless his name; exalt him; clap your wings, ye seraphs; cry aloud, ye cherubim; shout, shout, shout, to his praise, ye ransomed host above. And ye, O men that know his grace, extol him in your songs for ever; for he is Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God.

II. But now Christ, that is, CHRIST'S GOSPEL, is the power and the wisdom of God.

1. Christ's gospel is *a thing of divine power*. Do you want proofs of it? Ye shall not go far. How could Christ's gospel have been established in this world as it was, if it had not in itself intrinsic might? By whom was it spread? By mitred prelates, by learned doctors, by fierce warriors, by caliphs, by prophets? No; by fishermen, untaught, unlettered; save as the Spirit gave them utterance, not knowing how to preach or speak. How did they spread it? By the bayonet, by their swords, by the keen metal of their blades? Did they drive their gospel into men at the point of the lance, and with the cimeter? Say, did myriads rush to battle, as they did



when they followed the crescent of Mohammed, and did they convert men by force, by law, by might? Ah! no. Nothing but their simple words, their unvarnished eloquence, their rough declamation, their unhewn oratory; these it was, which, by the blessing of God's Spirit, carried the gospel round the world within a century after the death of its founder.

But what was this gospel which achieved so much? Was it a thing palatable to human nature? Did it offer a paradise of present happiness? Did it offer delight to the flesh and to the senses? Did it give charming prospects of wealth? Did it give licentious ideas to men? No; it was a gospel of morality most strict, it was a gospel with delights entirely spiritual—a gospel which abjured the flesh, which, unlike the coarse delusion of Joe Smith, cut off every prospect from men of delighting themselves with the joys of lust. It was a gospel holy, spotless, clean as the breath of heaven; it was pure as the wing of angel; not like that which spread of old, in the days of Mohammed, a gospel of lust, of vice, and wickedness, but pure, and consequently not palatable to human nature. And yet it spread. Why? My friends, I think the only answer I can give you is, because it has in it the power of God.

But do you want another proof? How has it been maintained since then? No easy path has the gospel had. The good bark of the church has had to plow her way through seas of blood, and those who have manned her have been bespattered with the bloody spray; yea, they have had to man her and keep her in motion, by laying down their lives unto the death. Mark the bitter persecution of the church of Christ from the time of Nero to the days of Mary, and further on, through the days of Charles the Second, and of those kings of unhappy memory, who had not as yet learned how to spell "toleration." From the dragoons of Claverhouse, right straight away to the gladiatorial shows of Rome, what a long series of persecutions has the gospel had! But, as the old divines used to say, "The blood of the martyrs" has been "the seed of the church." It has been, as the old herbalists had it, like the herb camomile, the more it is trodden on, the more it grows; and the more the church has been ill-treated, the more it has prospered. Behold the mountains where the

Albigenses walk in their white garments; see the stakes of Mithfield, not yet forgotten; behold ye the fields among the towering hills, where brave hands kept themselves free from despotic tyranny. Mark ye the Pilgrim Fathers, driven by a government of persecution across the briny deep. See what vitality the gospel has. Plunge her under the wave, and she rises, the purer for her washing; thrust her in the fire, and she comes out, the more bright for her burning; cut her in sunder, and each piece shall make another church; behead her, and like the hydra of old, she shall have a hundred heads for every one you cut away. She can not die, she must live; for she has the power of God within her.

Do you want another proof? I give you a better one than the last. I do not wonder that the church has outlived persecution so much as I wonder she has outlived the unfaithfulness of her professed teachers. Never was church so abused as the church of Christ has been, all through her history; from the days of Diotrefes, who sought to have the pre-eminence, even to these later times, we can read of proud, arrogant prelates, and supercilious, haughty lords over God's inheritance. Bonners, Dunstons, and men of all sorts, have come into her ranks, and done all they could to kill her; and with their lordly priestcraft they have tried to turn her aside. And what shall we say to that huge apostacy of Rome? A thousand miracles that ever the church outlived that! When her pretended head became apostate, and all her bishops disciples of hell, and she had gone far away, wonder of wonders, that she should come out, in the days of the glorious Reformation, and should still live. And, even now, when I mark the supineness of many of my brethren in the ministry—when I mark their utter and entire inefficiency of doing aught for God—when I see their waste of time, preaching now and then on the Sunday, instead of going to the highways and hedges and preaching the gospel everywhere to the poor—when I see the want of unction in the church itself, the want of prayerfulness—when I see wars and fightings, factions and disunions—when I see hot blood and pride, even in the meetings of the saints; I say it is a thousand thousand miracles that the church of God should be alive at all, after the unfaithfulness of her

members, her ministers, and her bishops. She has the power of God within her, or else she would have been destroyed; for she has got enough within her own loins to work her destruction.

“But,” says one, “you have not yet proved it is the power of God to my understanding.” Sir, I will give you another proof. There are not a few of you, who are now present, who would be ready, I know, if it were necessary, to rise in your seats and bear me witness that I speak the truth. There are some who, not many months ago, were drunkards; some who were loose livers; men who were unfaithful to every vow which should keep man to truth, and right, and chastity, and honesty, and integrity. Yes, I repeat, I have some here who look back to a life of detestable sin. You tell me, some of you, that for thirty years even (there is one such present now) you never listened to a gospel ministry, nor ever entered the house of God at all; you despised the Sabbath, you spent it in all kinds of evil pleasures, you plunged headlong into sin and vice, and your only wonder is, that God has not cut you off long ago, as cumberers of the ground; and now you are here, as different as light from darkness. I know your characters, and have watched you with a father’s love; for, child though I am, I am the spiritual father of some here whose years outcount mine by four times the number; and I have seen you honest who were thieves, and you sober who were drunkards. I have seen the wife’s glad eye sparkling with happiness; and many a woman has grasped me by the hand, shed her tears upon me, and said, “I bless God; I am a happy woman now; my husband is reclaimed, my house is blessed; our children are brought up in the fear of the Lord.” Not one or two, but scores of such are here. And, my friends, if these be not proofs that the gospel is the power of God, I say there is no proof of any thing to be had in the world, and every thing must be conjecture. Yes, and there worships with you this day (and if there be a secularist here, my friend will pardon me for alluding to him for a moment), there is in the house of God this day one who was a leader in your ranks, one who despised God, and ran very far away from right. And here he is! It is his honor this day to own himself a

Christian; and I hope, when this sermon is ended, to grasp him by the hand, for he has done a valiant deed; he has bravely burned his papers in the sight of all the people, and has turned to God with full purpose of heart. I could give you proofs enough, if proofs were wanted, that the gospel has been to men the power of God and the wisdom of God. **More** proofs I could give, yea, thousands, one upon the other.

But we must notice the other points. Christ's gospel is the *wisdom* of God. Look at the gospel itself and you will see it to be wisdom. The man who scoffs and sneers at the gospel, does so for no other reason but because he does not understand it. We have two of the richest books of theology extant that were written by professed infidels—by men that were so, I mean, before they wrote the books. You may have heard the story of Lord Lyttleton and West. I believe they determined to refute Christianity; one of them took up the subject of Paul's conversion, and the other, the subject of the resurrection; they sat down, both of them, to write books to ridicule those two events, and the effect was, that in studying the subject, they, both of them, became Christians, and wrote books which are now bulwarks to the church they hoped to have overthrown. Every man who looks the gospel fairly in the face, and gives it the study it ought to have, will discover that it is no false gospel, but a gospel that is replete with wisdom, and full of the knowledge of Christ. If any man will cavil at the Bible, he must cavil. There are some men who can find no wisdom anywhere, except in their own heads. Such men, however, are no judges of wisdom. We should not set a mouse to explain the phenomena of astronomy, nor should we set a man who is so foolish as to do nothing but cavil to understand the wisdom of the gospel. It needs that a man should at least be honest, and have some share of sense, or we can not dispute with him at all. Christ's gospel, to **any** man who believes it, is the wisdom of God.

Allow me just to hint that to be a believer in the gospel is no dishonor to a man's intellect. While the gospel can be understood by the poorest and the most illiterate, while there are shallows in it where a lamb may wade, there are depths where leviathan may swim. The intellect of Locke found an

ple space in the gospel; the mind of Newton submitted to receive the truth of inspiration as a little child, and found a something in its majestic being higher than itself, unto which it could not attain. The rudest and most untaught have been enabled, by the study of the holy Scripture of God's truth to enter the kingdom; and the most erudite have said of the gospel, it surpasses thought. I was thinking the other day what a vast amount of literature must be lost if the gospel be not true. No book was ever so suggestive as the Bible. Large tomes we have in our libraries which it takes all our strength to lift, all upon holy Scripture; myriads upon myriads of smaller volumes, tens of thousands of every shape and size, all written upon the Bible; and I have thought that the very suggestiveness of Scripture, the supernatural suggestiveness of holy Writ, may be in itself a proof of its divine wisdom, since no man has ever been able to write a book which could have so many commentators and so many writers upon its text as the Bible has received, by so much as one millionth part.

III. CHRIST IN A MAN, THE GOSPEL IN THE SOUL, is the power of God and the wisdom of God. We will picture the Christian from his beginning to his end. We will give a short map of his history. He begins there, in that prison-house, with huge iron bars, which he can not file; in that dark, damp cell, where pestilence and death are bred. There, in poverty and nakedness, without a pitcher to put to his thirsty lips, without a mouthful even of dry crust to satisfy his hunger, that is where he begins—in the prison chamber of conviction, powerless, lost and ruined. Between the bars I thrust my hand to him, and give to him in God's name the name of Christ to plead. Look at him; he has been filing away at these bars many and many a day, without their yielding an inch; but now he has got the name of Christ upon his lips; he puts his hands upon the bars, and one of them is gone, and another, and another; and he makes a happy escape, crying, "I am free, I am free, I am free! Christ has been the power of God to me, in bringing me out of my trouble." No sooner is he free, however, than a thousand doubts meet him. This one cries, "You are not elect;" another cries, "You are not redeemed;"

another says, "You are not called;" another says, "You are not converted." "Avaunt," says he, "avaunt! Christ died;" and he just pleads the name of Christ as the power of God, and the doubts flee apace, and he walks straight on. He comes soon into the furnace of trouble; he is thrust into the innermost prison, and his feet are made fast in the stocks. God has put his hand upon him. He is in deep trouble; at midnight he begins to sing of Christ; and lo! the walls begin to totter, and the foundation of the prison to shake; and the man's chains are taken off, and he comes out free; for Christ hath delivered him from trouble. Here is a hill to climb, on the road to heaven. Wearily he pants up the side of that hill, and thinks he must die ere he can reach the summit. The name of Jesus is whispered in his ear; he leaps to his feet, and pursues his way, with fresh courage, until the summit is gained, when he cries, "Jesus Christ is the strength of my song; he also hath become my salvation." See him again. He is on a sudden beset by many enemies; how shall he resist them? With this true sword, this true Jerusalem blade, Christ, and him crucified. With this he keeps the devil at arm's length; with this he fights against temptation, and against lust, against spiritual wickedness in high places, and with this he resists. Now, he has come to his last struggle; the river Death rolls black and sullen before him; dark shapes rise upward from the flood, and howl and fright him. How shall he cross the stream? How shall he find a landing place on the other side? Dread thoughts perplex him for a moment; he is alarmed; but he remembers, Jesus died; and catching up that watchword he ventures to the flood. Before his feet the Jordan flies apace; like Israel of old, he walks through, dry shod, singing as he goes to heaven, "Christ is with me, Christ is with me, passing through the stream! Victory, victory, victory, to him that overth me!"

To the Christian in his own experience Christ is ever the power of God. As for temptation he can meet that with Christ; as for trouble he can endure that through Christ who strengthens him, yea, he can say with Paul, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Have you never seen a Christian in trouble, a true Christian? I have read a story

of a man who was converted to God by seeing the conduct of his wife in the hour of trouble. They had a lovely child, their only offspring. The father's heart doted on it perpetually, and the mother's soul was knit up in the heart of the little one. It lay sick upon its bed, and the parents watched it night and day. At last it died. The father had no God: he rent his hair, he rolled upon the floor in misery, wallowed upon the earth, cursing his being, and defying God in the utter casting down of his agony. There sat his wife, as fond of the child as ever he could be; and though tears would come, she gently said, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." "What," said he, starting to his feet, "you love that child? I thought that when that child died you would break your heart. Here am I, a strong man; I am mad: here are you, a weak woman, and yet you are strong and bold; tell me what it is possesses you?" Said she, "Christ is my Lord, I trust in him; surely I can give this child to him who gave himself for me." From that instant the man became a believer. "There must," said he, "be some truth and some power in the gospel, which could lead you to believe in such a manner, under such a trial." Christians! try to exhibit that spirit wherever you are, and prove to the worldling that in your experience at least "Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God."

And now the last point. In the *Christian's experience*, Christ is wisdom, as well as power. If you want to be a thoroughly learned man the best place to begin, is to begin at the Bible, to begin at Christ. It is said that even children learn to read more quickly from the Bible than from any other book; and this I am sure of, that we, who are but grown-up children, will learn better and learn faster by beginning with Christ than we could by beginning with any thing else. I remember saying once, and as I can not say it better I will repeat it, that before I knew the gospel I gathered up a heterogeneous mass of all kinds of knowledge from here, there, and everywhere; a bit of chemistry, a bit of botany, a bit of astronomy, and a bit of this, that, and the other. I put them altogether, in one great confused chaos. When I learned the gospel, I got a shelf in my head to put every thing away upon just where it

should be. It seemed to me as if, when I had discovered Christ and him crucified, I had got the center of the system, so that I could see every other science revolving around in order. From the earth, you know, the planets appear to move in a very irregular manner—they are progressive, retrograde, stationary; but if you could get upon the sun, you would see them marching round in their constant, uniform, circular motion. So with knowledge. Begin with any other science you like, and truth will seem to be awry. Begin with the science of Christ crucified, and you will begin with the sun, you will see every other science moving round it in complete harmony. The greatest mind in the world will be evolved by beginning at the right end. The old saying is, "Go from nature up to nature's God;" but it is hard work going up hill. The best thing is to go from nature's God down to nature; and if you once get to nature's God, and believe him and love him, it is surprising how easy it is to hear music in the waves, and songs in the wild whisperings of the winds; to see God everywhere, in the stones, in the rocks, in the rippling brooks, and hear him everywhere, in the lowing of cattle, in the rolling of thunder, and in the fury of tempests. Get Christ first, put him in the right place, and you will find him to be the wisdom of God in your own experience.

