

THE DEATH OF GOD'S SAINTS  
PRECIOUS IN HIS SIGHT.

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A Sermon

PREACHED BY

MR. J. S. ANDERSON,

At Mount Zion Chapel, Chadwell Street,

On Lord's-day Evening, January 15th, 1888,

ON THE OCCASION OF THE

DECEASE OF MR. JOHN HAZELTON,

THE PASTOR OF THE CHURCH,

Who fell asleep in Jesus, January 9th, 1888.

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1888.



## SERMON.

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*"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints."*

Psalm cxvi. 15.

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THE Lord in His infinite mercy has placed an opaque veil between us and to-morrow, between us and the next hour; so that we cannot possibly know what events are to transpire during our pilgrimage through this world to the next. If the children of Israel could have foreseen all that they had to experience in the wilderness, and the lengthened period that they had to sojourn there, methinks that Moses would never have been able to lead them out of Egypt. But they, like us, could not foresee one day before them. And if those of us who stood on this platform, and those who sat in the pews about a month ago, could have known what would have called this vast congregation together to-night, how the anticipation would have cast a gloom over that assembly, and over every subsequent moment, from the time it was revealed, to the time it was accomplished: and hence we say that it is a mercy that we do not lose the enjoyment of the present through the anticipation of the future, which the Lord holds in His own hands.

If my departed brother could stand by my side this evening, and be my prompter, I know he would say, "Exalt the Master! extol Him! set Him very high! Keep me as much as possible out of sight, and only talk of Him by whose grace I was what I was, and am what I am." But he cannot stand and prompt; yet we know very well that something like that would have been his instruction, could it have been so. And I hope that we shall not forget that we are here to worship God; and may God help us, and sanctify to us all the event that we so keenly feel, and so deeply grieve over: for though we are forbidden to murmur, the Lord does not forbid us to mourn. When Mary and Martha mourned the loss of their brother, He did not lecture them on the folly of their grief, but rather comforted their hearts by mingling His tears with theirs. While He was able to quicken the dead, and to restore from the grave, He was a Brother that had a heart that could feel for the sufferers.

We shall offer a few remarks this evening on these three particulars—First, the persons referred to—*saints*; secondly, the process that they pass through—*death*; thirdly, the *preciousness* of that process unto our God.

First, let us invite your attention to the persons referred to, and notice what they are—"saints," holy persons, God-like individuals through sovereign, distinguishing, and almighty grace: and he whose absence, whose departure we lament, was an eminent saint. All those who knew him best felt that he lived in communion and in fellowship with his God,

and only at the last anniversary meeting I remember his saying, as I sat by his side on this platform, that all who knew him knew where he lived ; and then he quoted the first verse of the 90th Psalm, “ ‘ Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations ; ’ ” “ and I dwell,” said he, “ in God.” Oh what a dwelling-place ! what a home ! what a refuge for the heart of one who was a sinner, but who has become a saint ! They are made saints by sovereign and divine grace, first in the purpose of Jehovah in choosing, in predestinating, and in uniting them federally with their covenant Head, thus setting them apart for Himself, that all His divine perfections may be glorified in their salvation : for God is revealed in the salvation of His people as He is not in any other part of His dominions. We see only *parts* of His ways in creation ; but the *whole Godhead* is concerned in making saints, and in keeping, preserving, and teaching them, and finally, in taking them to heaven. They are, therefore, not only set apart in everlasting love, by choice, but they are called out of the world by the power of the Holy Ghost, and receive, as a free and sovereign gift, a nature that is heavenly, holy, pure, and God-like ; and thus they are sanctified by God the Father, redeemed by the blood of the Son, and quickened by the Holy Spirit, washed in the “ fountain opened for sin and uncleanness,” and made manifestly to differ from their former selves, and from a godless and profane world.

Observe whose they are. “ Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death *His* saints.” Ah ! they belong to Him. “ Whoso giveth a cup of cold water, *because ye belong to Christ*, shall not lose his reward.” His people are His patrimony, His portion given to Him by the divine Father ; He speaks of them emphatically as *His own*. Jesus, “ having loved His own,...He loved them unto the end ;” for they became His own, not only by right of creation,—by donation or gift of the Father,—but by the purchase of His blood. “ Ye are not your own,” said the apostle. Our brother was not his own, he did not belong to this church only as a loan for a while ; he belonged unto our Divine Lord, who had a right to do with Him whatsoever seemeth Him good, and hence Jesus ever speaks of His people as having a special and peculiar right to them. “ I have called thee by thy name ; thou art Mine.” Yes, thou art Mine ; and how blessed if we can adopt the language of the spouse in the Canticles, and say in the confidence of faith, “ I am my Beloved’s, and my beloved is mine !” Whatever figure is employed in the Scripture to set forth the union of Christ and His church, you ever find that union to be very close. The church is His *bride*, His *own* bride. He never had but *one*. He is the *Vine*, they are the *branches* ; and the branches spring out of the Vine. He is the *Shepherd*, they are the flock ; and you know we read in the 10th chapter of John, of the hireling, “ whose own the sheep are not ;” who “ fleeth, because he is an hireling :” but “ the good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep,” because they are His own. They are His saints, and they are spoken of as the stones of a crown ; and He says by the Prophet Malachi, that “ they that feared the Lord spake often one to another ; and the Lord hearkened and heard it : and a book of remembrance was written before Him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name. And they shall be Mine in that day when I

make up My jewels." Oh then, how unspeakably blessed it is to be found in the Saviour's crown—to belong thus specially to the Lord Jesus Christ by an indissoluble bond, a bond that death itself can never dissolve.

II. But let us, in the second place direct your attention to the *process* that they are called to pass through. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the *death* of His saints." I call it a process, and it is such; for instance, we died, penally, in the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. By man came sin; by sin came death as its wages; not only natural, physical death;—but eternal, or the second death,—the penalty of the law, attached to transgression; and the people being one, His saints being one with their covenant Head, they lived in Him, they fulfilled the law in Him, and they died in Him, mystically. His death was real; it was an accursed death; it was all sting, nothing but sting, to Him. His soul was stung: His inconceivable agonies arose, not from the mere pain of physical death, but from the fact that God's curse was in it; and hence that bitter wail—"My God! my God! why hast Thou forsaken me?" Beloved, behold Him on the cross, treading alone the wine-press of the fierce wrath of God against sin, after the vials of that indignation had been poured out upon His holy soul in the garden, when His sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground. None but He Himself can possibly know what He endured; but His people were in Him. "I am crucified with Christ," said the apostle; "nevertheless I live." Think of this, believer; try to realize the precious truth, and remember that it was Jesus who bore for you the curse of the law, and that not one drop of all the curse remains for wretches who deserved the whole.

"At most we do not taste His cup,  
For He Himself has drank it up."

For said He; "The cup that My Father hath given Me shall I not drink it?" And, "Ye are dead with Christ," says Paul. "Reckon yourselves to be dead." You died on Calvary in the Lord Jesus Christ. And then the results of it are certain and sure. There can be no failure whatever in the fulfilment of the Divine purposes concerning the objects of His eternal love. I should sink in utter despair if I did not believe that all that God purposed, and all that Christ intended by the purchase of His blood shall be fulfilled ultimately by the exercise of Divine power; and as the result therefore of His death, and our death in Him, mystically on the cross, we die to the world, and to the law, and to sin. "I was alive with out the law once," said the apostle; "but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died,"—died to sin. The question of our sin, legally and penally, was settled on Calvary, and it cannot be reopened. I say this advisedly:—the question of the believer's sin, once settled, cannot be reopened; and therefore, reckon yourselves to be dead to the law, dead to sin. "I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing;" but all the vile corruptions of fallen nature; but, legally, sin was put away; the penalty was endured, and the believer delivered from its guilt, and by the Holy Ghost he is delivered from its power; and as he dies to the world, and to sin, and to the law, he lives unto God. And you find life ever springing out of death. Yes, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the

ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit :” and thus Jesus illustrated the results, the blessed glorious results of his own death. He was the corn of wheat, and He died, and from His death our life springs; and as we live to Him, we die to all beside. Our beloved brother—oh how dead he was to the world! As we heard on Friday, the Lord had stopped him when a frolicsome lad, had opened his heart, like that of Lydia, let in the blessed light of that truth, and revealed unto him his need of salvation; then he died to the world; it lost its charms; he could find nothing in it whereon his new life could feed; and increasingly, from that day until last Monday, he was dying a lingering death to the world. And you know, those of you who have sat under his ministry, either statedly or occasionally, as well as those of us who have been in close ministerial association and companionship with him—how dead he was to sin. He was pre-eminently a godly man. Yes, dead to sin—that had lost all its charm. He only knew it to hate it, and ever to fight against it; and we know who are acquainted with his ministry how dead he was to the law. Yes, alive in the Gospel, alive *through* the Gospel, alive *to* the Gospel. But oh he could sweetly, and did sweetly, realize these precious lines of Toplady’s, that some people call blasphemous who know nothing of the secret :

“The terrors of law and of God,  
With me can have nothing to do;  
My Saviour’s obedience and blood,  
Hide all my transgressions from view.”

The saints die in Christ, and die by the power of the Holy Ghost unto the world, and sin, and to the law. And then they die literally and physically, but not as other men die. There is not a drop of penal wrath connected with their death; and have you not noticed that the Scriptures speak of it—the New Testament Scriptures especially,—very rarely as being death at all. “Our friend Lazarus *sleepeth*.” “After that, He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are *fallen asleep*.” “I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them who are asleep, that ye sorrow not even as others who have no hope,” [or ground of hope in salvation.] The Old Testament describes it very blessedly too as being “gathered to their people,” or being “gathered to their fathers.” Yes, it seems to me to take away a great deal of the gloom when we think of these descriptive passages concerning what we call “death.” But Peter the Apostle speaks of it as a going out, an exodus. Those who understand the Greek language tell us that the word “deceased” is a compound word, and signifies the same as the word “exodus,” going out; and Peter forewarned those to whom he wrote concerning his decease, and then very blessedly as “putting off this my tabernacle,” putting it off like a worn-out garment. And Paul speaks of it as an earthly house, or a “tabernacle being dissolved,” where we have the same idea—*worn-out, tumbling down*. So our dear brother’s earthly tabernacle was literally worn-out by the hard work in the cause of Him he loved so well; for he often preached when, humanly speaking, he should have been in bed; and he preached

because he loved the Master, and he loved the work, and he loved the pulpit. Hence, when the last attack came, his constitution was too weak to resist it. But the saints do not die as others, because their death is a step in advance : it is a promotion, a departure to be with Christ, a transfer to a higher class in the school, and a bringing of the beloved one and Jesus more closely together, to have sweeter fellowship with Him, and to learn yet more concerning Him. Yes, brethren, it is a real promotion ; hence Paul says, " Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better : " absent from the body, present with the Lord." Would we bring Brother Hazelton back again ? Ah ! no ; much as we miss him, much as we loved him, deeply as we grieve over his departure, we would not bring him back to the sufferings which he has endured for the last eight or ten years. To be with Christ is " far better ;"—some old copies read " best of all." Oh, it is best of all to see Jesus, to see His face, to hear His voice, to receive the glad welcome, " Come, ye blessed of my Father ;" or, " Well done, good and faithful servant : enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

III. But once more, let us direct your attention to the *preciousness* of this process of dying. You see it is a process the saints pass through—which is precious in the Lord's sight. " Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." Oh, will not this help you, beloved, to dry your tears, to wipe them away, to look up to Him. We know from this declaration of Holy Writ, that that which we mourn, that which is exceedingly painful to us who are left behind, is most precious in the sight of the Lord. But how can it be ? I have thought that this death is " precious in the sight of the Lord," because *they* are precious to Him. Every regenerated soul is unspeakably dear to the heart of Jesus Christ. Let us not forget this. What a price they cost Him ! He was rich, and who can tell how rich ! Mark you, he was rich in the possession of glory that He could relinquish for a time—that was not His Godhead ;—no, whatever it was, it was not His Godhead : He never laid that aside, He was never undeified, He was God when manifest in the flesh—but He was rich. Surrounded by the seraphic host, that never sinned, who hymned His praises, flew on His errands, honoured Him as co-equal with the Father and the Holy Ghost. Oh, how rich, and how independent ! The Lord hath looked down from heaven. He could see a long way—He hath looked down. Yes, and He " wondered that there was none to help," and His " own arm brought salvation !" He came down ; " for your sakes He became poor." He made Himself of no reputation, took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. Mark you, His *character* was unspotted, but His *reputation*, He was content to forego. There is a vast difference between real character and reputation. A bad man, from policy may manage to keep up a fair reputation, and be esteemed in the world, while He is deceiving all around him—there is real villainy beneath the cloak that he wears. A good man may make a false step, and his reputation may be damaged, as was the case with David. Bless God, our brother's reputation was never damaged, any more than his character. But Jesus, while His character was perfect, " made Himself of no reputation ;" for your sakes He became poor ;

that ye through His poverty might be made rich." Oh! how He must have loved us!

"Oh for this love, let rocks and hills,  
Their lasting silence break;  
And all harmonious human tongues  
The Saviour's praises speak!"

"Down from the shining seats above,  
With joyful haste he fled."

And what for? "The Son of man is come to seek and to save"—not *them* that were lost, though that is true; but He came "to seek and to save *that* which was lost:"—that treasure of His, those saints of His, they are dear to His heart, precious in His esteem, as the "precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold." Believer, try and think of this. Whatever the world thinks of you as an individual, the world thinks very little of you as a believer—very little indeed. Ah! the world does not esteem you as a Christian. Ah! no! they know us not, because they knew Him not. But oftentimes the child of God is persecuted, and despised, and down-trodden, and oppressed, simply because he is a saint. Never mind, so was the Master; and His saints are precious to Him; and because so precious to His heart, because they cost Him such a price, their death is precious in His sight.

In the next place, because it is a grand conquest. It is a blessed triumph of His grace. Life is a battle, not only commercially, but spiritually; the Christian has to fight the battle with indwelling sin; for though Christ has put it away penally and legally, it is there as a root of evil, and is ever budding forth; and life, therefore, is a battle with sin, Satan, the world, and self: and what is it, beloved, that sustains and upholds, and enables us to keep up the conflict? Grace, the grace of God. No sooner do we attempt the warfare in our own strength, than we fail. Peter said, "Lord, I am ready to go with Thee, both into prison and to death." "Lord, I will lay down my life for Thy sake!" That arose from self-confidence and pride; and you know what a disastrous fall he had. If we stand a moment against these foes, it is by the grace of God. And that grace is precious to Jesus; and the trial of the Christian through that grace, the victories obtained, are all precious to Jesus, and when these victories are complete, when every battle has been fought, and every foe vanquished in His name, and through His strength; and the soul is released from its body of clay, methinks it is precious in the sight of the Lord. Beloved, I say again, dry your tears; that which you grieve over is precious in Christ's esteem.

But once more: the death of the saint is precious in the sight of the Lord, because He loves to have them near Him. He is happy in *their* happiness, his enjoyment is their enjoyment; and when they pass through the change that we call death, they are released from their labours. "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord:.....that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." They do not go before them,—their works do follow them. And the Lord bids them welcome to the mansions in the sky, and rejoices in their deliverance from sickness, sorrow, pain, conflict, and temptation; and rejoices to have them



with a numberless host, around His mediatorial throne, rejoices in their songs of praise and thanksgiving unto Himself; while they cry, "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins, in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." Yes, "Precious in His sight is the death of His saints," because they are released from all suffering, and admitted within the pearly gates, to enjoy the fellowship of the church above, and await the grand day when salvation shall be complete, in their resurrection from the dead, for it is only a question of time. On Friday afternoon, we left the emaciated frame in the cold and dark tomb, committing "earth to earth, and dust to dust, and ashes to ashes;" but as we said then at the graveside, it was not common dust. No, it belongs to Christ; it is a part of the purchased possession, and He will watch over it while he sleeps. It is a dreamless and calm sleep; and in the morning of the resurrection, He who said to the dead, "Lazarus, come forth!" will again speak, and all the nations underground shall hear the voice; for we read "the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first." Thus, dear friends, you see their spirits are still living, and still making fresh discoveries of His glory, and receiving a higher education for eternity, and waiting there in the hope of rejoining their clay tenements, when they shall be rebuilt in the glorious image of the Lord. And oh how happy they are! how happy is Christ! and how precious to Him is their departure to be with Him! Aye! with God,—

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

But are all my hearers saints? Have you all been brought by the power of the Spirit to realize your need of Christ? Have you fallen at His feet, as self-condemned, penitent sinners? and are you resting by faith upon His blood and righteousness—the blood to atone, the righteousness to justify? And are you looking up to Him for grace to help you in the time of need? Then you are saints. But are you resting in outward forms, in mere duties, self-deceived? Our brother has taught all who sat under his ministry that God alone can convert a sinner into a saint, and I would warn you this evening, that this privilege, this honour, this blessedness is not to be obtained by any creature performances. Ah! no; O that God the Eternal Spirit may awaken such! and signalize this service by the outpouring of His influence into your hearts, both saints and sinners; for Jesus, the Redeemer's sake. Amen.