But wisdom is not knowledge; and we must not confound the two. Wisdom is the right use of knowledge; and Christ's gospel helps us, by teaching us the right use of knowledge. It directs us. You Christian has lost his way in a dark wood; but God's Word is a compass to him, and a lantern too: he finds his way by Christ. He comes to a turn in the road. Which is right, and which is wrong? He can not tell. Christ is the great sign-post, telling him which way to go. He sees every day new straits attend; he knows not which way to steer. Christ is the great pilot who puts his hand on the tiller, and makes him wise to steer through the shoals of temptation and the rocks of sin. Get the gospel, and you are a wise man. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and right understanding have they who keep his commandments." Ah! Christian, you have had many doubts, but you have had them all unriddled, when you have



come to the cross of Christ. You have had many difficulties; but they have been all explained in the light of Calvary. You have seen mysteries, when you have brought them to the face of Christ, made clear and manifest, which once you never could have known. Allow me to remark here, that some people make use of Christ's gospel to illuminate their heads, instead of making use of it to illuminate their hearts. They are like the farmer Rowland Hill once described. The farmer is sitting by the fire with his children; the cat is purring on the hearth, and they are all in great comfort. The plowman rushes in and cries, "Thieves! thieves! thieves!" The farmer rises up in a moment, grasps the candle, holds it up to his head, rushes after the thieves, and, says Rowland Hill, "he tumbles over a wheelbarrow, because he holds the light to his head, instead of holding it to his feet." So there are many who just hold religion up to illuminate their intellect, instead of holding it down to illuminate their practice; and so they make a sad tumble of it, and cast themselves into the mire, and do more hurt to their Christian profession in one hour than they will ever be able to retrieve. Take care that you make the wisdom of God, by God's Holy Spirit, a thing of true wisdom, directing your feet into his statutes, and keeping you in his ways.

And now a practical appeal, and we have done. I have been putting my arrow on the string; and if I have used any light similes, I have but done so just as the archer tips his arrow with a feather, to make it fly the better. I know that a rough quaint saying often sticks, when another thing is entirely forgotten. Now let us draw the bow, and send the arrow right at your hearts. Men, brethren, fathers, how many of you have felt in yourselves that Christ is the power of God, and the wisdom of God? Internal evidence is the best evidence in the world for the truth of the gospel. No Paley or Butler can prove the truth of the gospel so well as Mary, the servant girl yonder, that has got the gospel in her heart, and the power of it manifest in her life. Say, has Christ ever broken your bonds and set you free? Has he delivered you from your evil life, and from your sin? Has he given you "a good hope through grace," and can you now say, "On him I lean; on

my beloved I stay myself?" If so, go away and rejoice: you are a saint; for the apostle has said, "He is unto us who are saved, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." But if you can not say this, allow me affectionately to warn you. If you want not this power of Christ, and this wisdom of Christ now, you will want them in a few short moments, when God shall come to judge the quick and the dead, when you shall stand before his bar, and when all the deeds that you have done shall be read before an assembled world. You will want religion then. O that you had grace to tremble now; grace to kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little." Hear ye how to be saved, and I have done. Do you feel that you are a sinner? Are you conscious that you have rebelled against God? Are you willing to acknowledge your transgressions, and do you hate and abhor them, while at the same time you feel you can do nothing to atone for them? Then hear this. Christ died for you; and if he died for you, you can not be lost. Christ died in vain for no man for whom he died. If you are a penitent and a believer, he died for you, and you are safe; go your way: rejoice "with joy unspeakable, and full of glory;" for he who has taught you your need of a Saviour, will you give that Saviour's blood to be applied to your conscience, and you shall ere long, with yonder blood-washed host, praise God and the Lamb saying, "Hallelujah, for ever, Amen!" Only do you feel that you are a sinner? If not, I have no gospel to preach to you; I can but warn you. But if you feel your lost estate, and come to Christ, come, and welcome, for he will never cast you away.

## SERMON XXVI.

### GOING HOME—A CHRISTMAS SERMON.

“Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.”—MARK, v. 19.

THE case of the man here referred to is a very extraordinary one: it occupies a place among the memorabilia of Christ's life, perhaps as high as any thing which is recorded by either of the evangelists. This poor wretch being possessed with a legion of evil spirits had been driven to something worse than madness. He fixed his home among the tombs, where he dwelt by night and day, and was the terror of all those who passed by. The authorities had attempted to curb him; he had been bound with fetters and chains, but in the paroxysms of his madness he had torn the chains in sunder, and broken the fetters in pieces. Attempts had been made to reclaim him; but no man could tame him. He was worse than the wild beasts, for they might be tamed; but his fierce nature would not yield. He was a misery to himself, for he would run upon the mountains by night and day, crying and howling fearfully, cutting himself with the sharp flints, and torturing his poor body in the most frightful manner. Jesus Christ passed by; he said to the devils, “Come out of him.” The man was healed in a moment; he fell down at Jesus' feet; he became a rational being—an intelligent man, yea, what is more, a convert to the Saviour. Out of gratitude to his deliverer, he said, “Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest; I will be thy constant companion and thy servant; permit me so to be.” “No,” said Christ, “I esteem your motive; it is one of gratitude to me; but if you would show your gratitude, ‘go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.’”

Now, this teaches us a very important fact, namely, this, true religion does not break in sunder the bonds of family relationship. True religion seldom encroaches upon that sacred, I had almost said divine institution called *home*; it does not separate men from their families, and make them aliens to their flesh and blood. Superstition has done that; an awful superstition, which calls itself Christianity, has sundered men from their kind; but true religion has never done so. Why, if I might be allowed to do such a thing, I would seek out the hermit in his lonely cavern, and I would go to him and say, "Friend, if thou art what thou dost profess to be, a true servant of the living God, and not a hypocrite, as I guess thou art—if thou art a true believer in Christ, and would show forth what he has done for thee, upset that pitcher, eat the last piece of thy bread, leave this dreary cave, wash thy face, untie thy hempen girdle; and if thou wouldst show thy gratitude, go home to thy friends, and tell them what great things the Lord hath done for thee. Canst thou edify the sere leaves of the forest? Can the beasts learn to adore that God whom thy gratitude should strive to honor? Dost thou hope to convert these rocks, and wake the echoes into songs? Nay, go back; dwell with thy friends, reclaim thy kinship with men, and unite again with thy fellows, for this is Christ's approved way of showing gratitude." And I would go to every monastery and every nunnery, and say to the monks, "Come out, brethren, come out! If you are what you say you are, servants of God, go home to your friends. No more of this absurd discipline; it is not Christ's rule; you are acting differently from what he would have you; go home to your friends!" And to the Sisters of Mercy we would say, "Be sisters of mercy to your own sisters; go home to your friends; take care of your aged parents; turn your own houses into convents; do not sit here nursing your pride by a disobedience to Christ's rule, which says, 'go home to thy friends.'" "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee." The love of a solitary and ascetic life, which is by some considered to be a divine virtue, is neither more nor less than a disease of the mind. In the ages when there was but little benevo-

ence, and consequently few hands to build lunatic asylums, superstition supplied the lack of charity, and silly men and women were allowed the indulgence of their fancies in secluded haunts or in easy laziness. Young has most truly said,

“The first sure symptoms of a mind in health  
Are rest of heart and pleasure found at home.”

Avoid, my friends, above all things, those romantic and absurd conceptions of virtue which are the offspring of superstition and the enemies of righteousness. Be not without natural affection, but love those who are knit to you by ties of nature.

True religion can not be inconsistent with nature. It never can demand that I should abstain from weeping when my friend is dead. “Jesus wept.” It can not deny me the privilege of a smile, when Providence looks favorably upon me; for once “Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, Father, I thank thee.” It does not make a man say to his father and mother, “I am no longer your son.” That is not Christianity, but something worse than what beasts would do, which would lead us to be entirely sundered from our fellows, to walk among them as if we had no kinship with them. To all who think a solitary life must be a life of piety, I would say, “It is the greatest delusion.” To all who think that those must be good people who snap the ties of relationship, let us say, “Those are the best who maintain them.” Christianity makes a husband a better husband, it makes a wife a better wife than she was before. It does not free me from my duties as a son; it makes me a better son, and my parents better parents. Instead of weakening my love, it gives me fresh reason for my affection; and he whom I loved before as my father, I now love as my brother and co-worker in Christ Jesus; and she whom I revered as my mother, I now love as my sister in the covenant of grace, to be mine for ever in the state that is to come. O! suppose not, any of you, that Christianity was ever meant to interfere with households; it is intended to cement them, and to make them households which death itself shall never sever, for it binds them up in the bundle of life with the Lord their God, and reunites the several individuals on the other side of the flood.

Now, I will just tell you the reason why I selected my text. I thought within myself, there are a large number of young men who always come to hear me preach; they always crowd the aisles of my chapel, and many of them have been converted to God. Now, here is Christmas day come round again, and they are going home to see their friends. When they get home they will want a Christmas carol in the evening; I think I will suggest one to them—more especially to such of them as have been lately converted. I will give them a theme for their discourse on Christmas evening; it may not be quite so amusing as “The Wreck of the *Golden Mary*,” but it will be quite as interesting to Christian people. It shall be this: “Go home and tell your friends what the Lord hath done for your souls, and how he hath had compassion on you.” For my part I wish there were twenty Christmas days in the year. It is seldom that young men can meet with their friends; it is rarely they can all be united as happy families; and though I have no respect to the religious observance of the day, yet I love it as a family institution, as one of England’s brightest days, the great Sabbath of the year, when the plow rests in its furrow, when the din of business is hushed, when the mechanic and the working-man go out to refresh themselves upon the green sward of the glad earth. If any of you are masters you will pardon me for the digression, when I most respectfully beg you to pay your servants the same wages on Christmas day as if they were at work. I am sure it will make their houses glad if you will do so. It is unfair for you to make them feast, or fast, unless you give them wherewithal to feast and make themselves glad on that day of joy.

But now to come to the subject. We are going home to see our friends, and here is the story some of us have to tell. “Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee. First, *here is what they are to tell*; then, secondly, *why they are to tell it*; and then, thirdly, *how they ought to tell it*.

I. First, then, HERE IS WHAT THEY ARE TO TELL. It is to be a story of *personal experience*. “Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and

hath had compassion on thee." You are not to repair to your houses, and forthwith begin to preach. That you are not commanded to do. You are not to begin to take up doctrinal subjects, and expatiate on them, and endeavor to bring persons to your peculiar views and sentiments. You are not to go home with sundry doctrines you have lately learned, and try to teach these. At least you are not commanded so to do; you may, if you please, and none shall hinder you; but you are to go home and tell not what you have believed, but what you have *felt*—what you really know to be your own; not what great things you have read, but what great things the Lord hath *done for you*; not alone what you have seen done in the great congregation, and how great sinners have turned to God, but what the Lord has done for *you*. And mark this: there is never a more interesting story than that which a man tells about himself. The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner derives much of its interest because the man who told it was himself the mariner. He sat down, that man whose finger was skinny, like the finger of death, and began to tell that dismal story of the ship at sea in a great calm, when slimy things did crawl with legs over the shiny sea. The wedding guest sat still to listen, for the old man was himself a story. There is always a great deal of interest excited by a personal narrative. Virgil, the poet, knew this, and, therefore, he wisely makes Æneas tell his own story, and makes him begin it by saying, "In which I also had a great part myself." So if you would interest your friends, tell them what you felt yourself. Tell them how you were once a lost abandoned sinner, how the Lord met with you, how you bowed your knees, and poured out your soul before God, and how at last you leaped with joy, for you thought you heard him say within you, "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for my name's sake." Tell your friends a story of your own personal experience.

Note, next, it must be a story of *free grace*. It is not, "Tell thy friends how great things thou hast done thyself," but "how great things *the Lord* hath done for thee." The man who always dwells upon free will and the power of the creature, and denies the doctrines of grace, invariably mixes up a

great deal of what he has done himself in telling his experience; but the believer in free grace, who holds the great cardinal truths of the gospel, ignores this, and declares, "I will tell what the Lord hath done for me. It is true I must tell how I was first made to pray; but I will tell it thus—

"Grace taught my soul to pray,  
Grace made my eyes o'erflow."

It is true, I must tell in how many troubles and trials God has been with me; but I will tell it thus—

"'Twas grace which kept me to this day,  
And will not let me go.'"

He says nothing about his own doings, or willings, or prayings, or seekings, but he ascribes it all to the love and grace of the great God who looks on sinners in love, and makes them his children, heirs of everlasting life. Go home, young man, and tell the poor sinner's story; go home, young woman, and open your diary, and give your friends stories of grace. Tell them of the mighty works of God's hand which he hath wrought in you from his own free, sovereign, undeserved love. Make it a free-grace story around your family fire.

In the next place, this poor man's tale was a *grateful* story. I know it was grateful, because the man said, "I will tell thee how great things the Lord hath done for me;" and (not meaning a pun in the least degree) I may observe, that a man who is grateful is always full of the greatness of the mercy which God has shown him; he always thinks that what God has done for him is immensely good and supremely great. Perhaps when you are telling the story one of your friends will say, "And what of that?" And your answer will be, "It may not be a great thing to you, but it is to me. You say it is little to repent, but I have not found it so; it is a great and precious thing to be brought to know myself to be a sinner, and to confess it; do you say it is a little thing to have found a Saviour?" Look them in the face, and say, "If you had found him too you would not think it little. You think it little I have lost the burden from my back; but if you had suffered with it, and felt its weight as I have for many a long year, you



would think it no little thing to be emancipated and free, through a sight of the cross." Tell them it is a great story, and if they can not see its greatness, shed great tears and tell it to them with great earnestness, and I hope they may be brought to believe that you at least are grateful, if they are not. May God grant that you may tell a grateful story. No story is more worth hearing than a tale of gratitude.

And lastly, upon this point: it must be a tale told by a poor sinner who feels himself *not to have deserved* what he has received. "How he hath had *compassion* on thee." It was not a mere act of kindness, but an act of free compassion toward one who was in misery. O! I have heard men tell the story of their conversion and of their spiritual life in such a way that my heart hath loathed *them* and their story too, for they have told of their sins as if they did boast in the greatness of their crime, and they have mentioned the love of God not with a tear of gratitude, not with the simple thanksgiving of the really humble heart, but as if they as much exalted themselves as they exalted God. O! when we tell the story of our own conversion, I would have it done with deep sorrow, remembering what we used to be, and with great joy and gratitude, remembering how little we deserve these things. I was once preaching upon conversion and salvation, and I felt within myself, as preachers often do, that it was but dry work to tell this story, and a dull, dull tale it was to me; but on a sudden the thought crossed my mind, "Why, you are a poor lost ruined sinner yourself; tell it, tell it, as you received it: begin to tell of the grace of God as you trust you feel it yourself." When, then, my eyes began to be fountains of tears, those hearers who had nodded their heads began to brighten up, and they listened, because they were hearing something which the man felt himself, and which they recognized as being true to him, if it was not true to them. Tell your story, my hearers, as lost sinners. Do not go to your home, and walk into the house with a supercilious air, as much as to say, "Here's a saint come home to the poor sinners, to tell them a story;" but go home like a poor sinner yourself; and when you go in, your mother remembers what you used to be, you need not tell her there is a change—she will notice it, if it is only one

day you are with her ; and perhaps she will say, " John, what is this change that is in you ?" and if she is a pious mother you will begin to tell her the story, and I know, man though you are, you will not blush when I say it, she will put her arms round your neck and kiss you as she never did before, for you are her twice-born son, hers from whom she shall never part, even though death itself shall divide you for a brief moment. Go home, then, and tell your friends what great things the Lord hath done for you, and how he hath had compassion on you.