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# LOOKING ON A PIERCED CHRIST.

## A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL.

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*"And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced."—*  
John xix. 37.

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It will be remembered that the Lord, immediately after predicting the destruction of the temple and the city of Jerusalem, said to his disciples, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." The word of Jesus Christ, therefore, is important to himself, and also to all his loved and redeemed people. He has been sovereignly and mercifully pleased to give us a revelation of his will, of his heart and the thoughts of his mind; and, if we are hearty believers in the plenary inspiration of God's word, we know, in some respects, what the future will be, and what operations he will carry on in the kingdoms of nature, of providence, and of grace. Our Lord said also, while preaching a sermon on himself as the good Shepherd, "The scriptures cannot be broken;" and in consequence of this the expression is so frequently used, "The mouth of the Lord—the mouth of the Lord hath spoken this." The word of God lies beneath his eye as he sits upon his throne; and his hand is fulfilling his promises, his threatenings, and also the hopes and expectations of his beloved people. The Old Testament was before the eye of Jesus, as the suffering Saviour of his people, he was careful to confine himself, as to his words, his conduct, his steps, and his sufferings, to what was therein predicted concerning himself and his people; consequently, in the chapter out of which I have taken my text, the fulfilment of the scripture is referred to four or five times. In the 24th verse we read, "They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it (that is the coat of the Saviour,) but cast lots for it, whose it shall be; that the scripture might be fulfilled which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things, therefore (and the word "therefore" here is very significant and expressive): "These things, therefore, the soldiers did." It might have occurred to our minds, had it not been for this word, that the soldiers were guided by no special influence, at least, by none that was supernatural, when they said, Let us not rend it; but their minds, their mouths, and their hands were directed or overruled by a Divine power. The word of prophecy was present to the Saviour, and therefore his coat was not rent; hence, "Let us cast lots for it, whose it shall be."—"These things, therefore, the soldiers did." Then again, in the 28th verse, we read, "After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, said, I thirst. It appears that the Saviour's eye was upon the writings of David; and whilst it was a fact that he thirsted, and that his thirst was penal and unspeakably

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intense, it was also a fact that he had regard to the immutability of Divine revelation; and said, in order to fulfil the scripture, "I thirst!" Again, in the following verses, we read, that "Jesus having received the vinegar, said, It is finished! and bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. The Jews, because it was the preparation that the body should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day (for that Sabbath was an high day), besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away." Otherwise it was usual for criminals to hang upon the crosses upon which they were executed. But since the Lord Jesus was crucified at the time of the Jewish passover, and the Sabbath following was to the Jews a very important day, they were anxious that no criminal should then be seen on Golgotha or Calvary; and believing that Christ and the thieves had not had time to die, they went to Pilate and besought him that their legs might be broken, in order to accelerate their death; and he gave them permission to do this. "The soldiers therefore went and brake the legs of the first thief and of the other that was crucified with Jesus; but when they came to Jesus to accelerate his death, they saw that he was dead already, and brake not his legs. And this again constituted a perfect fulfilment of Scripture, for "these things were done that the scriptures should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken." We are then told that since the Lord Jesus was dead, they resolved not to break his legs, but one of the soldiers in an unaccountable and wanton manner "with his spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water;" and my text says, "Another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced."

Now just one or two words more before I try to open the text. You observe in the fact that the soldiers omitted a portion of their duty, the word of God was fulfilled. They would not have exceeded their duty had they broken the legs of the three sufferers; they had orders so to do, and it was therefore their military duty to break the legs of the two thieves, and those of Jesus also; but finding him dead already, a thought occurred to their minds—for a supernatural influence was upon them—that they would not break his legs; and that took place, the Holy Ghost tells us, in order that the Scriptures might be fulfilled: "A bone of him shall not be broken." And then, in the second place, one of the soldiers exceeded his duty. He did what he had no authority to do. He had authority from Pilate and from his captain to break the legs of Christ, and that he did not do; but he had no authority whatever for piercing him in the side; and therefore an omission of duty on the one hand, and an excess thereof on the other, fulfilled the word of God; and hence it is said, "A bone of him shall not be broken" according to the scripture; and "another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced."

I have made these introductory remarks for the purpose of trying to exalt your thoughts concerning the boundless importance of the word of God. And now leaving, the fulfilment of the Scriptures, let us limit our attention for a few minutes to the words we have read, which express a solemn fact, "They shall look on him whom they pierced."

In the first place, this might refer to the Jewish nation; for although Christ was not pierced by a Jew, but by one of the Roman soldiers, a person is said to do that which is done in his name or by his authority, and it was the Jews that cried out, "Crucify him! crucify him!" They clamoured for his death, and therefore they pierced him. The time may come, for aught I know, when a very considerable number of the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, will be called by Divine grace, and look upon him whom they pierced and mourn for him. At all events, the period is coming, and may not be far distant, when the Lord of life and glory shall appear in the clouds, and every eye shall see him and they also which pierced him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. I shall not confine my attention to the Jewish people as a nation, nor make any further remarks upon the supposition or the belief that large numbers

of them may probably be called by Divine grace, but look at my text as applicable to sinners saved, or to such persons as have a humble hope that their guilt and sin were imputed to the Lord of life and glory, and that he was pierced and wounded for their transgressions and crimes ; for " they shall look on him whom they pierced." This being the course which we intend taking, the subject may be divided into two branches :—First, *the blessed and important object*, a pierced Christ ; and secondly, *the solemn act*,—looking on Him. They shall look on him whom they pierced. Thus we have a marvellous object to contemplate, and a saving act to describe.

I. A few observations, in the first place, on the *object*—a *pierced Christ*, who is looked upon by every saved sinner. And the first thought here is this, the object of a saved sinner's faith is a *suffering* one—a *pierced Christ*. Some persons are continually saying, Preach Christ ; and there is, I think, much meaningless talk in relation to this point. Let Christ be preached : but have we a definite and scriptural idea of what it is to preach the Lord Jesus to our fellow men ? If I preach an uncrucified, unsuffering, unpierced, an unbleeding Christ, I do not preach the *Christ* of the Bible, nor that Saviour which lost and ruined sinners require. And therefore the apostle Paul has very beautifully and comprehensively put the fact before us : " I am determined to know nothing among men save Jesus Christ and him crucified." We may, if we can, look into the bosom of eternal love, and exhibit Jesus Christ as lying therein, and then we may consider the throne of eternal glory wherein he is now seated, and preach the fact that he is crowned with many crowns, and that his kingdom is an everlasting one ; but if we omit his cross, his sufferings, his sweat and blood, we omit, I had almost said, the greatest and most wondrous view the sinner can have of the dear Redeemer. The cross of Jesus, his bleeding wounds, his crown of thorns, his unparalleled sufferings, and the fact that death with its ten thousand stings met him and thrust them all into his dear and precious person, constitute the cream of the gospel. And therefore the crucifixion, sufferings, and death of Jesus are all-important matters to every inquiring sinner, or to every man and woman that is going to heaven.

*All suffering appears superlative at the cross of Jesus.* I beg attention, beloved friends, to this point for a minute. For instance, the *sufferer* himself is the greatest Being that ever suffered, or that ever will or can suffer. He was incarnate God, and you are not, when contemplating Christ on the cross, to separate his divinity from his humanity ; his Godhead should not be modified or lessened on account of the fact that it was obscured in some measure whilst he hung on the accursed tree. The *whole* of the divine nature, his whole Deity was there. All the boundless greatness and majesty of God were in the person of him whom the cruel and cursing soldier chose to pierce. It was Jehovah-Jesus that hung on the tree ; and therefore in him we have the greatest Being that ever suffered. Then, pursuing this train of thought, we have, in the next place, the greatest *sufferings* that were ever experienced, as well as the greatest sufferer. There is not a being in hell that suffers as the Saviour did ; for all the pangs endured by the lost cannot be compared with those of the great Son of God. He suffered the hells of thousands, and on the tree he quenched that wrath which to the sinner himself would have been endless, and therefore this great Sufferer endured what had never been experienced before.