II. But now, in the second place, WHY SHOULD WE TELL THIS STORY ? For I hear many of my congregation say, " Sir, I could relate that story to any one sooner than I could to my friends ; I could come to your vestry, and tell you something of what I have tasted and handled of the word of God ; but I could not tell my father, nor my mother, nor my brethren, nor my sisters." Come, then ; I will try and argue with you, to induce you to do so, that I may send you home this Christmas day, to be missionaries in the localities to which you belong, and to be real preachers, though you are not so by name. Dear friends, do tell this story when you go home.

First, for *your Master's sake*. O ! I know you love him ; I am sure you do, if you have proof that he loved you. You can never think of Gethsemane and of its bloody sweat ; of Gabbatha and of the mangled back of Christ, flayed by the whip ; you can never think of Calvary and his pierced hands and feet, without loving him ; and it is a strong argument when I say to you, for his dear sake who loved you so much, go home and tell it. What ! do you think we can have so much done for us, and yet not tell it ? Our children, if any thing should be done for them, do not stay many minutes before they are telling all the company, " such a one hath given me such a present, and bestowed on me such-and-such a favor." And should the children of God be backward in declaring how they were saved when their feet made haste to hell, and how redeeming mercy snatched them as brands from the burning ? You love Jesus, young man ! I put it to you, then, will you refuse to tell the tale of his love to you ? Shall your lips be dumb, when his honor is concerned ? Will you

not, wherever you go, tell of the God who loved you and died for you? This poor man, we are told, “departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him, and all men did marvel.” So with you. If Christ has done much for you, you can not help it—you must tell it. My esteemed friend, Mr. Oncken, a minister in Germany, told us last Monday evening that so soon as he was converted himself, the first impulse of his new-born soul was to do good to others. And where should he do that good? Well, he thought he would go to Germany. It was his own native land, and he thought the command was, “Go home to thy friends, and tell them.” Well, there was not a single Baptist in all Germany, nor any with whom he could sympathize, for the Lutherans had swerved from the faith of Luther, and gone aside from the truth of God. But he went there and preached, and he has now seventy or eighty churches established on the Continent. What made him do it? Nothing but love for his Master, who had done so much for him, could have forced him to go and tell his kinsmen the marvelous tale of divine goodness.

But, in the next place, are your friends pious? Then go home and tell them, in order to *make their hearts glad*. I received last night a short epistle written with a trembling hand by one who is past the natural age of man, living in the county of Essex. His son, under God, had been converted by hearing the word preached, and the good man could not help writing to the minister, thanking *him*, and blessing most of all his God, that his son had been regenerated. “Sir,” he begins, “an old rebel writes to thank you, and above all to thank his God, that his dear son has been converted.” I shall treasure up that epistle. It goes on to say, “Go on! and the Lord bless you.” And there was another case I heard some time ago, where a young woman went home to her parents, and when her mother saw her she said, “There! if the minister had made me a present of all London, I should not have thought so much of it as I do of this—to think that you have really become a changed character, and are living in the fear of God.” O! if you want to make your mother’s heart leap within her, and to make your father glad—if you would make

that sister happy who sent you so many letters, which some times you read against a lamp-post, with your pipe in your mouth—go home and tell your mother that her wishes are all accomplished, that her prayers are heard, that you will no longer chaff her about her Sunday-school class, and no longer laugh at her because she loves the Lord, but that you will go with her to the house of God, for you love God, and you have said, “Your people shall be my people, and your God shall be my God, for I have a hope that your heaven shall be my heaven for ever.” O! what a happy thing it would be if some here who had gone astray should thus go home! It was my privilege a little while ago to preach for a noble institution for the reception of women who had led abandoned lives—and before I preached the sermon I prayed to God to bless it, and in the printed sermon you will notice that at the end of it there is an account of two persons who were blessed by that sermon, and restored. Now, let me tell you a story of what once happened to Mr. Vanderkist, a city missionary, who toils all night long to do good in that great work. There had been a drunken broil in the street; he stepped between the men to part them, and said something to a woman who stood there concerning how dreadful a thing it was that men should thus be intemperate. She walked with him a little way, and he with her, and she began to tell him such a tale of woe and sin too, how she had been lured away from her parents’ home in Somersetshire, and had been brought up here to her soul’s eternal hurt. He took her home with him, and taught her the fear and love of Christ; and what was the first thing she did, when she returned to the paths of godliness, and found Christ to be the sinner’s Saviour? She said, “Now I must go home to my friends.” Her friends were written to; they came to meet her at the station at Bristol, and you can hardly conceive what a happy meeting it was. The father and mother had lost their daughter; they had never heard from her; and there she was, brought back by the agency of this Institution, and restored to the bosom of her family. Ah! if such a one be here! I know not; among such a multitude there may be such a one. Woman! hast thou strayed from thy family? Hast thou left them long? “Go home to thy

friends," I beseech thee, ere thy father totters to his grave, and ere thy mother's gray hairs sleep on the snow-white pillow of her coffin. Go back, I beseech thee! Tell her thou art penitent; tell her that God hath met with thee—that the young minister said, "Go back to thy friends." And if so, I shall not blush to have said these things, though you may think I ought not to have mentioned them; for if I may but win one such soul, I will bless God to all eternity. "Go home to thy friends." Go home and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee. Can not you imagine the scene, when the poor demoniac mentioned in my text went home? He had been a raving madman; and when he came and knocked at the door, don't you think you see his friends calling to one another in affright, "O! there he is again," and the mother running up stairs and locking all the doors, because her son had come back that was raving mad; and the little ones crying, because they knew what he had been before—how he cut himself with stones, because he was possessed with devils. And can you picture their joy, when the man said, "Mother! Jesus Christ has healed me; let me in; I am no lunatic now?" And when the father opened the door, he said, "Father! I am not what I was; all the evil spirits are gone; I shall live in the tombs no longer. I want to tell you how the glorious man who wrought my deliverance accomplished the miracle—how he said to the devils, 'Get ye hence,' and they ran down a steep place into the sea, and I am come home healed and saved." O! if such a one, possessed with sin, were here this morning, and would go home to his friends, to tell them of his release, methinks the scene would be somewhat similar.

Once more, dear friends. I hear one of you say, "Ah! sir, would to God I could go home to pious friends! But when I go home I go into the worst of places; for my home is among those who never knew God themselves, and consequently never prayed for me, and never taught me any thing concerning heaven." Well, young man, go home to your friends. If they are ever so bad, they are your friends. I sometimes meet with young men wishing to join the church, who say, when I ask them about their father, "O, sir, I am parted from

my father." Then I say, "Young man, you may just go and see your father before I have any thing to do with you; if you are at ill-will with your father and mother I will not receive you into the church; if they are ever so bad they are *your parents*." Go home to them, and tell them, not to make them glad, for they will very likely be angry with you; but tell them *for their soul's salvation*. I hope, when you are telling the story of what God did for you, that they will be led by the Spirit to desire the same mercy themselves. But I will give you a piece of advice. Do not tell this story to your ungodly friends when they are all together, for they will laugh at you. Take them one by one, when you can get them alone, and begin to tell it to them, and they will hear you seriously. There was once a very pious lady who kept a lodging-house for young men. All the young men were very gay and giddy, and she wanted to say something to them concerning religion. She introduced the subject, and it was passed off immediately with a laugh. She thought within herself, "I have made a mistake." The next morning, after breakfast, when they were all going, she said to one of them, "Sir, I should like to speak with you a moment or two," and taking him aside into another room she talked with him. The next morning she took another, and the next morning another, and it pleased God to bless her simple statement, when it was given individually: but, without doubt, if she had spoken to them all together they would have backed each other up in laughing her to scorn. Reprove a man alone. A verse may hit him whom a sermon flies. You may be the means of bringing a man to Christ who has often heard the Word and only laughed at it, but who can not resist a gentle admonition. In one of the States of America there was an infidel who was a great despiser of God, a hater of the Sabbath and all religious institutions. What to do with him the ministers did not know. They met together and prayed for him. But among the rest, one Elder B—— resolved to spend a long time in prayer for the man; after that he got on horseback, and rode down to the man's forge, for he was a blacksmith. He left his horse outside, and said, "Neighbor, I am under very great concern about your soul's salvation; I tell you I

pray day and night for your soul's salvation." He left him, and rode home on his horse. The man went inside to his house, after a minute or two, and said to one of his infidel friends, "Here's a new argument; here's Elder B—— been down here, he did not dispute, and never said a word to me except this, 'I say, I am under great concern about your soul; I can not bear you should be lost.' O! that fellow," he said, "I can not answer him;" and the tears began to roll down his cheeks. He went to his wife, and said, "I can't make this out; I never cared about my soul, but here's an elder, that has no connection with me, but I have always laughed at him, and he has come five miles this morning on horseback just to tell me he is under concern about my salvation." After a little while he thought it was time he should be under concern about his salvation too. He went in, shut the door, began to pray, and the next day he was at the deacon's house, telling him that he too was under concern about his salvation, and asking him to tell him what he must do to be saved. O! that the everlasting God might make use of some of those now present in the same way, that they might be induced to

"Tell to others round  
 What a dear Saviour they have found;  
 To point to his redeeming blood,  
 And say, Behold the way to God!"

III. I shall not detain you much longer; but there is a third point, upon which we must be very brief. **HOW IS THE STORY TO BE TOLD?**

First, *tell it truthfully*. Do not tell more than you know; do not tell John Bunyan's experience, when you ought to tell your own. Do not tell your mother you have felt what only Rutherford felt. Tell her no more than the truth. Tell your experience truthfully; for mayhap one single fly in the pot of ointment will spoil it, and one statement you may make which is not true may ruin it all. Tell the story truthfully.

In the next place, *tell it very humbly*. I have said that before. Do not intrude yourselves upon those who are older and know more; but tell your story humbly; not as a preacher not *ex-cathedra*, but as a friend and as a son.

Next, *tell it very earnestly*. Let them see you mean it.

Do not talk about religion flippantly; you will do no good if you do. Do not make puns on texts; do not quote Scripture by way of joke: if you do, you may talk till you are dumb, you will do no good, if you in the least degree give them occasion to laugh by laughing at holy things yourself. Tell it very earnestly.

And then, *tell it very devoutly*. Do not try to tell your tale to man till you have told it first to God. When you are at home on Christmas day, let no one see your face till God has seen it. Be up in the morning; wrestle with God; and if your friends are not converted, *wrestle with God for them*; and then you will find it easy work to *wrestle with them for God*. Seek, if you can, to get them one by one, and tell them the story. Do not be afraid; only think of the good you may possibly do. Remember, he that saves a soul from death hath covered a multitude of sins, and he shall have stars in his crown for ever and ever. Seek to be, under God, saviours in your family, to be the means of leading your own beloved brethren and sisters to seek and to find the Lord Jesus Christ, and then one day, when you shall meet in Paradise, it will be a joy and blessedness to think that you are there, and that your friends are there too, whom God will have made you the instrument of saving. Let your reliance on the Holy Spirit be entire and honest. Trust not yourself, but fear not to trust him. He can give you words. He can apply those words to their hearts, and so enable you to "minister grace to the hearers."

To close up, by a short, and I think a pleasant turning of the text, to suggest another meaning to it. Soon, dear friends, very soon with some of us, the Master will say, "Go home to thy friends." You know where the home is. It is up above the stars,

"Where our best friends, our kindred, dwell,  
Where God our Saviour reigns."

Yon gray-headed man has buried all his friends; he has said, "I shall go to them, but they will not return to me." Soon his Master will say, "Thou hast had enough tarrying here in this vale of tears: go home to thy friends!" O! happy hour. O! blessed moment, when that shall be the word—'Go home to thy friends!' And when we go home to **our**



friends in Paradise, what shall we do? Why, first, we will repair to that blest seat where Jesus sits, take off our crown and cast it at his feet, and crown him Lord of all. And when we have done that, what shall be our next employ? Why, we will tell the blessed ones in heaven what the Lord hath done for us, and how he hath had compassion on us. And shall such a tale be told in heaven? Shall that be the Christmas carol of the angels? Yes, it shall be; it has been published there before—blush not to tell it yet again—for Jesus has told it before, “When he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them. Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.” And thou, poor sheep, when thou shalt be gathered in, wilt thou not tell how thy Shepherd sought thee, and how he found thee? Wilt thou not sit in the grassy meads of heaven, and tell the story of thine own redemption? Wilt thou not talk with thy brethren and thy sisters, and tell them how God loved thee and hath brought thee there? Perhaps thou sayest, “It will be a very short story.” Ah! it would be if you could write now. A little book might be the whole of your biography; but up there, when your memory shall be enlarged, when your passions shall be purified and your understanding clear, you will find that what was but a tract on earth will be a huge tome in heaven. You will tell a long story there of God’s sustaining, restraining, constraining grace, and I think that when you pause to let another tell his tale, and then another, and then another, you will at last, when you have been in heaven a thousand years, break out and exclaim, “O saints, I have something else to say.” Again they will tell their tales, and again you will interrupt them with “O beloved, I have thought of another case of God’s delivering mercy.” And so you will go on, giving them themes for songs, finding them the material for the warp and woof of heavenly sonnets. “Go home,” he will soon say, “go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.” Wait a while; tarry his leisure, and ye shall soon be gathered to the land of the hereafter, to the home of the blessed, where endless felicity shall be thy portion. God grant a blessing, for his name’s sake!

## SERMON XXVII.

### A MIGHTY SAVIOUR.

“Mighty to save.”—ISAIAH, lxiii. 1.