And then, in the third and last place, the *greatest possible results* are flowing, and will for ever flow, from these greatest sufferings of this greatest of sufferers. What are they ? What is the outcome of the depths of Christ's sorrow ? Why, all your life and mine. All your good hopes and mine. All those comforts which tend to make existence pleasant flow from the sufferings of the dear Redeemer ; and the facts that you are prepared for heaven, that your end shall be peace, that your spirit in its departing moments shall be tranquil and serene, are all owing

to the superlative sorrows and sufferings of incarnate God. And then, beloved brethren, the heaven that lies beyond all time and sin, the crowns of glory you shall for ever wear, the throne of dignity you shall for ever occupy, the robes of immortality you shall for ever wear, and those overflowing joys you shall for ever feel, may all be traced to the fact that Jesus was pierced for sinners,—for their guilt, transgression, and crime. And, therefore, we have in the pierced Christ the grand central object of the church of God, the grand central object of the *universe* of divine and holy minds, the very centre of that eternity of heaven and bliss which are prepared for the family of grace. The pierced Christ of God is the most glorious expression of the Father's thoughts of love concerning wretched, ruined man. "They shall look on him whom they pierced."

And, now, what were the sufferings of Jesus? They were *penal*. Yours and mine are not so; but those of Jesus were: that is, they were such sufferings as are experienced by the criminal in prison, or when his life is ignominiously taken for crime to satisfy justice. Go into a prison, and you see penal suffering there. Go into a hospital, you see suffering; but not that which is penal. Now Jesus suffered *penally*. He was punished. His sufferings were a punishment inflicted upon him to satisfy Divine justice. They were inflicted, not with a rod of correction as yours and mine are, but with a sword, and a spear, and with instruments of torture which indicated breaches of the law and transgressions of the will of God. They shall look on him who was suffered for sin. And, then, his sufferings were *meritorious*. You and I might suffer all the days of our life, and people might say when they were over here, and our spirits had departed for eternity—Poor creatures! they are better off now; as if the sufferings of a sinful creature could possibly merit so great a boon as love divine, or eternal happiness and glory. No, my friends—

"Could my tears for ever flow,  
Could my zeal no respite know,  
All for sin could not atone—  
Christ must save, and Christ alone."

His precious blood was a sufficient price. All his groans and agonies only were and are current coin in the moral government of God. Christ bought us with a price, and he merits and deserves for his weeping observers, all the perfection and bliss they shall ever possess. When Jesus died, the stipulated price was fully paid, the bill was receipted, the book was cancelled and closed, and Christ said, "It is finished;" and bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. And, then, in the next place, the sufferings of Jesus Christ were *final*. I do beg attention to this, and hope to dwell upon it myself as a poor ruined sinner. I should not be comforted, and I hope I am speaking with reverence, by looking on him that was pierced, if I did not believe that his sufferings for sin and his people were final. My Christian brethren, the work of penal suffering for sin, as far as the people of God are concerned, is ended. It is all finished. Justice will never draw her sword over your soul, and never pour a curse upon your mind; and Jehovah will never judicially frown upon your troubled spirit; for he can frown, curse, smite no more. The punishment is all for ever ended, and the sufferings of the redeemed are chastisements and corrections, but not penal visitations for guilt, transgression, and crime. O that we had a stronger faith to cast ourselves on this great fact, and to look with a steadier eye on him that was pierced for sin! Well, the sufferings of Christ were meritorious and final; and since they were so, they sent a fragrance to heaven which entered that glorious world, surrounds the throne of God, envelopes Deity himself; and impregnates for ever the very atmosphere of glory. Faith lives in it here, hope is now sustained thereby, and herein the believer dies, and ascends from the body to heaven, to live and sing for ever and ever there. A suffering

object is the object of the saved sinner's faith. "They shall look on him whom they pierced." But it is time to pass away from this point, otherwise I intended to remind you of the fact that here we have the sinner's *Refuge*. If there is anything in the life and death of the Lord Jesus that ought to be regarded as the antitype of that cleft of the rock into which God put Moses, we have it here. Christ was pierced and wounded : and his wounds are the clefts of that rock into which God puts all his beloved people. "I will put thee," said God, to Moses, "into a place which is by me here ;" and there is now a place by God, blessed be his name, in the smitten rock, into which he puts trembling sinners, and having lodged them therein, he covers them with his hand whilst he passes by and shows them his hinder parts. They look on him whom they pierced ; and, wishing they were in his wounds, God the Spirit in due time puts them therein. They look on the pierced One, and regard his wounds as *the great outlets of eternal love*. And as Moses smote the rock, and the waters gushed out, so, when Christ the Rock of Ages was pierced, blood and water flowed out—blood to atone for accursed crimes, and water to wash, cleanse, sanctify, and make us for ever whiter than snow. Brethren, it is sweet to look at the wounded Christ, and see the heart of Deity flowing ; good to look on a smitten Saviour, and wish we were in him ; sweet to be consciously placed in his bosom by the Holy Ghost ; and sweet to look and regard his wounds as the accepted *depository of prayer*, and all our offerings. Dear Jesus, we come to thee as helped by thy Spirit, and connect our prayers, tears, services, and sermons too, with thy wounds. They, whether they be ministers or private Christians,—“they shall look on him whom they pierced,” and, as it is elsewhere said, “they shall mourn for him.” And here, my brother, in the fact that our Lord was pierced, we have *our way to God*, our way out of time into eternity, our way through death, and our way into a better world. We go through the pierced heart of incarnate God to heaven, and through the wounds of the dear Redeemer into eternal rest. This is a living, tender, bleeding, and purifying way. We go this way to see our God. But lest we leave not ourselves time to glance at the second part of the subject, we will now leave the sufferings of Christ.

A *risen Saviour* is the object of the sinner's faith. They shall look on him whom they *pierced*—i.e., awhile ago, eighteen hundred and forty years, or thereabouts. Christ on the cross is not the termination of the believer's hope and faith. Christ is not in the grave, but risen from the dead ; and living again, he says, "Amen. I have the keys of hell and of death." Had not Jesus been raised from the dead, all would have been for ever lost. You cannot attribute too much importance to the resurrection of him that was pierced for you, or whom you pierced. This is the grand declaration of the fact that you are a saved man or woman, and that all in heaven is peace in relation to your soul and body. Had Christ remained in the grave under the power of death, all heaven, I had almost said, had been clothed in mourning, and God himself would have been disappointed, for full salvation would have been impossible without the resurrection of the Saviour. But on the morning of the third day, he that was pierced came out of prison or the tomb, and that fact proclaimed many delightful truths—viz., that the law was magnified, justice was satisfied, guilt was expiated, the debt was paid, and the way of salvation from the threshold of hell to the heights of glory was perfectly finished, and there was nothing more for a suffering Christ to do but go to heaven and take his crown and sceptre and reign there, for the purpose of bringing the purchase of his blood to himself in a better world. They shall look on him whom they pierced on the tree, and rejoice that he is risen from the dead, and ever liveth to make intercession for all that come unto God by him. Our dear Lord may be regarded as first standing on the condemnation side of death, and then, secondly, as standing on the justification side thereof. He entered death

from the sinner's place, passed through it as a sufferer, and rose from the grave on the opposite side, which I have called the justification shore. He rose, and Paul triumphantly says, "He is able now to save all that come unto God by him." We look at our pierced Christ as suffering, and mourn, and then we look at him as risen, and commit our cause into his hands, fall at his once-pierced feet, pray for an interest in his intercession, and say, as did the dying thief—

"Now thou in thy kingdom art,  
Dear Lord, remember me."