THIS, of course, refers to our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, who is described as “coming from Edom with dyed garments from Bozrah,” and who, when it is questioned who he is, replies, “I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.” It will be well, then, at the commencement of our discourse to make one or two remarks concerning the mysteriously complex person of the man and God whom we call our Redeemer, Jesus Christ our Saviour. It is one of the mysteries of the Christian religion, that we are taught to believe that Christ is God, and yet a man. According to Scripture, we hold that he is “*very God*,” equal and co-eternal with the Father, possessing, as his Father doth, all divine attributes in an infinite degree. He participated with his Father in all the acts of his divine might; he was concerned in the decree of election, in the fashioning of the covenant; in the creation of the angels, in the making of the world, when it was wheeled from nothing into space, and in the ordering of this fair frame of nature. Before any of these acts the divine Redeemer was the eternal Son of God. “From everlasting to everlasting he is God.” Nor did he cease to be God when he became man. He was equally “God over all, blessed for evermore,” when he was “the man of sorrows, acquainted with grief,” as before his incarnation. We have abundant proof of that in the constant affirmations of Scripture, and, indeed, also in the miracles which he wrought. The raising of the dead, the treading of the billows of the ocean, the hushing of the winds, and the rending of the rocks, with all those marvelous acts of his, which we have not time here to mention, were strong and potent proofs that he was

God, most truly God, even when he condescended to be man. And Scripture, most certainly, teaches us that he is God now, that he shares the throne of his Father—that he sits high above all “principalities and powers, and every name that is named,” and is the true and proper object of the veneration, the worship, and the homage of all worlds. We are equally taught to believe that he is *man*. Scripture informs us that, on a day appointed, he came from heaven and did become man as well as God, taking upon himself the nature of a babe in the manger of Bethlehem. From that babe, we are told, he did grow to the stature of manhood, and became “bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh,” in every thing except our sin. His sufferings, his hunger, above all, his death and burial, are strong proofs that he was man, most truly man; and yet it is demanded of us by the Christian religion, to believe, that while he was man, he was most truly God. We are taught that he was a “child born, a son given,” and yet, at the same time, the “Wonderful, the Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father.” Whosoever would have clear and right views of Jesus, must not mingle his natures. We must not consider him as a God diluted into deified manhood, or as a mere man officially exalted to the Godhead, but as being two distinct natures in one person; not God melted into man, nor man made into God, but man and God taken into union together. Therefore, do we trust in him, as the Daysman, the Mediator, Son of God, and Son of Man. This is the person who is our Saviour. It is this glorious, yet mysterious being, of whom the text speaks, when it says, he is mighty—“mighty to save.”

That he is mighty we need not inform you; for as readers of the Scriptures you all believe in the might and majesty of the incarnate Son of God. You believe him to be the Regent of providence, the King of death, the Conqueror of hell, the Lord of angels, the Master of storms, and the God of battles, and, therefore, you can need no proof that he is mighty. The subject of this morning is one part of his mightiness. He is “mighty to save.” May God the Holy Spirit help us in briefly entering upon this subject, and make use of it to the salvation of our souls!

First, we shall consider *what is meant by the words "to save ;"* secondly, *how we prove the fact that he is "mighty to save ;"* thirdly, *the reason why he is "mighty to save ;"* and then, fourthly, *the inferences which are to be deduced from the doctrine that Jesus Christ is "mighty to save."*

I. First, then, WHAT ARE WE TO UNDERSTAND BY THE WORDS "TO SAVE?"

Commonly, most men, when they read these words, consider them to mean salvation from hell. They are partially correct, but the notion is highly defective. It is true Christ does save men from the penalty of their guilt; he does take those to heaven who deserve the eternal wrath and displeasure of the Most High; it is true that he does blot out "iniquity, transgression, and sin," and that the iniquities of the remnant of his people are passed over for the sake of his blood and atonement. But that is not the whole meaning of the words "to save." This deficient explanation lies at the root of mistakes which many theologians have made, and by which they have surrounded their system of divinity with mist. They have said that to save is to pluck men as brands from the burning—to save them from destruction if they repent. Now, it means vastly, I had almost said infinitely more than this. "To save" means something more than just delivering penitents from going down to hell. By the words "to save" I understand the whole of the great work of salvation, from the first holy desire, the first spiritual conviction, onward to complete sanctification. All is done of God through Jesus Christ. Christ is not only mighty to save those who do repent, but he is able to make men repent; he is engaged not merely to carry those to heaven who believe, but he is mighty to give men new hearts and to work faith in them; he is mighty not merely to give heaven to one who wishes for it, but he is mighty to make the man who hates holiness love it, to constrain the despiser of his name to bend his knee before him, and to make the most abandoned reprobate turn from the error of his ways.

By the words "to save," I do not understand what some men say they mean. They tell us in their divinity that Christ came into the world to put all men into a salvable state—to make the salvation of all men possible by their own exertions

I believe that Christ came for no such thing—that he came into the world not to put men into a *salvable* state, but into a *saved* state; not to put them where they could save themselves, but to do the work in them and for them, from the first even to the last. If I believed that Christ came only to put you, my hearers, and myself into a state where we might save ourselves, I should give up preaching henceforth and for ever; for knowing a little of the wickedness of men's hearts, because I know something of my own—knowing how much men naturally hate the religion of Christ—I should despair of any success in preaching a gospel which I had only to offer, its effects depending upon the voluntary acceptance of it by unrenewed and unregenerate men. If I did not believe that there was a might going forth with the word of Jesus, which makes men willing in the day of his power, and which turns them from the error of their ways by the mighty, overwhelming, constraining force of a divine and mysterious influence, I should cease to glory in the cross of Christ. Christ, we repeat, is mighty, not merely to put men into a salvable condition, but mighty absolutely and entirely to save them. This fact I regard as one of the grandest proofs of the divine character of the Bible revelation. I have many a time had doubts and fears, as most of you have had; and where is the strong believer that has not sometimes wavered? I have said, within myself, "Is this religion true, which, day after day, I incessantly preach to the people? Is it the correct one? Is it true that this religion has an influence upon mankind?" And I will tell you how I have reassured myself. I have looked upon the hundreds, nay, upon the thousands whom I have around me, who were once the vilest of the vile—drunkards, swearers, and such like—and I now see them "clothed, and in their right mind," walking in holiness and in the fear of God; and I have said within myself, "This must be the truth, then, because I see its marvelous effects. It is true, because it is efficient for purposes which error never could accomplish. It exerts an influence among the lowest order of mortals, and over the most abominable of our race. It is a power, an irresistible agent of good; who, then, shall deny its truth? I take it that the highest proof of Christ's power is not that he offers salvation,

not that he bids you take it if you will, but that when you reject it, when you hate it, when you despise it, he has a power whereby he can change your mind, make you think differently from your former thoughts, and turn you from the error of your ways. This I conceive to be the meaning of the text: "mighty to save."

But it is not all the meaning. Our Lord is not only mighty to make men repent, to quicken the dead in sin, to turn them from their follies and their iniquities. But he is exalted to do more than that: he is mighty to keep them Christians after he has made them so, and mighty to preserve them in his fear and love, until he consummates their spiritual existence in heaven. Christ's might doth not lie in making a believer, and then leaving him to shift for himself afterward; but he who begins the good work carries it on; he who imparts the first germ of life which quickens the dead soul, gives afterward the life which prolongs the divine existence, and bestows that mighty power which at last bursts asunder every bond of sin, and lands the soul perfected in glory. We hold and teach, and, we believe, upon scriptural authority, that all men unto whom Christ has given repentance, must infallibly hold on their way. We do believe that God never begins a good work in a man without finishing it; that he never makes a man truly alive to spiritual things without carrying on that work in his soul even to the end, by giving him a place among the choirs of the sanctified. We do not think that Christ's power dwells in merely bringing me one day into grace, and then telling me to keep myself there, but in so putting me into a gracious state, and giving me such an inward life, and such a power within myself, that I can no more turn back than the very sun in the heavens can stay itself in its course, or cease to shine. Beloved, we regard this as signified by the terms "mighty to save." This is commonly called Calvinistic doctrine; it is none other than Christian doctrine, the doctrine of the holy Bible; for despite that it is now called Calvinism, it could not be so called in Augustine's days; and yet in Augustine's works you find the very same things. And it is not to be called Augustinism: it is to be found in the writings of the **Apostle Paul**. And yet it was not called Paulism, simply for

this reason, that it is the expansion, the fullness of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. To repeat what we have before said, we hold and boldly teach, that Jesus Christ is not merely able to save men who put themselves in his way, and who are willing to be saved, but that he is able to make men willing—that he is able to make the drunkard renounce his drunkenness and come to him—that he is able to make the despiser bend his knee, and make hard hearts melt before his love. Now, it is ours to show that he is able to do so.

II. HOW CAN WE PROVE THAT CHRIST IS “MIGHTY TO SAVE?”

We will give you the strongest argument first; and we shall need but one. The argument is, that he *has* done it. We need no other; it were superfluous to add another. He *has* saved men. He has saved them, in the full extent and meaning of the word which we have endeavored to explain. But in order to set this truth in a clear light, we will suppose the worst of cases. It is very easy to imagine, say some, that when Christ's gospel is preached to some here who are amiable and lovely, and have always been trained up in the fear of God, they will receive the gospel in the love of it. Very well, then we will not take such a case. You see this South Sea Islander. He has just been eating a diabolical meal of human flesh; he is a cannibal; at his belt are slung the scalps of men whom he has murdered, and in whose blood he glories. If you land on the coast he will eat you too, unless you mind what you are after. That man bows himself before a block of wood. He is a poor, ignorant, debased creature, but very little removed from the brute. Now, has Christ's gospel power to tame that man, to take the scalps from his girdle, to make him give up his bloody practices, renounce his gods, and become a civilized and Christian man? You know, my dear friends, you talk about the power of education in England; there may be a great deal in it; education may do very much for some who are here, not in a spiritual, but in a natural way; but what would education do with this savage: go and try. Send the best schoolmaster in England over to him; he will eat him before the day is up. That will be all the good of it. But if the missionary goes with Christ's gospel, what will be

come of him? Why, in multitudes of cases, he has been the pioneer of civilization, and, under the providence of God, has escaped a cruel death. He goes with love in his hands and in his eyes; he speaks to the savage. And, mark ye, we are telling facts now, not dreams. The savage drops his tomahawk. Says he, "It is marvelous; the things that this man tells me are wonderful; I will sit and listen." He listens, and the tears roll down his cheeks; a feeling of humanity which never burned within his soul before is kindled in him. He says, "I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ;" and soon he is "clothed, and in his right mind," and becomes in every respect a man—such a man as we could desire all men to be. Now, we say that this is a proof that Christ's gospel does not come to the mind that is prepared for it, but prepares the mind for itself; that Christ does not merely put the seed into the ground that has been prepared beforehand, but plows the ground too—ay, and harrows it, and does the whole of the work. He is able to do all this. Ask our missionaries who are in Africa, in the midst of the greatest barbarians in the world—ask them whether Christ's gospel is able to save, and they will point to the kraal of the Hottentot, and then they will point to the houses of the Kuraman, and they will say, "What has made this difference but the word of the gospel of Christ Jesus?" Yes, dear brethren, we have had proofs enough in heathen countries; and why need we say more, but merely to add this—we have had proofs enough at home. There are some who preach a gospel which is very well fitted to train man in morals, but utterly unfitted to save him—a gospel which does well enough to keep men sober when they are so, but not a gospel which makes men sober when they have become drunkards. It is a good thing enough to supply them with a kind of life when they have it already, but not to quicken the dead and save the soul, and it can give up to despair the very characters whom Christ's gospel was most of all intended to affect. I could a tale unfold of some who have plunged head-first into the blackest gulfs of sin, who would horrify you and me, if we could allow them to recount their guilt. I could tell you how they have come into God's house with their teeth set against the minister, determined that, say



what he would, they might listen, but it would be to scoff. They stayed a moment; some word arrested their attention; they thought within themselves, "I will hear that sentence." It was some pointed, terse saying that entered into their souls. They knew not how it was, but they were spell-bound, and stood to listen a little longer; and by-and-by, unconsciously to themselves, the tears began to fall, and when they went away, they had a strange, mysterious feeling about them that led them to their chambers. Down they fell on their knees; the story of their life was all told before God; he gave them peace through the blood of the Lamb, and they went to God's house, many of them to say, "Come and hear what God hath done for my soul," and to

"Tell to sinners round  
What a dear Saviour they had found."

Remember the case of John Newton, the great and mighty preacher of St. Mary, Woolnoth—an instance of the power of God to change the heart, as well as to give peace when the heart is changed. Ah! dear hearers, I often think within myself, "This is the greatest proof of the Saviour's power." Let another doctrine be preached: will it do the same? If it will, why not let every man gather a crowd round him and preach it? Will it really do it? If it will, then the blood of men's souls must rest upon the man who does not boldly proclaim it. If he believes his gospel does save souls, how does he account for it that he stands in his pulpit from the first of January till the last of December, and never hears of a harlot made honest, nor of a drunkard reclaimed? Why? For this reason, that it is a poor dilution of Christianity. It is something like it, but it is not the bold, broad Christianity of the Bible; it is not the full gospel of the blessed God, for that *has* power to save. But if they do believe that theirs is the gospel, let them come out to preach it, and let them strive with all their might to win souls from sin, which is rife enough, God knows. We say again, that we have proof positive in cases even here before us, that Christ is mighty to save even the worst of men—to turn them from follies in which they

have too long indulged, and we believe that the same gospel preached elsewhere would produce the same results.

The best proof you can ever have of God's being mighty to save, dear hearers, is that he saved *you*. Ah! my dear hearer, it were a miracle if he should save thy fellow that stands by thy side; but it were more a miracle if he should save thee. What art thou this morning? Answer! "I am an infidel," says one, "I hate and despise Christ's religion." But suppose, sir, there should be such a power in that religion that one day thou shouldst be brought to believe it! What wouldst thou say then? Ah! I know thou wouldst be in love with that gospel for ever; for thou wouldst say, "I above all men was the last to receive it; and yet here am I, I know not how, brought to love it." O! such a man, when constrained to believe, makes the most eloquent preacher in the world. "Ah! but," says another, "I have been a Sabbath breaker upon principle; I despise the Sabbath, I hate utterly and entirely every thing religious." Well, I can never prove religion to you to be true, unless it should ever lay hold of you, and make you a new man. Then you will say there is something in it. "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen." When we have felt the change it works in ourselves, then we speak of facts, and not of fancies, and we speak very boldly too. We say again, then, he is "mighty to save."

III. But now it is asked, WHY IS CHRIST "MIGHTY TO SAVE?" To this there are sundry answers.

First, if we understand the word "save" in the popular acceptance of the word, which is not, after all, the full one, though a true one—if we understand salvation to mean the pardon of sin and salvation from hell, Christ is mighty to save, *because of the infinite efficacy of his atoning blood*. Sinner! black as thou art with sin, Christ this morning is able to make thee whiter than the driven snow. Thou askest why. I will tell thee. He is able to forgive, because he has been punished for thy sin. If thou dost know and feel thyself to be a sinner, if thou hast no hope or refuge before God but in Christ, then be it known that Christ is able to forgive, because he was once punished for the very sin which thou hast committed, and therefore he can freely remit, because the punish-

ment has been entirely paid by himself. Whenever I get on this subject I am tempted to tell a story; and though I have told it times enough in the hearing of many of you, others of you have never heard it, and it is the simplest way I know of setting out the belief I have in the atonement of Christ. Once a poor Irishman came to me in my vestry. He announced himself something in this way: "Your riverence, I'm come to ax you a question." "In the first place," said I, "I am not a reverend, nor do I claim the title; and in the next place, why don't you go and ask your priest that question?" Said he, "Well your riv—sir, I meant—I did go to him, but he did not answer me to my satisfaction exactly; so I have come to ask you, and if you will answer this you will set my mind at peace, for I am much disturbed about it." "What is the question?" said I. "Why, this. You say, and others say too, that God is able to forgive sin. Now, I can't see how he can be just, and yet forgive sin: for," said this poor man, "I have been so greatly guilty that if God Almighty does not punish me, *he ought*; I feel that he would not be just if he were to suffer me to go without punishment. How, then, sir, can it be true that he can forgive, and still retain the title of just?" "Well," said I, "it is through the blood and merits of Jesus Christ." "Ah!" said he, "but then I do not understand what you mean by that. It is the kind of answer I got from the priest, but I wanted him to explain it to me more fully, how it was that the blood of Christ could make God just. You say it does, but I want to know how." "Well, then," said I, "I will tell you what I think to be the whole system of atonement, which I think is the sum and substance, the root, the marrow, and the essence of all the gospel. This is the way Christ is able to forgive. Suppose," said I, "you had killed some one. You were a murderer; you were condemned to die, and you deserved it." "Faith," said he, "yes, I should deserve it." "Well, her majesty is very desirous of saving your life, and yet at the same time universal justice demands that some one should die on account of the deed that is done. Now, how is she to manage?" Said he, "That is the question. I can not see how she can be inflexibly just, and yet suffer me to escape." "Well," said I, "suppose, Pat, I should go

to her, and say, 'Here is this poor Irishman, he deserves to be hanged, your majesty; I don't want to quarrel with the sentence, because I think it just: but, if you please, I so love him that if you were to hang me instead of him I should be very willing.' Pat, suppose she should agree to it, and hang me instead of you: what then? would she be just in letting you go?" "Ay," said he, "I should think she would. Would she hang two for one thing? I should say not. I'd walk away, and there isn't a policeman that would touch me for it." "Ah," said I, "that is how Jesus saves. 'Father,' he said, I love these poor sinners: let me suffer instead of them!" 'Yes,' said God, 'thou shalt,' and on the tree he died, and suffered the punishment which all his elect people ought to have suffered; so that now all who believe on him, thus proving themselves to be his chosen, may conclude that he was punished for them, and that therefore they never can be punished." "Well," said he, looking me in the face once more, "I understand what you mean; but how is it, if Christ died for all men, that, notwithstanding, some men are punished again? For that is unjust." "Ah!" said I, "I never told you that. I say to you that he has died for all who believe in him, and all who repent, and that he was punished for their sins so absolutely and so really, that none of them shall ever be punished again." "Faith," said the man, clapping his hands, "that's the gospel; if it isn't, then I don't know any thing, for no man could have made that up: it is so wonderful. Ah!" he said, as he went down the stairs, "Pat's safe now; with all his sins about him he'll trust in the man that died for him, and so he shall be saved." Dear hearer, Christ is mighty to save, because God did not turn away the sword, but he sheathed it in his own Son's heart; he did not remit the debt, for it was paid in drops of precious blood; and now the great receipt is nailed to the cross, and our sins with it, so that we may go free if we are believers in him. For this reason he is "mighty to save," in the true sense of the word.

But in the large sense of the word, understanding it to mean all that I have said it does mean, he is "mighty to save." How is it that Christ is able to make men repent, to make men believe, and to make them turn to God? One answers,

“Why, by the eloquence of preachers.” God forbid we should ever say that! It is “not by might nor by power.” Others reply, “It is by the force of moral suasion.” God forbid we should say “ay” to that; for moral suasion has been tried long enough on man, and yet it has failed of success. How does he do it? We answer, by something which some of you despise, but which nevertheless is a fact. He does it by the omnipotent influence of his divine Spirit. While men are hearing the word (in those whom God will save) the Holy Spirit works repentance; he changes the heart and renews the soul. True, the preaching is the instrument, but the Holy Spirit is the great agent. It is certain that the truth is the means of saving, but it is the Holy Ghost applying the truth which saves souls. Ah! and with this power of the Holy Ghost we may go to the most debased and degraded of men, and we need not be afraid but that God can save them. If God should please, the Holy Spirit could at this moment make every one of you fall on your knees, confess your sins, and turn to God. He is an Almighty Spirit, able to do wonders. In the life of Whitefield, we read that sometimes under one of his sermons two thousand persons would at once profess to be saved, and were really so, many of them. We ask why it was? At other times he preached just as powerfully, and not one soul was saved. Why? Because in the one case the Holy Spirit went with the word, and in the other case it did not. All the heavenly result of preaching is owing to the divine Spirit sent from above. I am nothing; my brethren in the ministry around are all nothing; it is God that doeth every thing. “Who is Paul, who is Apollos, and who is Cephas, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as God gave to every man.” It must be “not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord.” Go forth, poor minister! Thou hast no power to preach with polished diction and elegant refinement; go and preach as thou canst. The Spirit can make thy feeble words more mighty than the most ravishing eloquence. Alas! alas! for oratory! Alas! for eloquence! It hath long enough been tried. We have had polished periods, and finely-turned sentences; but in what place have the people been saved by them? We have had

grand and gaudy language ; but where have hearts been renewed ? But now, “ by the foolishness of preaching,” by the simple utterance by a child of God’s Word, he is pleased to save them that believe, and to save sinners from the error of their ways. May God prove his word again this morning !

IV. The fourth point was, **WHAT ARE THE INFERENCES TO BE DERIVED FROM THE FACT THAT JESUS CHRIST IS MIGHTY TO SAVE ?**

Why, first, there is a fact for ministers to learn—that they should endeavor to preach in faith, nothing wavering. “ O God,” cries the minister at times, when he is on his knees, “ I am weak ; I have preached to my hearers, and have wept over them ; I have groaned for them ; but they will not turn to thee. Their hearts are like the nether mill-stone ; they will not weep for sin, nor will they love the Saviour.” Then I think I see the angel standing at his elbow, and whispering in his ear, “ Thou art weak, but he is strong ; thou canst do nothing, but he is ‘ mighty to save.’ ” Bethink thyself of this. It is not the instrument, but the God. It is not the pen wherewith the author writes which is to have the praise of his wisdom or the making of the volume, but it is the brain that thinks it, and the hand that moves the pen. So in salvation. It is not the minister, it is not the preacher, but the God who first designs the salvation, and afterward uses the preacher to work it out. Ah ! poor disconsolate preacher, if thou hast had but little fruit of thy ministry, go on still in faith, remembering it is written, “ My word shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.” Go on ; be of good courage ; God shall help thee ; he shall help thee, and that right early.

Again, here is another encouragement for praying men and women, who are praying to God for their friends. Mother, you have been groaning for your son for many a year ; he is now grown up, and has left your roof, but your prayers have not been heard. So you think. He is as gay as ever ; not yet has he made your breast rejoice. Sometimes you think he will bring your gray hairs with sorrow to the grave. It was but yesterday you said, “ I will give him up, I will never pray for him again ” Stop, mother, stop ! By all that is holy and

that is heavenly, stop! Utter not that resolution again; begin once more! Thou hast prayed over him; thou didst weep over his infant forehead, when he lay in his cradle; thou didst teach him when he came to years of understanding, and thou hast often warned him since; but all of no avail. O! give not up thy prayers; for remember, Christ is "mighty to save." It may be that he waits to be gracious, and he keeps thee waiting, that thou mayest know more of his graciousness when the mercy comes. But pray on. I have heard of mothers who have prayed for their children twenty years; ay, and of some who have died without seeing them converted, and then their very death has been the means of saving their children, by leading them to think. A father once had been a pious man for many years, yet never had he the happiness of seeing one of his sons converted. He had his children round his bed, and he said to them when dying, "My sons, I could die in peace if I could but believe you would follow me to heaven; but this is the most sorrowful thing of all—not that I am dying, but that I am leaving you to meet you no more." They looked at him, but they would not weep, nor would they think on their ways. They went away. Their father was suddenly overtaken with great clouds and darkness of mind; instead of dying peacefully and happily, he died in great misery of soul, but still trusting in Christ. He said, when he died, "O that I had died a happy death, for that would have been a testimony to my sons; but now, O God, this darkness and these clouds have in some degree taken away my power to witness to the truth of thy religion." Well, he died, and was buried. The sons came to the funeral. The day after, one of them said to his brother, "Brother, I have been thinking, father was always a pious man, and if his death was yet such a gloomy one, how gloomy must ours be, without God and without Christ." "Ah!" said the other, "that thought struck me too." They went up to God's house, heard God's word, they came home and bent their knee in prayer, and to their surprise they found that the rest of the family had done the same, and that the God who had never answered the father's prayer in his life had answered it after his death, and by his death too, and by such a death as would appear to be most unlikely to have

wrought the conversion of any. Pray on, then, my sister; pray on, my brother! God shall yet bring thy sons and daughters to his love and fear, and thou shalt rejoice over them in heaven, if thou never dost on earth.

And finally, my dear hearers, there are many of you here this morning who have no love to God, no love to Christ; but you have a desire in your hearts to love him. You are saying, "O! can he save me? Can such a wretch as I be saved?" In the thick of the crowd there you are standing, and you are now saying within yourself, "May I one day sing among the saints above? May I have all my sins blotted out by blood divine?" Yes, sinner, he is "mighty to save;" and this is comfort for thee. Dost thou think thyself the worst of men? Does conscience smite thee as with a mailed fist, and does he say it is all over with thee; thou wilt be lost; thy repentance will be of no avail; thy prayers never will be heard; thou art lost to all intents and purposes? My hearer, think not so. He is "mighty to save." If thou canst not pray, he can help thee to do it; if thou canst not repent, he can give thee repentance; if thou feelest it hard to believe, he can help thee to believe, for he is exalted on high to give repentance, as well as to give remission of sins. O poor sinner, trust in Jesus; cast thyself on him. Cry, and may God help thee to do it now. May he help thee this very day to cast thy soul on Jesus; and this will be one of the best years of all thy life. "Turn ye, turn ye; why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Turn unto Jesus, ye wearied souls; come unto him, for lo! he bids you come. "The Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life," and have Christ's grace freely. It is preached to you, and to all of you who are willing to receive it, it has been already given.

May God of his grace make you willing, and so save your souls, through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour! Amen.



## SERMON XXVIII.

### ISRAEL IN EGYPT.

“And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.”—REV., xv. 3.

At the outset, let us remark the carefulness of the Holy Spirit in guarding the honor of our blessed Lord. This verse is often quoted as if it runs thus—“They sing the song of Moses and the Lamb.” This mistake has led many weak minds to wonder at the expression, for they have imagined that it divided the honor of the song of heaven between Moses and the Redeemer. The clause—“the servant of God”—is doubtless inserted by the Holy Spirit to prevent any error upon this point, and therefore it should be carefully included in the quotation. I take it that the song of Moses is here united with the song of the Lamb, because the one was a type and picture of the other. The glorious overthrow of Pharaoh in the Red Sea shadowed forth the total destruction of Satan and all his host in the day of the great battle of the Lord; and there was in the song of Moses the expression of the same feelings of triumph which will pervade the breasts of the redeemed when they shall triumph with their Captain.

May God the Holy Spirit enable me to *exhibit the parallel which exists between the condition of Israel when passing through the sea, and the position of the church of Christ at the present day.* Next, we shall *compare the triumph of the Lord at the Red Sea with the victory of the Lamb in the great and terrible day of the Lord.* And lastly, I shall *point out certain prominent features of the song of Moses, which will doubtless be as prominent in the song of the Lamb.*

I. First, it is our business to regard THE POSITION OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL AS EMBLEMATICAL OF OUR OWN. And here we observe that, like the church of God, the vast host of Israel had been delivered from bondage. We, my brethren, who constitute a part of the Israel of God, were once the slaves of sin and Satan; we served with hard bondage and rigor while in our natural state; no bondage was ever more terrible than ours; we indeed made bricks without straw, and labored in the very fire; but by the strong hand of God we have been delivered. We have come forth from the prison-house; with joy we beheld ourselves emancipated—the Lord's free men. The iron yoke is taken from our necks; we no longer serve our lusts, and pay obedience to the tyrant sin. With a high hand and an outstretched arm, our God has led us forth from the place of our captivity, and joyfully we pursue our way through the wilderness.

But with the children of Israel it was not all joy; they were free, but their master was at their heels. Pharaoh was loth to lose so valuable a nation of servants; and therefore with his chosen captains, his horsemen, and his chariots, he pursued them in angry haste. Affrighted Israel beheld her infuriated oppressor close at her rear, and trembled for the issue—the hearts of the people failed them while they saw their hopes blighted and their joys ended by the approach of the oppressor; even so it is with some of you; you think you must be driven back again like dumb cattle, into Egypt, and once more become what you were. “Surely,” you say, “I can not hold on my way with such a host seeking to drive me back; I must again become the slave of my iniquities.” And thus dreading apostacy, and feeling that you would rather die than become what you were; you this morning are filled with trepidation. You are saying, “Alas for me! Better that I had died in Egypt than that I should have come out into this wilderness to be again captured.” You have tasted for a moment the joys of holiness and the sweets of liberty; and now again to go back to endure the bondage of a spiritual Egypt, would be worse than before. This is the position of the sacramental host of God's elect; they have come out of Egypt, and they are pursuing their way to Canaan. But the world is

against them ; the kings of the earth stand up, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his people, saying, "Let us scatter them ; let us utterly destroy them." From the fiery days of the stakes of Smithfield even until now, the world's black heart has hated the church, and the world's cruel hand and laughing lip have been for ever against us. The host of the mighty are pursuing us, and are thirsty for our blood, and anxious to cut us off from the earth. Such is our position unto this hour, and such must it be until we are landed on the other side of Jordan, and until our Maker comes to reign on the earth.