Thirdly, he is a *revealed* Christ. They shall look on him; he must therefore show himself. This object, like the sun of nature, is a self-revealing one. He reveals himself declaratively in the Word; ministerially by the preaching of his sent servants; spiritually and experimentally to the hearts of his purchased people; and he ever liveth to reveal himself as the sinner's Saviour. And, beloved friends, I beg your attention to this important fact:—every one that goes to heaven looks on the pierced Jesus, and sees him somewhere before he enters that holy place; for it seems to me that there is no other method of *practically* and experimentally cleansing the mind from sin, and preparing it for the presence of eternal purity. "They *shall* look on him whom they pierced." Some of you are looking for him, or feeling after him, for you want him. By-and-bye, and before you enter the world of light, whither you are going, it may be in the deep solemnities of death, he will reveal himself, and you shall look on him; and, looking on Jesus, your adoring soul shall leave your body, and glide out of time into eternity, and pass in a marvellous manner into all the bliss of being and the grandeur of your God. They shall look on him, for he is a revealed Christ. And is he not *attractive*? This shall be our last idea—a pierced Christ is attractive. Among millions of beings he is the most prominent. Bible history gives us an account of the solemn business which was transacted on Calvary. We see the soldiers; we see Mary and the women sitting and watching him there; we see the rabble wagging their heads and putting out their tongues, as the Psalmist has it; and we hear them sneeringly and persecutingly say—"He saved others: let him save himself." We see all those characters; but the most prominent, the most attractive object on Calvary is the Being that was pierced; for they shall look on him. And, my brother, when he comes the second time without sin unto salvation, he will come attended by perhaps millions and millions, but the Lord will be the most prominent of all. Some little idle talk I sometimes hear about the experience of the glorified in heaven. One says, I shall look for you, and you will look for me among the glorified; and when I arrive I shall look for my father, and my mother, and my husband, and for others. All this appears to me to be carnalising that spiritual place and state, and things which are supernatural and divine. Christ is all in all; and our heaven will not result from a sight of creatures, but from the presence of him that was pierced for us, who will then be in the midst of the throne, whose beauties and excellencies we shall gaze on for ever and ever, as the good old believer in a country town said, just before she died—"I am now going to close my eyes for ever on earthly things, and open and fix them upon Immanuel, to take them off no more for ever." Oh, heaven will consist in being with and looking on him that we pierced, the Lamb as he had been slain. Well, they shall look on him *only*. Mary will be there; but should the Pope of Rome, and his predecessors and their followers go to heaven, and carry their religion with them, I suppose they would look on the Virgin Mary, the apostles, and the hundreds and thousands of saints that they have canonized. Miserable trash! Abomination, mystery of iniquity, and vile idolatry! Mary, indeed! Why, she is one of the observers or spectators. Her ransomed eyes are fixed upon her

once-pierced Lord. And Peter with the keys of heaven—another abomination ! he is there ; but not as an apostle, not in official robes, but in the robe of his Saviour's righteousness, looking at him whom he pierced. Hence Christ in the midst of the throne will attract the attention and absorb the thoughts of ransomed minds for ever and ever.

II. *The act itself.* They shall look on him ; first, in *condemnation*. Sensible of the fact that they are condemned, lost, and ruined, they shall look on him that was pierced ; and hence you observe the look is that of a guilty sinner, that of a criminal, that of one that is under sentence of death. Where do our criminals look, and on whom can they fix their eyes after conviction has taken place, and sentence has been passed upon them ? All before them is death, darkness, and black despair, except there may be a thought, a passing thought that probably petitions may be sent to Her Majesty, and the sentence may not be carried out ; but if there is such a hope it has no just foundation, and should it be fulfilled, justice would be wronged, according to existing facts, and mercy would triumph over her. But here is a guilty sinner in a state of condemnation, and under sentence of death : he is not in absolute despair, though perhaps not far from it, for there is ground whereon he may stand and hope. He is looking upon this pierced object ; and the language of his spirit is—God be merciful ! for thou canst if thou wilt be merciful to me a sinner. Say unto me, I am thy salvation. And this look is a *loathing* one. What is meant by that ? Well ; not that Christ is loathed, but that he that looks loathes himself and his sins. It is a look of self-loathing, of godly sorrow and repentance. It is faith, with her eyes filled with tears, looking on the Lord Jesus. The sinner loathes his sin, and hopes for mercy, and hence he does not sink into despair ; he hangs between heaven and hell, looking on Jesus ; he does not sink into hell, for he is looking on the pierced One : he does not rise to heaven, for he knows not yet whether the Saviour died for him or not ; and, finally, he says—

“ If I die with mercy sought,  
When I the King have tried,  
This were to die,—delightful thought !—  
As sinner never died.”

He looks in condemnation thus on Jesus Christ, the pierced One. I should like to dwell on these points, but time forbids.

Secondly there is a looking on him in *suffering*—mental, physical, spiritual circumstantial, and dying. In affliction, look at the grandest Sufferer that ever tasted sorrow.

“ His way was much rougher and darker than mine :  
Did Christ, my Lord, suffer, and shall I repine ? ”

Your pierced Lord had no dying bed ; he gave up the ghost on the accursed tree. Look at his dying circumstances. Who nursed him ? No one. Who moistened his burning tongue when he said—I thirst ! No mother was permitted to dip a feather into wine and water to mitigate the sufferings of the dying God-man. A wretch filled a sponge with vinegar, and raised it to his parched lips. When fever burns us up, my friends, we have nurses, and are succoured ; and when otherwise afflicted, we have alleviating circumstances and services ; but your Lord had none,—nothing to mitigate his woes. When tempted to repine and murmur in suffering, think of and look on the pierced One. They shall look on him whom they pierced when in suffering. And then again in *learning*—whilst inquiring into the mysteries of the kingdom, they shall look on him. When they would know the whole about sin, they shall look upon him, for the whole appears there. When they want to know what is love divine, they shall look on him. When they would know as much as possible of justice and its inflexibility



and sternness, they shall look on him ; and when they would know what is hell, they shall look on him that was pierced, and around whom the flames of divine wrath raged ; and when they would know what is death, and the sting thereof, they shall look on him ; for a pierced Christ is the fullest and grandest exposition of the vital mysteries which constitute our grand and holy religion. Then, fourthly, they shall look at him in their *conflict* with the world, the flesh, and the devil. I know of no influence that can enable one to stand against the powers of darkness, but that which comes from the crucified One. The Papists,—deluded mortals,—have many methods of mortifying the flesh and sin. Let me say—Do you want to mortify sin ? It must be done by a look—a daily look at him. Is the world to be crucified to you, and you to the world ? It must be done in this way. They may kneel on pebbles, count beads, and pray for whole days together, put peas between the soles of their feet and their shoes, wear horsehair or sackcloth next to their skin, immure themselves in nunneries and convents, assume a voluntary poverty, and much more, yet the “old man” will remain strong, and sin will prevail. When all these things are placed in competition with the pierced Christ of God, we say, with Paul: “God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of my Lord Jesus Christ, by whom I am crucified to the world, and the world is crucified to me.” I would sit before this pierced One as a sinner, and loathe sin, mortify it, be crucified to the world myself, and become pure ; for purity emanates from the pierced One, and flows from him through faith into the spectator’s heart. They shall look on him *in worship* ; in prayer ; in the ordinances of God’s house, baptism and the Lord’s Supper. I could not baptize any person that said he saw nothing of Jesus Christ in the ordinance, nor could I baptize one that rested therein. Be baptized for his sake ; but whilst doing this look on him whom you have pierced. Let us take our seats at the Lord’s table, see the elements, and look through them on him whom we pierced. In worship look ; but *on him only*. “This, sir, is the identical cross that Christ hung upon.” I do not care for that. “Here is the identical spear with which he was pierced. Here are the three nails with which he was nailed to the tree—one for each hand and one for his feet—the identical nails !” I do not care for them. Could I have them, and were I convinced that they were the same, I would pass them by, and come to the fact that as a guilty sinner, I want, not the spear, not the nails, but him that was pierced. And then, lastly, death will come, and we will die looking on him. Then, by-and-bye, the graves shall be opened and the dead shall be raised, and he that was pierced shall come again, and every eye shall see him, and we shall put our blood-bought, pardoned heads out of our dusty beds, and our ransomed eyes will be fixed upon him whom we pierced, and we shall say—“Lo, this is our God ; we have waited for him, and he will save us : this is the Lord ; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.” Then shall our eyes be set upon him for ever ; and “so shall we ever be with the Lord.” Amen. May the Lord add his blessing, for Christ’s sake.