But once more : the children of Israel were in a position more wonderful than this. They came to the edge of the Red Sea ; they feared their enemies behind ; they could not fly on either hand, for they were flanked by mountains and stupendous rocks ; one course only was open to them, and that course was through the sea. God commands them to go forward. The rod of Moses is outstretched, and the affrighted waters divide ; a channel is left while the floods stand upright, and the waters are congealed in the heart of the sea. The priests, bearing the ark, march forward ; the whole host of Israel follow. And now behold the wondrous pilgrimage. A wall of alabaster is on either side, and myriads are in the pebbly depths. Like a wall of glass the sea stands on either side of them, frowning with beetling cliffs of foam ; but still on they march ; and until the last of God's Israel is safe the water stands still and firm, frozen by the lips of God. Such, my hearers, is the position of God's church now. You and I are marching through a sea, the floods of which are kept upright only by the sovereign power of God. This world is a world which is suddenly to be destroyed ; and our position in it is just the position of the children of Israel, for whose sake the floods refused to meet until they were safely landed. O church of God ! thou art the salt of the earth : when thou art removed this earth must putrify and decay. O living army of the living God ! ye, like Israel, keep the floods of providence still standing fast ; but when the last of you shall be gone from this stage of action, God's fiery wrath and tremendous anger shall dash down upon the ground whereon you

now are standing, and your enemies shall be overwhelmed in the place through which you now walk safely. Let me put my thoughts as plainly as I can. Naturally, according to the common order, the Red Sea should have flowed on in a level and even manner, constant in its waves, and unbroken in its surface. By the might of God the Red Sea was divided into two parts, and the floods stood back. Now mark. Naturally, according to the common course of justice, this world, which groaneth and travaileth until now, ought, if we only consider the wicked, to be utterly destroyed. The only reason why the Red Sea afforded a safe passage for the host was this—that Israel marched through it; and the only reason why this world stands, and the only reason why it is not destroyed by fire, as it is to be at the last great day, is because God's Israel are in it; but when once they shall have passed through, the parted floods shall meet their hands, and embrace with eager joy to clasp the adverse host within their arms. The day is coming when this world shall reel to and fro and stagger like a drunken man. Every Christian may say, with due reverence to God, "The earth is dissolved; I bear up the pillars thereof." Let all the Christians that are in the world die, and the pillars of the earth would fall, and like a wreck and a vision all this universe of ours would pass away, never to be seen again. We are to-day, I say, passing through the floods, with enemies behind, pursuing us who are going out of Egypt up to Canaan.

II. And now the TRIUMPH OF MOSES was a picture of the ultimate triumph of the Lamb. Moses sang a song unto the Lord by the sea of Egypt. If you will turn to holy Scripture you will find that my text was sung by the holy spirits who had been preserved from sin and from the contamination of the beast; and it is said that they sung this song upon "a sea of glass mingled with fire." Now the song of Moses was sung by the side of a sea, which was glassy, and still; for a little season the floods had been disturbed, divided, separated, congealed, but in a few moments afterward, when Israel had safely passed the flood, they became as glassy as ever, for the enemy had sunken to the bottom like a stone, and the sea returned to its strength when the morning appeared. Is there

ever a time, then, when this great sea of Providence, which now stands parted to give a passage to God's saints shall become a level surface? Is there a day when the now divided dispensations of God, which are kept from following out their legitimate tendency to do justice upon sin—when the two seas of justice shall commingle, and the one sea of God's providence shall be "a sea of glass mingled with fire?" Yes, the day is drawing nigh when God's enemies shall no longer make it necessary for God's providence to be apparently disturbed to save his people, when the great designs of God shall be accomplished, and therefore when the walls of water shall roll together, while in their inmost depths the everlasting burning fire shall still consume the wicked. O, the sea shall be calm upon the surface; the sea upon which God's people shall walk shall seem to be a sea that is clear, without a weed, without an impurity; while down in its hollow bosom, far beyond all mortal ken, shall be the horrid depths where the wicked must for ever dwell in the fire which is mingled with the glass.

Well, I now want to show you why it was that Moses triumphed, and why it is that by-and-by we shall triumph. One reason why Moses sung his song was because *all* Israel were safe. They were all safely across the sea. Not a drop of spray fell from that solid wall until the last of God's Israel had safely planted his foot on the other side of the flood. That done, immediately the floods dissolved into their proper place again, but not till then. Part of that song was, "Thou hast led thy people like a flock through the wilderness." Now, in the last time, when Christ shall come upon earth, the great song will be—"Lord, thou hast saved thy people; thou hast led them all safely through the paths of providence, and not one of them has fallen into the hands of the enemy." O, it is my strong belief, that in heaven there shall not be a vacant throne. I rejoice that all who love the Lord beloved must at last attain to heaven. I do not believe with some that men may start on the road to heaven, and be saved, and yet fall by the hand of the enemy. God forbid, my friends!

" All the chosen race  
Shall meet around the throne,  
Shall bless the conduct of his grace,  
And make his glories known."

Part of the triumph of heaven will be, that there is not one throne that is unoccupied. As many as God hath chosen, as many as Christ hath redeemed, as many as the Spirit hath called, as many as believe, shall arrive safe across the stream. We are not all safely landed yet :

‘Part of the host have crossed the flood,  
And part are crossing now.’

The vanguard of the army have already reached the shore. I see them yonder ;

“I greet the blood-besprinkled bands  
Upon th’ eternal shore.”

And you and I, my brethren, are marching through the depths. We are at this day following hard after Christ, and walking through the wilderness. Let us be of good cheer : the rearguard shall soon be where the vanguard already is ; the last of the chosen shall soon have landed ; the last of God’s elect shall have crossed the sea, and then shall be heard the song of triumph, when all are secure. But O ! if one were absent—O ! if one of his chosen family should be cast away—it would make an everlasting discord in the song of the redeemed, and cut the strings of the harps of Paradise, so that music could never be distilled from them again.

But, perhaps, the major part of the joy of Moses lay in the destruction of *all* the enemies of God. He looked upon his people the day before.

“He looked upon his people,  
And the tear was in his eye ;  
He looked upon the foeman,  
And his glance was stern and high.”

And now to-day he looks upon his people, and he says, “Blessed art thou, O Israel, safely landed on the shore ;” and he looks not upon the foeman, but upon the foeman’s tomb—he looks where the living were protected by the shield of God from all their enemies ; and he sees—what ? A mighty sepulchre of water ; a mighty tomb in which were engulfed princes, monarchs, potentates. “The horse and his rider hath

he thrown into the sea." Pharaoh's chariots also are drowned therein. And soon, my hearers, you and I shall do the same. I say that now we have to look abroad on hosts of enemies. What with the wild beasts of Rome, what with the antichrist of Mohammed, what with the thousands of idolatries and false gods, what with infidelity in all its myriad shapes, many are the enemies of God, and mighty are the hosts of hell. Lo, you see them gathered together this day; horseman upon horseman, chariot upon chariot, gathered together against the Most High. I see the trembling church, fearing to be overthrown; I mark her leaders bending their knees in solemn prayer, and crying, "Lord, save thy people, and bless thy heritage." But mine eye looks through the future with telescopic glance, and I see the happy period of the latter days, when Christ shall reign triumphant. I shall ask them where is Babel? where is Rome? where is Mohammed? and the answer shall come—where? Why they have sunk into the depths; they have sunk to the bottom as a stone. Down there the horrid fire devours them, for the sea of glass is mingled with the fire of judgment. To-day I see a battle-field—the whole earth is torn by the hoofs of horses; there is the rumble of cannon and the roll of drum. "To arms! to arms!" both hosts are shouting. But you wait awhile, and you shall walk across this plain of battle, and say, "Seest thou that colossal system of error dead? There lies another, all frozen, in ghastly death, in motionless stupor. There lieth infidelity; there sleepeth secularism and the secularist; there lie those who defied God. I see all this vast host of rebels lying scattered upon the earth. "Sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; Jehovah has gotten unto himself the victory, and the last of his enemies are destroyed." Then shall be the time when shall be sung "the song of Moses and of the Lamb."

III. Now, turning to the song of Moses, I shall conclude my address to you by noticing some interesting particulars in the song which will doubtless have a place in the everlasting orchestra of the redeemed, when they shall praise the Most High. O! my brethren, I could but wish that I had stood by the Red Sea, to have heard that mighty shout, and that tro

mendous roar of acclamation! Methinks one might well have borne a servitude in Egypt, to have stood in that mighty host who sung such mighty praise. Music hath charms; but never had it such charms as it had that day when fair Miriam led the women, and Moses led the men, like some mighty leader, beating time with his hand. "Sing unto the Lord, for he hath done gloriously." Methinks I see the scene; and I anticipate the greater day, when the song shall be sung again, "as the song of Moses and of the Lamb."

Now, just notice this song. In the 15th chapter of Exodus you find it, and in divers of the Psalms you will see it amplified. The first thing I would have you notice in it is, that from beginning to end it is *a praise of God*, and of nobody else but God. Moses, thou hast said nothing of thyself. O great lawgiver, mightiest of men, did not thine hand grasp the mighty rod that split the sea—that burned its fair breast, and left a scar for awhile upon its bosom? Didst not thou lead the hosts of Israel? Didst not thou marshal their thousands for battle, and like a mighty commander led them through the depths? Is there not a word for thee? Not one. The whole strain of the song is, "I will sing unto the Lord," from beginning to end. It is all praise of Jehovah; there is not one word about Moses, nor a single word in praise of the children of Israel. Dear friends, the last song in this world, the song of triumph, shall be full of God, and of no one else. Here you praise the instrument; to-day you look on this man and on that, and you say, "Thank God for this minister, and for this man?" To-day you say, "Blessed be God for Luther, who shook the Vatican, and thank God for Whitefield, who stirred up a slumbering church;" but in that day you shall not sing of Luther, nor of Whitefield, nor of any of the mighty ones of God's hosts; forgotten shall their names be for a season, even as the stars refuse to shine when the sun himself appeareth. The song shall be unto Jehovah, and Jehovah only; we shall not have a word to say for preachers nor bishops, not a syllable to say for good men and true; but the whole song from first to last shall be, "Unto him that loved us, and hath washed us from our sins in his own blood, unto him be glory for ever and ever. Amen."



And next will you please to note, that this song celebrated something of *the fierceness of the enemy!* Do you observe how, when the songster describes the attack of Pharaoh, he says, "The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them." A song is made out of the wrath of Pharaoh. And it shall be so at the last. The wrath of man shall praise God. I believe the last song of the redeemed, when they shall ultimately triumph, will celebrate in heavenly stanzas the wrath of man overcome by God. Sometimes after great battles, monuments are raised to the memory of the fight; and of what are they composed? They are composed of weapons of death and of instruments of war which have been taken from the enemy. Now, to use that illustration as I think it may be properly used, the day is coming when fury, and wrath, and hatred, and strife, shall all be woven into a song; and the weapons of our enemies, when taken from them, shall serve to make monuments to the praise of God. Rail on, rail on, blasphemer! Smite on, smite on, tyrant! Lift thy heavy hand, O despot; crush the truth, which yet thou canst not crush; knock from his head the crown—the crown that is far above thy reach—poor puny impotent mortal as thou art! Go on, go on! But all thou doest shall but increase his glories. For aught we care, we bid you still proceed with all your wrath and malice. Though it shall be worse for you, it shall be more glorious for our Master; the greater your preparations for war, the more splendid shall be his triumphal chariot, when he shall ride through the streets of heaven in pompous array. The more mighty your preparations for battle, the more rich the spoil which he shall divide with the strong. O! Christian, fear not the foe! Remember the harder his blows, the sweeter thy song; the greater his wrath, the more splendid thy triumph; the more he rages, the more shall Christ be honored in the day of his appearing. They sung the song of Moses and the Lamb.

And then will ye note, in the next place, how they sang *the total overthrow* of the enemy. There is one expression in this song, which ought to be and I believe is, when set to music,

very frequently repeated. It is that part of the song, as recorded in the Psalms, where it is declared that the whole host of Pharaoh were utterly destroyed, and there was not one of them left. When that great song was sung by the side of the Red Sea, there was, no doubt, a special emphasis laid upon that expression, "not one." I think I hear the hosts of Israel. When the words were known by them, they began and they proceeded thus—"There is not one of them left;" and then in various parts the words were repeated, "Not one, not one." And then the women with their sweet voices sang, "Not one, not one." I believe that at the last, a part of our triumph will be the fact, that there is not one left. We shall look abroad throughout the earth, and see it all a level sea; and not one foeman pursuing us—"not one, not one!" Raise myself never so high, O thou deceiver, thou canst not live; for not one shall escape. Lift thy head never so proudly, O despot, thou canst not live; for not one shall escape. O heir of heaven, not one sin shall cross the Jordan after thee; not one shall pass the Red Sea to overtake thee; but this shall be the summit of thy triumph—"Not one, not one! not one of them is left."

Just let us note again, and I will not detain you too long, lest I weary you. One part of the song of Moses consisted in praising the ease with which God destroyed his enemies. "Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them; they sank as lead in the mighty waters." If *we* had gone to work to destroy the hosts of Pharaoh, what a multitude of engines of death should we have required. If the work had been committed to us, to cut off the hosts, what marvelous preparations, what thunder, what noise, what great activity there would have been. But mark the grandeur of the expression. God did not even lift himself from his throne to do it: he saw Pharaoh coming; he seemed to look upon him with a placid smile; he did just blow with his lips, and the sea covered them. You and I will marvel at the last how easy it has been to overthrow the enemies of the Lord. We have been tugging and toiling all our life-time to be the means of overthrowing systems of error; it will astonish the church, when her Master shall come, to see how, as the ice dissolveth before the fire, all

error and sin shall be utterly destroyed in the coming of the Most High. We must have our societies and our machinery, our preachings and our gatherings, and rightly too; but God will not require them at the last. The destruction of his enemies shall be as easy to him as the making of a world. In passive silence unmoved he sat; and he did but break the silence with "Let there be light; and light was." So shall he at the last, when his enemies are raging furiously, blow with his winds, and they shall be scattered; they shall melt even as wax, and shall be burned like tow; they shall be as the fat of rams; into smoke shall they consume, yea, into smoke shall they consume away.

Furthermore, in this song of Moses, you will notice there is one peculiar beauty. Moses not only rejoiced for what had been done, but for the future consequences of it. He says, "The people of Canaan, whom we are about to attack, will now be seized with sudden fear; by the greatness of thy arm they shall be as still as a stone." O! I think I hear them singing that too, sweetly and softly, "as still as a stone." How would the words come full, like gentle thunder heard in the distance, "as still as a stone!" And when we shall get on the other side the flood, see the triumph over our enemies, and behold our Master reigning, this will form a part of our song, that they must henceforth be "as still as a stone." There will be a hell, but it will not be a hell of roaring devils, as it now is. They shall be "as still as a stone." There will be legions of fallen angels, but they shall no longer have courage to attack us or defy God: they shall be "as still as a stone." O how grand will that sound, when the hosts of God's redeemed, looking down on the demons chained, bound, silenced, struck dumb with terror, shall sing exultingly over them! They must be "as still as a stone;" and there they must lie, and bite their iron bands. The fierce despiser of Christ can no more spit in his face; the proud tyrant can no more lift his hands to oppress the saints; even Satan can no more attempt to destroy. They shall be "as still as a stone."

And last of all, the song concludes by noticing *the eternity of God's reign*; and this will always make a part of the triumphant song. They sang, "The Lord shall reign for ever and

ever." Then I can suppose the whole band broke out into their loudest strain of music: "The Lord shall reign for ever and ever." Part of the melody of heaven will be "The Lord shall reign for ever and ever." That song has cheered us here, "The Lord reigneth; blessed be my Rock!" And that song shall be our exultation there. "The Lord reigneth for ever and ever." When we shall see the placid sea of providence, when we shall behold the world all fair and lovely, when we shall mark our enemies destroyed, and God Almighty triumphant, then we shall shout the song,

"Hallelujah! for the Lord  
 God Omnipotent shall reign;  
 Hallelujah! let the word  
 Echo round the earth and main."