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# CHRIST EXALTED, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVEN.

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## A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,  
ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JULY 10th, 1881.

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*"This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear."*  
—Acts ii. 32, 33.

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It will be remembered that before His ascension into heaven the Lord said to His disciples, "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature: he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; and he that believeth not, shall be damned." But they were to tarry at Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high. Having given this charge to his disciples, Jesus ascended to His Father; and our Father, to His God and our God, from whence in due time he fulfilled the promise which He made to His disciples, and also the covenant engagements into which He had entered with His divine Father. On the day of Pentecost He poured out in a miraculous manner His blessed Spirit upon His church, according to His word, and the hopes and expectations of His servants. Peter had preached in the day of Christ's flesh; but he never preached the Gospel before the death and resurrection of the Saviour, as he preached it on the day of Pentecost, for we learn that when Jesus spoke, concerning His death, Peter took Him aside, and rebuked Him. Peter could not bear to hear of the sufferings and death of His Master, and none of the disciples would accept the fact that He was about to leave them, and therefore, they said one to another, "What is this that He saith unto us: A little while, and ye shall not see me, and again, a little while, and ye shall see me; and because I go unto the Father? What is this that He saith, A little while? We cannot tell what He saith." However, the time came when Jesus died, and put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and the disciples having lost the personal presence of their Master, remained, according to His orders, in the city of Jerusalem. On the day of Pentecost the promise was fulfilled; a marvellous measure of Divine "power" was poured down upon their heads and their hearts, and the Old Testament—the New was not then in existence—appeared to them as a new book. The prophecies, the promises, and the doctrines of grace, as recorded in the Old Testament were understood, and Peter, for the first time, "preached" the Gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven." On the day of Pentecost they saw that the death of their Lord was essential to salvation; that the blood of the dear Redeemer was required to put away sin, and that God could not be just, and the justifier of the ungodly, without the interposition of that Ransom. Therefore having received

the Holy Spirit they proceeded to address the multitude in various languages. Some of the people sneered and mocked, and others said, "These men are full of new wine." But Peter being divinely inspired, rose, and preached the Gospel in the new light and power which he had received from heaven, and my text forms a part of the first sermon preached after the outpouring of the Spirit. "This Jesus," said Peter, "hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear."

Let me endeavour simply to illustrate the text, and in so doing you perceive that we shall have to notice three things. First, *the resurrection of the Lord*; and, secondly, *His exaltation at the right hand of God*; and, thirdly and lastly, *the effusion of the Holy Spirit*: "He hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear."

In the first place, let me offer a few observations upon *the resurrection of our glorious Lord*. I dare say some of my remarks this morning will be doctrinal, but I have long believed that there is no spiritual meat or drink, no spiritual honey, milk or wine, for the saints of God, without the glorious doctrines of grace. The incarnation of the Son of God is a wonderful doctrine; His obedient life and sacrificial death are glorious themes, and it is also very blessed when one is influenced by the Holy Ghost to dwell upon His burial and resurrection. It is said emphatically in the Word, that Jesus died, and *was buried*. He did not return to life immediately after He had died on the cross. It was necessary that he should enter the grave; necessary that He should lie there three days and three nights; necessary that He should conquer death in his own territories, and necessary that He should sanctify the tomb for the sleeping dust of all His blood-bought people. Our great Redeemer is now Lord of all, having taken possession of all things for Himself. He has taken possession of His church; He has taken possession of all the grace that is required to save His people; He has taken possession of death; He has taken possession of the grave; He has taken possession of heaven, and of all those mansions which eternal love ordained; and He has left on record a blessed and precious promise for His people: "Where I am, there shall also My servant be." In looking at the resurrection of Jesus, we shall first regard it as a proof of the fact that His great saving work is done, or that redemption is finished for ever. Had not redemption been completed, had not our debts been fully and eternally paid, had not our guilt been quite expiated, and our sin wholly put away, Justice would not have opened the Saviour's tomb, and eternal righteousness and truth would not have permitted our great Surety to leave the prison. Blessed for ever be the name of the Redeemer, He is not in the grave, but on the throne; He is not in the world, but at the right hand of God; and that He is there proves the real and blessed fact upon which our hope rests, that redemption's great work is done; that the perfections of God have been brought together in everlasting beauty and harmony, and that there is eternal peace between the everlasting God and man. That the blood that was demanded has been shed, and the atonement that was required has been made and taken into heaven, appeasing for ever the great

Jehovah on His throne, Christ's resurrection makes clear. I hardly know how to receive the words of Dr. Watts, when speaking of God's throne—

“Once 'twas a seat of dreadful wrath,  
And shot devouring flame.”

Well, the throne of God is not now a seat of wrath, neither does it shoot devouring flame; for the blood of Jesus has been taken within the vail, sprinkled upon that high and majestic throne, and there are no fires now to quench; no curses now to inflict, and no attributes now to reconcile. The heavens of eternal glory are everlastingly filled with the fragrance of the Saviour's atonement, and mercy reigns over guilty men. Grace reigns righteously and equitably; so that God is just, and yet the Justifier of them that believe in him. When the blood was taken into heaven, God smelled a sweet savour of rest, and eternal justice descended in connection with angels, and rolled back the stone that was over the grave of Emmanuel, and He that was dead came forth, and thus the resurrection of our Lord forms a part of the foundation of our imperishable hopes. He has left the tomb. This Jesus has God raised up; for His work was done.

Let us look at this subject for a few minutes. His work as a *servant* was done. He took upon Himself the form of a servant, and engaged to serve His Father by fulfilling His laws and demands, and by accomplishing His purposes; for His work consisted in obeying the law, and making it for ever honourable. Our Lord commenced His work of obedience when He entered the world; for He was made of a woman, made under the law, that He might redeem them that were under the law. He lived for three-and-thirty years under a broken law, and obeyed in the place of transgressors, and as He proceeded with His work He left perfection behind Him, whilst before Him there were guilt and curse. He gave a glory to every precept, or a perfect obedience to every requirement and demand of God, and having reached the end of the precept His cross was set up, and He was nailed to it, where He bore the penalty due to sin, and bowed His head, and said, My work as a Servant is completed; my obedience is perfect and saving. He took His obedience, and presented it to His Father, saying, Father, will it do? And the Father said, I am well pleased with Thee, for Thy righteousness' sake, for Thou hast magnified the law, and made it honourable. And now that same righteousness, as He sits upon the throne, He presents to the guilty, sensible sinner, and says, Sinner, will it do for you? It is My obedient life, and My Father has accepted it with tokens of divine approval—will it do for you? And this righteousness cast upon the guilty, and covering the unclean, induces him to sing—

“Bold shall I stand in that great day,  
For who aught to my charge shall lay?  
Fully through Christ absolved I am,  
From sin's tremendous curse and shame.”

Yes, the work of the Redeemer as the Father's Servant is finished. The sufferings of our Lord were penal. He bore every penal woe; swallowed up every penal sorrow, having received every curse. The curse of God is a heavy, fiery, and burning reality. It is hell, and it raged around

the suffering person of the Redeemer, as He hung on the accursed tree. As it is written, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." His precious soul was filled with a sense of wrath, and His precious heart was enveloped in the curses of a broken law. God smote Him as He never smote a being before; for there is not a mere creature that could survive the blow that fell upon the glorious person of God's beloved Son. The damned in hell suffer the curses of the law, but they fall not there upon lost finite creatures as they fell upon our incarnate suffering Saviour. God took all the vials of wrath which had been accumulating from the fall, and emptied them upon the head of His Son, and Jesus lived to receive and to exhaust them all; and when the last drop had been poured out, the Father said, "It is done;" and Christ said, "It is finished," and bowed His head, and gave up the ghost. There are now afflictions for me and for you, but nothing penal has been left by our Lord. Our sufferings are not judgments, but chastisements; they are not curses, but blessings. They do not come from the judicial, but from the parental hand of our God. They do not come from the broken law or the law of works, but from the covenant of eternal grace. They are not intended to appease God, to satisfy justice, or to remove sin; for all that was done by our great Emmanuel, and He that did it all has been raised from the grave. "This Jesus," whom we preach, "hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses."