O! may we be there to sing it!

I have one remark to make, and I have done. You know, my friends, that as there is something in the song of Moses which is typical of the song of the Lamb, there was another song sung by the waters of the Red Sea which is typical of the song of hell. "What mean you, sir, by that dread thought?" O! shall I use the word music? Shall I profane the heavenly word so much as to say, 'twas doleful music which came from the lips of Pharaoh and his host? Boldly and pompously, with roll of drum and blast of trumpet they had entered into the sea. On a sudden their martial music ceased; and ah! ye heavens and ye floods what was it? The sea was coming down upon them, utterly to devour them. O! may we never hear that shriek, that awful yell of hideous agony, that seemed to rend the sky, and then was hushed again, when Pharaoh and his mighty men were swallowed up, and went down quick into hell! Ah! stars, if ye had heard it, if the black pall of waters had not shut out the sound from you, ye might have continued trembling unto this hour, and mayhap ye are trembling now; mayhap your twinklings by night are on account of that terrible shriek ye heard; for sure it were enough to make you tremble on for ever. That dreadful shriek, that hideous moan, that horrible howl, when a whole army sank into hell at once, when the waters swallowed them up!

Take heed, my friends, take heed, lest you should have to join in that terrible *miserere*; take heed, lest that horrible howl should be yours, instead of the song of the redeemed. And remember, so must it be, unless ye be born again, unless ye believe in Christ, unless ye repent of sin and renounce it wholly, and with trembling hearts put your confidence in the man of sorrows, who is soon to be crowned the King of kings and Lord of lords. May God bless you, and give you all to taste of his salvation, that you may stand upon the sea of glass, and not have to feel the terrors of the mingled fire in the lower depths thereof! God Almighty bless this vast assembly, for Jesus' sake.

## SERMON XXIX.

### PRESUMPTUOUS SINS.

“Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins.”—PSALM xix 13

ALL sins are great sins, but yet some sins are greater than others. Every sin has in it the very venom of rebellion, and is full of the essential marrow of traitorous rejection of God. But there be some sins which have in them a greater development of the essential mischief of rebellion, and which wear upon their faces more of the brazen pride which defies the Most High. It is wrong to suppose that because all sins will condemn us, that therefore one sin is not greater than another. The fact is, that while all transgression is a greatly grievous sinful thing, yet there are some transgressions which have a deeper shade of blackness, and a more double scarlet-dyed hue of criminality than others. Now the presumptuous sins of our text are just the chief of all sins: they rank head and foremost in the list of iniquities. It is remarkable, that though an atonement was provided under the Jewish law for every kind of sin, there was this one exception: “But the soul that sinneth presumptuously shall have no atonement; it shall be cut off from the midst of my people.” And now, under the Christian dispensation, although in the sacrifice of our blessed Lord there is a great and precious atonement for presumptuous sins, whereby sinners who have sinned in this manner are made clean, yet, without doubt, presumptuous sinners, dying without pardon, must expect to receive a double portion of the wrath of God, and a more wonderful manifestation of the unutterable anguish of the torment of eternal punishment in the pit that is digged for the wicked.

I shall this morning, first of all, endeavor to *describe presumptuous sins*; then, secondly, I shall try, if I can, to *show*.

by some illustrations, why the presumptuous sin is more venious than any other; and then thirdly, I shall try to press the prayer upon your notice—the prayer, mark you, of the holy man—the prayer of David: “Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins.”

I. First, then, WHAT IS A PRESUMPTUOUS SIN? Now, I think there must be one of four things in a sin in order to make it presumptuous. It must either be a sin against light and knowledge, or a sin committed with deliberation, or a sin committed with a design of sinning, merely for sinning’s sake, or else it must be a sin committed through hardihood, from a man’s rash confidence in his own strength. We will mark these points one by one.

1. A sin that is committed willfully against manifest light and knowledge is a presumptuous sin. A sin of ignorance is not presumptuous, unless that ignorance also be wilful, in which case the ignorance itself is a presumptuous sin. But when a man sins for want of knowing better—for want of knowing the law, for want of instruction, reproof, advice, and admonition, we say that his sin, so committed, does not partake to any great extent of the nature of a presumptuous sin. But when a man knows better, and sins in the very teeth and face of his increased light and knowledge, then his sin deserves to be branded with this ignominious title of a presumptuous sin. Let me just dwell on this thought a moment. *Conscience* is often an inner light to men, whereby they are warned of forbidden acts as being sinful. Then if I sin against conscience, though I have no greater light than conscience affords me, still my sin is presumptuous, if I have presumed to go against that voice of God in my heart, an enlightened conscience. You, young man, were once tempted (and perhaps it was but yesterday) to commit a certain act. The very moment you were tempted, conscience said, “It is wrong, it is wrong”—it shouted *murder* in your heart, and told you the deed you were about to commit was abominable in the sight of the Lord. Your fellow-apprentice committed the same sin without the warning of conscience; in him it was guilt—guilt which needs to be washed away with the Saviour’s blood. But it was not such guilt in him as it was in you, because your

conscience checked you ; your conscience told you of the danger, warned you of the punishment, and yet you dared to go astray against God, and therefore you sinned presumptuously. You have sinned very grievously in having done so. When a man shall trespass on my ground, he shall be a trespasser though he have no warning, but if straight before his face there stands a warning, and if he knowingly and willingly trespasses, then he is guilty of a presumptuous trespass, and is to be so far punished accordingly. So you, if you had not known better ; if your conscience had been less enlightened, you might have committed the deed with far less of the criminality which now attaches to you, because you sinned against conscience, and consequently sinned presumptuously.

But, O ! how much greater is the sin, when man not only has the light of conscience, but has also *the admonition of friends*, the advice of those who are wise and esteemed by him. If I have but one check, the check of my enlightened conscience, and I transgress against it, I am presumptuous ; but if a mother with tearful eye warns me of the consequence of my guilt, and if a father with steady look, and with affectionate determined earnestness, tells me what will be the effect of my transgression—if friends who are dear to me counsel me to avoid the way of the wicked, and warn me what must be the inevitable result of continuing in it, then I am presumptuous, and my act in that very proportion becomes more guilty. I should have been presumptuous for having sinned against the light of nature, but I am more presumptuous when, added to that, I have the light of affectionate counsel and of kind advice, and therein I bring upon my head a double amount of divine wrath. And how much more is this the case, when the transgressor has been gifted with what is usually called a religious education ; in childhood he has been lighted to his bed by the lamps of the sanctuary, the name of Jesus was mingled with the hush of lullaby, the music of the sanctuary woke him like a matin hymn at morning ; he has been dandled on the knee of piety and has sucked the breasts of godliness ; he has been tutored and trained in the way he should go ; how much more fearful I say, is the guilt of such a man than that of those who have never had such training, but have been left to follow



their own wayward lusts and pleasures without the restraint of a holy education and the restraints of an enlightened conscience!

But, my friends, even this may become worse still. A man sinned yet more presumptuously, *when he has had most special warning from the voice of God against the sin.* "What mean you?" say you. Why, I mean this. You saw but yesterday a strong man in your neighborhood brought to the grave by sudden death; it is but a month ago that you heard the bell toll for one whom once you knew and loved, who procrastinated and procrastinated until he perished in procrastination. You have had strange things happen in your very street, and the voice of God has been spoken loudly through the lips of Death to you. Ay, and you have had warnings too in your own body; you have been sick with fever, you have been brought to the jaws of the grave, and you have looked down into the bottomless vault of destruction. It is not long ago since you were given up; all said they might prepare a coffin for you, for your breath could not long be in your body. Then you turned your face to the wall, and prayed; you vowed that if God would spare you you would live a godly life, that you would repent of your sins; but to your own confusion you are now just what you were. Ah! let me tell you, your guilt is more grievous than that of any other man, for you have sinned presumptuously, in the very highest sense in which you could have done so. You have sinned against reproofs, but what is worse still, you have sinned against your own solemn oaths and covenants, and against the promises that you made to God. He who plays with fire must be condemned as careless; but he who has been burned out once, and afterward plays with the destroying element, is worse than careless; and he who has himself been scorched in the flame, and has had his locks all hot and crisp with the burning, if he again should rush headlong into fire, I say he is worse than careless, he is worse than presumptuous, he is mad. But I have some such here. They have had warnings so terrible that they might have known better, they have gone into lusts which have brought their bodies into sickness, and perhaps this day they have crept up to this house, and they dare

not tell to their neighbor who stands by their side what is the loathsomeness that even now doth breed upon their frame. And yet they will go back to the same lusts; the fool will go again to the stocks, the sheep will lick the knife that is to slay him. You will go on in your lust and in your sins, despite warnings, despite advice, until you perish in your guilt. How worse than children are grown-up men! The child who goes for a merry slide upon a pond, if he be told that the ice will not bear him, starteth back affrighted, or if he daringly creepeth upon it how soon he leaves it, if he hears but a crack upon the slender covering of the water! But you men have conscience, which tells you that your sins are vile, and that they will be your ruin; you hear the crack of sin, as its thin sheet of pleasure gives way beneath your feet; ay, and some of you have seen your comrades sink in the flood, and lost; and yet you go sliding on, worse than childish, worse than mad are you, thus presumptuously to play with your own everlasting state. O my God, how terrible is the presumption of some! How fearful is presumption in any! O! that we might be enabled to cry, "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins."

2. I said again, that another characteristic of a presumptuous sin was *deliberation*. A man, perhaps, may have a passionate spirit, and in a moment of hot haste he may utter an angry word of which in a few short minutes he will sincerely repent. A man may have a temper so hot that the least provocation causes him at once to be full of wrath. But he may also have a temperament which has this benefit to balance it, that he very soon learns to forgive, and cools in a moment. Now, such a man does not sin presumptuously, when suddenly overcome by anger, though, without doubt, there is presumption in his sin, unless he strives to correct that passion and keep it down. A man, again, who is suddenly tempted and surprised into a sin which is not his habit, but which he commits through the force of some strong temptation, is guilty, but not guilty of presumption, because he was taken unawares in the net and caught in the snare. But there are other men who sin deliberately; there are some who can think of a lust for weeks beforehand and dote upon their darling crime with pleasure

They do as it were, water the young seedling of lust until it grows to the maturity of desire, and then they go and commit the crime. There are some to whom lust is not a passer-by, but a lodger at home. They receive it, they house it, they feast it; and when they sin they sin deliberately, walk coolly to their lusts, and in cold blood commit the act which another might haply do in hot and furious haste. Now, such a sin has in it a great extent of sinfulness, it is a sin of high presumption. To be carried away, as by a whirlwind of passion, in a moment is wrong; but to sit down and deliberately resolve upon revenge is cursed and diabolical. To sit down and deliberately fashion schemes of wickedness is heinous, and I can find no other word fitly to express it. To deliberate carefully how the crime is to be done, and, Haman-like, to build the gallows, and to set to work to destroy one's neighbor, to get the pit digged that the friend may fall into it and be destroyed, to lay snares in secret, to plot wickedness upon one's bed—this is a high pitch of presumptuous sin. May God forgive any of us, if we have been so far guilty!

Again, *when a man continues long in sin, and has time to deliberate about it*, that also is a proof that it is a presumptuous sin. He that sins once, being overtaken in a fault, and then abhors the sin, has not sinned presumptuously; but he who transgresses to-day, to-morrow, and the next day, week after week, and year after year, until he has piled up a heap of sins that are high as a mountain, such a man, I say, sins presumptuously, because in a continued habit of sin there must be a deliberation to sin; there must be at least such a force and strength of mind as could not have come upon any man if his sin were but the hasty effect of sudden passion. Ah! take heed, ye that are sodden in sin, ye that drink it down as the greedy ox drinketh down water, ye who run to your lust as the rivers run to the sea, and ye who go to your passions as the sow to her wallowing in the mire. Take heed! your crimes are grievous, and the hand of God shall soon fall terribly on your heads, unless by divine grace it be granted to you to repent and turn unto him. Fearful must be your doom if, unpardoned, God shou'd condemn you for presumptuous

sin. O "Lord, keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins."

3. Again: I said that a presumptuous sin must be a *matter of design*, and have been committed with the intention of sin. If at your leisure at home you will turn to that passage in the book of Numbers, where it says there is no pardon for a presumptuous sin under the Jewish dispensation, you will find immediately afterward a case recorded. A man went out on the Sabbath-day to gather sticks; he was taken in the act of Sabbath-breaking, and the law being very stringent under the Jewish dispensation, he was ordered at once to be put to death. Now, the reason why he was put to death was not because he gathered sticks on the Sabbath merely, but because the law had just then been proclaimed, "In it thou shalt do no manner of work." This man willfully, out of design, in order, as it were, to show that he despised God—to show that he did not care for God—without any necessity, without any hope of advantage, went straight out, in the very teeth of the law, to perform, not an act which he kept in his own house, which might perhaps have been overlooked, but an act which brought shame upon the whole congregation, because, infidel-like, he dared to brazen it out before God; as much as to say, "I care not for God. Has God just commanded, 'Ye shall do no manner of work?' Here am I; I do not want sticks to-day; I do not want to work; not for the sake of sticks, but with the design of showing that I despise God, I go out this day and gather sticks." "Now," says one, "surely there are no people in the world that have ever done such a thing as this." Yes, there are; and there are such in the Surrey Music Hall this day. They have sinned against God, not merely for the pleasure of it, but because they would show their want of reverence to God. That young man burned his Bible in the midst of his wicked companions—not because he hated his Bible, for he quivered and looked pale at the ashes on the hearth when he was doing it; but he did it out of pure bravado, in order to show them, as he thought, that he really was far gone from any thing like a profession of religion. That other man is accustomed sometimes to stand by the wayside, when the people are going to the house of God; and he swears

at them, not because he delights in swearing, but because he will show that he is irreligious, that he is ungodly. How many an infidel has done the same—not because he had any pleasure in the thing itself, but because out of the wickedness of his heart he would spit at God, if it were possible, having a design to let men know that though the sin itself was cheap enough, he was determined to do something which would be like spitting in the face of his Maker, and despising God who created him! Now, such a sin is a master-piece of iniquity. There is pardon for such a one—there is full pardon to those who are brought to repentance; but few of such men ever receive it; for when they are so far gone as to sin presumptuously, because they *will* do it—to sin merely for the sake of showing their disregard of God and of God's law, we say of such, there is pardon for them, but it is wondrous grace which brings them into such a condition that they are willing to accept it. O that God would keep back his servants here from presumptuous sins! And if any of us here have committed them, may he bring us back, to the praise of the glory of his grace!

4. But one more point, and I think I shall have explained these presumptuous sins. A presumptuous sin also is one that is committed *through a hardihood of fancied strength of mind*. Says one, "I intend to-morrow to go into such-and-such a society, because I believe, though it hurts other people, it does me no hurt." You turn round and say to some young man, "I could not advise you to frequent the Casino—it would be your ruin." But you go yourself, sir? "Yes." But how do you justify yourself? Because I have such strength of principle that I know just how far to go, and no further. Thou liest, sir; against thyself thou liest; thou liest presumptuously in so doing. Thou art playing with bombshells that shall burst and destroy thee; thou art sitting over the mouth of hell, with a fancy that thou shalt not be burned. Because thou hast gone to haunts of vice and come back tainted, much tainted, but because thou art so blind as not to see the taint, thou thinkest thyself secure. Thou art not so. Thy sin, in daring to think that thou art proof against sin, is a sin of presumption. "No, no," says one; "but I know that I can go

just so far in such-and-such a sin, and there I can stop." **Pre**sumption, sir; nothing but presumption. It would be presumption for any man to climb to the top of the spire of a church, and stand upon his head. "Well, but he might come down safe, if he were skilled in it." Yes, but it is presumptuous. I would no more think of subscribing a farthing to a man's ascent in a balloon, than I would to a poor wretch cutting his own throat. I would no more think of standing and gazing at any man who puts his life in a position of peril, than I would of paying a man to blow his brains out. I think such things, if not murders, are murderous. There is suicide in men risking themselves in that way; and if there be suicide in the risk of the body, how much more in the case of a man who puts his own soul in jeopardy just because he thinks he has strength of mind enough to prevent its being ruined and destroyed. Sir, your sin is a sin of presumption; it is a great and grievous one; it is one of the master-pieces of iniquity.

O! how many people there are who are sinning presumptuously to-day! You are sinning presumptuously in being to-day what you are. You are saying, "In a little time I will solemnly and seriously think of religion. in a few years, when I am a little more settled in life, I intend to turn over a new leaf, and think about the matters of godliness." Sir, you are presumptuous. You are presuming that you shall live; you are speculating upon a thing which is as frail as the bubble on the breaker; you are staking your everlasting soul on the deadly odds that you shall live for a few years, whereas, the probabilities are, that you may be cut down ere the sun shall set: and it is possible, that ere another year shall have passed over your head, you may be in the land where repentance is impossible, and useless were it possible. O! dear friends, procrastination is a presumptuous sin. The putting off a thing which should be done to-day, because you hope to live to-morrow, is a presumption. You have no right to do it—you are, in so doing, sinning against God, and bringing on your heads the guilt of presumptuous sin. I remember that striking passage in Jonathan Edwards' wonderful sermon, which was the means of a great revival, where he says, "Sinner, thou art this moment standing over the mouth of Hell, upon a single

plank, and that plank is rotten; thou art hanging over the jaws of perdition, by a solitary rope, and the strands of that rope are creaking now." It is a terrible thing to be in such a position as that, and yet to say, "to-morrow," and to procrastinate. You remind me, some of you, of that story of Dionysius the tyrant, who, wishing to punish one who had displeased him, invited him to a noble feast. Rich were the viands that were spread upon the table, and rare the wines of which he was invited to drink. A chair was placed at the head of the table, and the guest was seated within it. Horror of horrors! The feast might be rich, but the guest was miserable, dreadful beyond thought. However splendid might be the array of the servants, and however rich the dainties, yet he who had been invited sat there in agony. For what reason? Because over his head, immediately over it, there hung a sword, a furnished sword, suspended by a single hair. He had to sit all the time with this sword above him, with nothing but a hair between him and death. You may conceive the poor man's misery. He could not escape; he must sit where he was. How could he feast? How could he rejoice! But O, my unconverted hearer, thou art there this morning, man, with all thy riches and thy wealth before thee, with the comforts of a home and the joys of a household; thou art there this day, in a place from which thou canst not escape; the sword of death above thee, prepared to descend; and woe unto thee, when it shall cleave thy soul from thy body! Canst thou yet make mirth, and yet procrastinate? If thou canst, then verily thy sin is presumptuous in a high degree. "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins."

II. And now I come to the second part of the subject, with which I shall deal very briefly. I am to try and show why it is that there is great enormity in a presumptuous sin.

Let me take any one of the sins; for instance, *the sin against light and knowledge*. There is greater enormity in such a presumptuous sin than in any other. In this our happy land it is just possible for a man to commit treason. I think it must be rather difficult for him to do it; for we are allowed to say words here which would have brought our necks beneath the guillotine, if they had been spoken on the other side

the Channel; and we are allowed to do deeds here which would have brought us long years of imprisonment if the deed had been done in any other land. But I suppose it is just possible to commit treason here. Now, if two men should commit treason—if one of them should wantonly and wickedly raise the standard of revolt to-morrow, should denounce the rightful sovereign of this land in the strongest and most abominable language, should seek to entice the loyal subjects of this country from their allegiance, and should draw some of them astray, to the hurt and injury of the common weal; he might have in his rebellious ranks one who had joined incautiously, not knowing whereunto the matter might tend, who might come into the midst of the rebels, not understanding the intention of their unlawful assembling, not even knowing the law which prohibited them from being banded together. I can suppose these two men brought up upon a charge of high treason: they have both, legally, been guilty of it; but I can suppose that the one man who had sinned ignorantly would be acquitted, because there was no malignant intent; and I can suppose that the other man, who had willfully, knowingly, maliciously and wickedly raised the standard of revolt, would receive the highest punishment which the law could demand. And why? Because in the one case it was a sin of presumption, and in the other case it was not so. In the one case the man dared to defy the sovereign, and defy the law of the land, willfully, out of mere presumption. In the other case not so. Now, every man sees that it would be just to make a distinction in the punishment, because there is—conscience itself tells us—a distinction in the guilt.

Again: some men, I have said, sin *deliberately*, and others do not do so. Now, in order to show that there is a distinction here, let me take a case. To-morrow the bench of magistrates are sitting. Two men are brought up. They are each of them charged with stealing a loaf of bread. It is clearly proved, in the one case, that the man was hungry, and that he snatched the loaf of bread to satisfy his necessities. He is sorry for his deed, he grieves that he has done this act; but most manifestly he had a strong temptation to it. In the other case the man was rich, and he wilfully went into the shop



merely because he would break the law and show that he was a law-breaker. He said to the policeman outside, "Now, I care neither for you nor the law; I intend to go in there, just to see what you can do with me." I can suppose the magistrate would say to one man, "You are discharged; take care not to do the like again; there is something for your present necessities; seek to earn an honest living." But to the other I can conceive him saying, "You are an infamous wretch; you have committed the same deed as the other, but from very different motives; I give you the longest term of imprisonment which the law allows me, and I can only regret that I can not treat you worse than I have done." The presumption of sin made the difference. So when you sin deliberately and knowingly, your sin against Almighty God is a higher and a blacker sin than it would have been if you had sinned ignorantly, or sinned in haste.

Now let us suppose one more case. In the heat of some little dispute some one shall insult a man. You shall be insulted by a man of angry temper; you have not provoked him, you gave him no just cause for it; but at the same time he was of a hot and angry disposition; he was somewhat foiled in the debate, and he insulted you, calling you by some name which has left a stain upon your character, so far as epithets can do it. I can suppose that you would ask no reparation of him, if by to-morrow you saw that it was just a rash word spoken in haste, of which he repented. But suppose another person should waylay you in the street, should week after week seek to meet you in the market-place, and should, after a great deal of toil and trouble, at last meet you, and there, in the center of a number of people, unprovoked, just out of sheer, deliberate malice, come before you and call you a liar in the street; I can suppose that, Christian as you are, you might find it necessary to chastise such insolence, not with your hand, but with the arm of that equitable law which protects us all from insulting violence. In the other case I can suppose it would be no trouble to forgive. You would say, "My dear fellow, I know we are all hasty sometimes—there, now, I don't care at all for it; you did not mean it." But in this case, where a man has dared and defied you without any provocation what

ever. you would say to him, "Sir, you have endeavored to injure me in respectable society; I can forgive you as a Christian, but as a man and a citizen I shall demand that I am protected against your insolence."

You see, therefore, in the cases that occur between man and man, how there is an excess of guilt added to a sin by presumption. O! ye that have sinned presumptuously—and who among us has not done so?—bow your heads in silence, confess your guilt, and then open your mouths, and cry, "Lord have mercy upon me, a presumptuous sinner."

III. And now I have nearly done—not to weary you by too long a discourse—we shall notice THE APPROPRIATENESS OF THIS PRAYER—"Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins."

Will you just note, that this prayer was the *prayer of a saint*, the prayer of a holy man of God? Did David need to pray thus? Did the "man after God's own heart" need to cry, "Keep back thy servant?" Yes, he did. And note the *beauty* of the prayer. If I might translate it into more metaphorical style, it is like this: "Curb thy servant from presumptuous sin." "Keep him back or he will wander to the edge of the precipice of sin. Hold him in, Lord; he is apt to run away; curb him; put the bridle on him; do not let him do it; let thine overpowering grace keep him holy; when he would do evil, then do thou draw him to good, and when his evil propensities would lead him astray, then do thou check him." "Check thy servant from presumptuous sins."

What then? Is it true that the best of men may sin presumptuously? Ah! it is true. It is a solemn thing to find the Apostle Paul warning saints against the most loathsome of sins. He says, "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, idolatry, inordinate affection," and such like. What! do saints want warning against such sins as these? Yes, they do. The highest saints may sin the lowest sins, unless kept by divine grace. You old experienced Christians, boast not in your experience; you may trip yet, unless you cry, "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe." Ye whose love is fervent, whose faith is constant, whose hopes are bright, say not, "I shall never sin," but

rather cry out, "Lord, lead me not into temptation, and when there leave me not there; for unless thou hold me fast I feel I must, I shall decline, and prove an apostate after all." There is enough tinder in the hearts of the best men in the world to light a fire that shall burn to the lowest hell, unless God should quench the sparks as they fall. There is enough corruption, depravity, and wickedness in the heart of the most holy man that is now alive to damn his soul to all eternity, if free and sovereign grace does not prevent. O Christian, thou hast need to pray this prayer. But I think I hear you saying, "Is thy servant a dog, that I should do this thing?" So said Hazeel, when the prophet told him that he would slay his master; but he went home and took a wet cloth and spread it over his master's face and choked him, and did the next day the sin which he abhorred before. Think it not enough to abhor sin, you may yet fall into it. Say not, "I never can be drunken, for I have such an abhorrence of drunkenness;" thou mayest fall where thou art most secure. Say not, "I can never blaspheme God, for I have never done so in my life;" take care; you may yet swear most profanely. Job might have said, "I will never curse the day of my birth;" but he lived to do it. He was a patient man; he might have said, "I will never murmur; though he slay me, yet will I trust in him;" and yet he lived to wish that the day were darkness wherein he was brought forth. Boast not, then, O Christian; by faith thou standest. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

But if this need to be the prayer of the best, how ought it to be the prayer of you and me? If the highest saint must pray it, O mere moralist, thou hast good need to utter it. And ye who have begun to sin, who make no pretensions to piety, how much need is there for you to pray that you may be kept from presumptuously rebelling against God.

Instead, however, of enlarging upon that point, I shall close my few remarks this morning by just addressing myself most affectionately to such of you as are now under a sense of guilt by reason of presumptuous sins. God's Spirit has found some of you out this morning. I thought when I was describing presumptuous sin that I saw here and there an eye that was

suffused with tears; I thought I saw here and here a head that was bowed down, as much as to say, "I am guilty there." I thought there were some hearts that palpitated with confession, when I described the guilt of presumption. I hope it was so. If it was, I am glad of it. If I hit your consciences, it was that I meant to do. Not to your ears do I speak, but to your hearts. I would not give the snap of this my finger to gratify you with mere words of oratory, with a mere flow of language. No, God is my witness. I never sought effect yet, except the effect of hitting your consciences. I would use the words that would be most rough and vulgar in all our language, if I could get at your heart better with them than with any other; for I reckon that the chief matter with a minister is to touch the conscience. If any of you feel, then, that you have presumed against God in sinning, let me just bid you look at your sin, and weep over the blackness of it; let me exhort you to go home and bow your heads with sorrow, and confess your guilt, and weep over it with many tears and sighs. You have greatly sinned, and if God should blast you into perdition now, he would be just; if now his fiery thunderbolt of vengeance should pierce you through, if the arrow that is now upon the string of the Almighty should find a target in your heart, he would be just. Go home and confess that, confess it with cries and sighs. And then what next wilt thou do? Why, I bid thee remember that there was a man who was a God. That man suffered for presumptuous sin. I would bid thee this day, sinner, if thou knowest thy need of a Saviour, go up to thy chamber, cast thyself upon thy face, and weep for sin; and when thou hast done that, turn to the Scriptures, and read the story of that man who suffered and died for sin. Think you see him in all his unutterable agonies, and griefs, and woes, and say this—

"My soul looks back to see  
The burdens thou didst bear  
When hanging on the accursed tree,  
And hopes her guilt was there."

Lift up your hand, and put it on his head who bled, and say,

“ My faith would lay its hand  
 On that dear head of thine,  
 While, like a penitent, I stand,  
 And there confess my sin.”

Sit down at the foot of his cross, and watch him till your heart is moved, till the tears begin to flow again, until your heart breaks within you; and then you will rise and say,

“ Dissolved by his mercy, I fall to the ground,  
 And weep to the praise of the mercy I found.”

O sinner, thou canst never perish, if thou wilt cast thyself at the foot of the cross. If thou seekest to save thyself thou shalt die; if thou wilt come, just as thou art, all black, all filthy, all hell-deserving, all ill-deserving, I am my Master's hostage, I will be answerable at the day of judgment for this matter, if he does not save thee. I can preach on this subject now, for I trust I have tried my Master myself. As a youth I sinned, as a child I rebelled, as a young man I wandered into lusts and vanities: my Master made me feel how great a sinner I was, and I sought to reform, to mend the matter; but I grew worse. At last I heard it said, “ Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth;” and I looked to Jesus. And O! my Saviour, thou hast eased my aching conscience, thou hast given me peace; thou hast enabled me to say,

“ Now, freed from sin, I walk at large;  
 My Saviour's blood's a full discharge;  
 At his dear feet my soul I lay,  
 A sinner saved, and homage pay.”

And O! my heart pants for you. O that you who never knew him could taste his love now. O that you who have never repented might now receive the Holy Ghost who is able to melt the heart! And O that you who are penitents would look to him now! And I repeat that solemn assertion—I am God's hostage this morning; ye shall feed me on bread and water to my life's end, ay, and I will bear the blame for ever, if any of you seek Christ, and Christ rejects you. It must not, it can

not be. "Whosoever cometh," he says, "I will in nowise cast out." He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him." May God Almighty bless you; and may we meet again in yonder Paradise; and there will we sing more sweetly of redeeming love and dying blood, and of Jesus' power to save,

"When this poor lisping, scammering tongue  
Lies silent in the grave"