The work of Christ as *the Captain of salvation* was completed. The world was before Him, with all its blandishments, pleasures, pains, and curses. It was before Him to condemn, and to applaud; but our great Emmanuel was equally dead to its applause, its condemnation, its pleasures, and its pains; and went on conquering and to conquer, in His own great might. Just before He met the last foe, He said to His disciples, "In the world you shall have tribulation," and it will be deep and bitter; for "the time is coming when whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." "But be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." Sometimes our brethren in prayer say, "We are passing through an enemy's land to our heavenly and eternal rest." Dr. Watts was not of that opinion—

"We're marching through Emmanuel's ground,  
To fairer worlds on high."

There are enemies in the land; but the land itself belongs to our Lord, the world having been conquered and overcome by Him. It is Christ's property, and He reigns in, and reigns over it, for His beloved people; and hence as the Conqueror of the world He said, "Be of good cheer." You shall have tribulation below, but you shall have peace in Me. And what was Christ's conflict with the devil, during forty days and nights in the wilderness perhaps we shall never know. I would not go too far or too deep into the mystery of temptation; but some of my beloved friends have met the great arch-fiend more than once, and received his arrows, and been tempted by him to doubt almost everything. You have been tempted to doubt the existence of almost everything recorded in the Bible, and to doubt the existence of beings whose character is

described there. Have not vile thoughts, abominable feelings and heart-polluting ideas swarmed in your minds, and have you not under such circumstances been filled with terror, and shaken as an aspen leaf? Oh what were the temptations that surrounded and enveloped the great Captain of our salvation! The devil invented all he could invent, and forged every arrow that he could forge, and hurled all at the Lord of life and glory. But, bless His name! it is said that "when the devil had ended all the temptations he departed from him for a season;" and our Lord came forth unstained, uninjured, and undamaged. Satan's temptations on that occasion were as the way of a ship in the sea, or as the way of a serpent on the rock. The Rock of Ages was there, and the old serpent crawled about Him, and had it been possible would have injected his filth into His glorious person; but the Redeemer was untarnished by it all. His work as a Conqueror was completed, and hence He was raised from the dead. But He had another foe to meet, and that was death, with its ten thousand stings: for "He, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man." I wish I could enter deeply into the fact that our blessed Redeemer bore all the terrors of death that were due to our transgression. What it is to die we do not yet know, and what it is to die for sin and under the burden of guilt we cannot tell; but our Lord met death with all its stings, and tasted it for everyone that shall sing His glorious praises in heaven. And when the sting of death was quite extracted, and death itself was wholly conquered; then our Lord bowed His head, and gave up the ghost; and because the world, and the devil and death were all vanquished at His feet, having lost their power, the Father raised Him from the dead. And, lastly, his work as a *priestly Saviour* was completed. As the great High Priest of our profession. He offered Himself without spot to God, and having expiated and put away our guilt, and appeased the eternal Jehovah, He has entered within the veil, there to appear in the presence of God for us. The resurrection of our Lord is a proof of the fact that salvation is a finished work. If it were not, the resurrection of Jesus would have been impossible. He is not in the grave; He is risen, and we rejoice.

In the second place His resurrection is a *sweet pledge of ours*. It is a proof of the completion of Christ's work, and a pledge of the resurrection of His people. He died as a common person, I mean as the Head and Representative of the church. He was buried as a common person, and not as an isolated individual, and in this capacity He rose from the dead. When He came out of the grave He represented all His beloved people, and inasmuch as He who is the resurrection and the life, and also the great Head of the church is now living on high, where He is His members must also be for ever. Our union to Jesus requires our resurrection. I have sometimes had some serious, and I trust profitable thoughts, whilst speaking over the remains of some of the saints of God. The grave is not a pleasant place to look into; but when we view it in connection with the Lord Jesus, we feel there is mercy connected with our death and burial, and our rest in our dusty beds. As surely as the body of our Lord is in heaven, so surely will all the bodies of His people be raised from the dead. And what a wondrous sight will be seen at the

last day, when every grave will be opened, and countless millions of ransomed beings will lift up their heads in the dust, and be drawn out of their graves; for their Lord is the resurrection and the life. He will communicate new life to the dust now sleeping in the grave, and by His almighty power raise every ransomed body, and form and fashion it like unto His own glorious body, when it shall be caught up to meet Himself in the air, and so shall it be for ever with the Lord. Beloved friends, we shall see and meet our friends again. The eyes of Job, which saw his three or four friends, shall see his descending Lord, for himself, and behold Him, and not another. Since death is inevitable, and we are certainly going to the grave, and must become dust again, oh how pleasing and sweet is the fact that the day is coming when death shall be swallowed up in victory! The blood of the Lamb demands our resurrection. It speaketh better things than the blood of Abel, and among its other demands it requires the glorification of our bodies. I have sometimes made observations here and elsewhere in relation to the bodies of the saints, some of whom I have heard speak as I have thought very improperly and unscripturally concerning their bodies. If our souls, they have said, get to heaven, and enter into rest, we care not what becomes of our bodies. But your Lord cares for them, and has made himself responsible for their resurrection. He is to present your bodies at the last day, before the glory of God's presence. They are purchased property, they are the temples of the Holy Ghost. The body of Jesus was raised, and the bodies of His people cannot be allowed to remain in the tomb. A sweet pledge is the resurrection of Jesus, of the resurrection of His people.

Lastly, with regard to the resurrection of Christ—*it is the pattern of the resurrection of His people*. The minds of the saints are conformed in some measure to Jesus Christ in this world. He is holy; so are they. He is spiritual; so are they. He was filled with the Holy Ghost; and they possess a measure of the same Spirit. The life of Jesus is in every saint; and every saint is a Christian, because Christ is formed in him the hope of eternal glory. But our bodies, beloved friends, are to undergo a change similar, perhaps, to that which our minds passed through in regeneration. I have no authority for saying that the Holy Ghost will regenerate our bodies, but the resurrection of the body will, in some measure resemble the regeneration of the mind. Now the body is a burden to the mind. "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." We sometimes experience considerable difficulty in bringing our bodies up to the sanctuary, and when they are there they frequently burden our souls. There is drowsiness, and a want of liveliness and buoyancy which interfere with our spiritual worship and comfort. Soon our bodies will be spiritual, like the glorious body of the Lord Jesus, and when He has put if I may so speak, the last touch to His work by raising us from the grave, and making us completely like Himself,—what shall we be, and how shall we appear? Brethren, "it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." Eternity will never, like time, cause infirmities and defects upon our parts and powers. Immortal youth and vigour, and

strength, and buoyancy, and spirituality will characterise the persons of all the people of God. "This Jesus hath God raised up." And the fact that He did so proves the completeness of our redemption, supplies a pledge of our perfection, and is a pattern of our resurrection.

Let us notice in the second place, one or two facts in connection with the *exaltation of Jesus*. "Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted," it was necessary that our Lord should be honoured for His work, and His exaltation is the glorious reward of His sufferings. He entered heaven justly and righteously, having a right to do so, in consequence of His own personal worth and merit. We enter behind Him in His name, and in dependence on His worth and merit. He leaned and rested, and depended on Himself alone. He lifted up His head with confidence and joy when He reached the portals of eternal glory, and, conscious of His own worth and worthiness, He went up to the right hand of God. Divine justice seated Him on the throne of honour, and put upon His head the many crowns which now adorn His brow, for He is worthy to sit there; and worthy to receive all the ascriptions of praise and glory which are presented to Him. He is the only worthy one in that glorious world. Gabriel never speaks of worth or worthiness, and the saints that are glorified have no thought of personal worthiness; but our Lord is conscious of the fact that He is worthy to sit, and live, and reign over all, for ever and ever. He is rewarded for His work with a seat at the right hand of God.

"His work for ever is complete,  
For ever undisturbed His seat;  
Myriads of angels round Him fly,  
And sing His well-gained victory."

"They brought His chariot from above  
To bear Him to His throne;  
Clapped their triumphant wings, and cried,  
'The glorious work is done!'"

And who is it that sits at the right hand of the Majesty on high? The Lord that died for us? Flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone. He is our Brother. If when we were in trouble we had a brother in a high place that could and would help us, what hope and confidence that fact would inspire us with. O friends, eternity is before us, and we have immortal minds to be saved from sin, and carried through all our trials and troubles here. Our Brother is on the throne, our Jesus is Lord of all; God has exalted Him at His own right hand, and He reigns over all. John saw a book in the hands of Him that sat on the throne, and heard a voice saying, "Who is worthy to take it, and to open the seals thereof?" Of all that John saw, not one in heaven, or on earth, or under the earth could open the book. John wept, and one said to him, "Weep not; for the Lion of the tribe of Judah hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof." And John looked, and saw a Lamb in the midst of the throne, as it had been slain, who took the book out of the hand of the Father. And what is He doing now? Why, the book of God's purposes is before this exalted Lord, who holds the reins of universal dominion in His hand, and



“Here He exalts neglected worms  
 To sceptres and a crown ;  
 And there the following page He turns,  
 And treads the monarch down.”

As a minister preaches, this exalted One drops his grace into the hearts of sinners and saints, regenerating the former and edifying the latter, proving that he is Lord of all. Whilst all this is being done, there are hundreds of saints on their dying beds, not far from their home of glory; and He that sits on the throne attends to all their wants, and sees them safely through. Our exalted Lord is receiving those for whom He died, helping them on their way to the heavenly home, is present with them in their last moments, and meets them at the threshold of glory, to welcome them to their everlasting home and rest. He is exalted at the right hand of God. There is not a world, but what is His, nor a devil but what He controls, nor an event but what He influences. The circumstances of our life He connects together in a way that is worthy of Himself. That which is casual, and called an accident, He controls and manages.

“My life’s minutest circumstance  
 Is governed by His eye.”

He that is your Lord was the “man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.” It is divinely right that He should sit on that high throne, and manage all the affairs of the universe. But that is not all. He is the object of eternal worship. He that is exalted above all blessing and praise represents Deity, and is Himself the eternal God. How great is the mystery of godliness ! We do not expect to see three divided persons in heaven, certainly not as painters represent the Trinity—the Father as an old man, the Son as a young man, and the Holy Ghost as a dove. Oh how prone people are to carnalise eternal things, and even Jehovah and His character.

“The God shines gracious through the man,  
 And sheds sweet glories on them all.”

The Lamb of God embodies Deity, and all the perfections and attributes of Jehovah. Thus all the inhabitants of heaven fall before our exalted Lord, and sing, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive honour, and power, and glory for ever.” Amen.

# PETER'S CONFESSION OF FAITH.

## A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, 18th SEPTEMBER, 1887.

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“*He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven.*”—  
Matt. xvi. 15—17.  
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PETER was an extraordinary man, and he often spoke for his brethren, and was mouth for them on this particular occasion. His Master said, “I say unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this Rock [which you have now confessed] I will build My church;” and thou shalt be a living stone thereof, and occupy a place upon Myself as its firm foundation, “and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Now, I say this portion of the Word of God has been fulfilled from year to year, and from one month to another, until the present moment. The gates of hell have attempted to prevail against the church, and rivers (so to speak) of blood have been shed in connection with a public profession of religion. The gates of hell and the powers of darkness have always been opposed to God’s dear Son, and His cause and interest in the world; but we leave that, however, and glance at the fact, “I will build My church upon this Rock.” Where is the church of God now? In God the Father, and in His Son Jesus Christ. The church is upon Christ, the Rock of eternal ages; and let us bless God, dear friends, for this. Whatever may happen in the world, Christ’s church is safe. Kingdoms may fall, politics may change, and change greatly too, and thrones and empires may tumble down, the church of God will stand firmly until the end of time; and then it will appear in full perfection and glory in a better world for ever. The Scriptures cannot be broken; for He who said, “The gates of hell shall not prevail against it,” will see that this word be fulfilled unto the end.

“What though the gates of hell withstood,  
Yet must this building rise;  
'Tis Thy own work, Almighty God,  
And wondrous in our eyes.”

Families are dissolved, societies are breaking up, and all nature is changing; but the church of God is saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation, and can never, never be destroyed. Let us, however, confine attention to the words we have read.

There are four points to be noticed; I will mention them as I proceed, and offer a few remarks upon each of them. In the first place we have an important question: He saith unto them, not unto Peter singly or separately: “But whom, say ye that I am?” Let us tarry here a few minutes, and try to look at this great question. In general affairs public

opinion goes for something, I dare say; but it goes for little or nothing in the things of God. The Saviour had previously put a question to His disciples; "Whom do *men* say that I, the Son of man am?" Not that our Lord thought or cared for public opinion; and yet, determined to pave His way to this question, He asked of His disciples, "Whom do men say that I am?" In the first question He introduces the words, "the Son of man," but in the text that phrase is left out. "Whom say ye that *I am*?" In answer to the first question, the disciples said, "Some say that Thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, and others Jeremias or one of the prophets. That is the opinion of the people. "But whom say ye that I am?" What think *ye* of Christ? Let us not go out of doors into the world for a correct view of the Saviour. Let us look at the the Word of God, and hold it up to our experience, and see how we compare with the gospel. If that Christ who is formed in our hearts, the hope of glory, is the Christ who appears in the glorious gospel of God's grace, we are safe to all the intents of bliss. "Whom say ye that I am?" The thought strikes me here, that our dear Lord always turns His mind, as it were, towards and upon Himself; He always directs our attention to Himself; He always makes Himself very prominent and conspicuous, and is always determined to magnify Himself. It was perfectly right that it should be so on His part; for He was, and is, and ever will be, the greatest being in the universe. It is your privilege and mine to magnify Him, to speak well of His name, and to see that He is exalted, if possible, not only above all that is within and without, but above all blessing and praise in heaven. I should be a happy man if I could lift or raise the Saviour in my own heart above all the evil that dwells therein; and if I could set my Lord above all the circumstances which surround me, and keep my eye steadily fixed upon Him. My days would pass quietly away, and my nights would be calm and serene. Is it not a fact in connection with our experience, that we are so prone to magnify the creature, and our troubles, and to so magnify the nature and consequences of sin, that we almost lose sight of the great and glorious Immanuel, the blessed, the ever-reigning Christ of God. He is greater than the greatest, and higher than the highest, and stronger than the strongest; are these contradictions, or am I using superfluous words? There are men that are of the strongest; but our Lord is stronger than they. Devils are stronger than men; but our Lord is stronger than they. There are thrones which are comparatively high here, but His is the highest throne; and there are crowns that glitter much in this world; but on His head are many crowns, and it is our mercy that it is so. Brethren, let Christ be magnified in our life, our experience, and our progress through the world, as He will be in eternity. Yes, the Saviour turned His eyes upon Himself, and it was perfectly just on His part to do so, and ask the question, "Whom say ye that I am?" I should not like to ask my friends for their opinion of myself as a man, as a Christian, or as a minister. It is for me, for you, and for all God's people, to turn their attention away from themselves as much as possible to the dear and blest Redeemer; but it was the grand prerogative of Jesus Christ to stand out prominently before everybody and everything, and to place Himself above all, and say,

“Whom say ye that I am?” If we have low ideas of our Lord, we are in a strange position; but if He is our dear Lord, and we have been bought with His blood, and have some humble knowledge of that fact, our ideas and estimate of Him will not be low. We shall labour under the weight of His great name, and feel how heavy is His glory, and lament our weakness and inability to raise Him to the position which He has a right to occupy.

Now, I take it, my friends, that in the first place our Lord *appealed to the faith of His disciples*. “Whom say ye that I am?” We read in the 53rd of Isaiah, that when Jesus Christ should appear, the world, and especially the Jewish world, would see no beauty in Him that they should desire Him. I am glad that the Holy Ghost has been pleased to add these words, “that we should desire Him;” for otherwise in this wonderful day of ours the world professes to see moral beauty in the character of the Messiah. They express this very guardedly, for they do not know Him, and their utterances are as dry as chips, if I may so speak. The infidel sees it; for a celebrated man who died a few years ago admitted that the character of the Messiah was very beautiful. Therefore the Holy Ghost has been pleased to add the words, “that we should desire Him.” Our Lord appealed to the faith of His believing disciples. Their faith was not very deep, or vigorous, or strong; nevertheless they did believe in God, and in their Lord and Master; and He appealed to their faith: “Whom say ye that I am?” What are your convictions, your thoughts, your feelings, your experience? “For, as believers in Me you have convictions, and they are deep, and concerning My person they are correct and true; therefore, whom say ye that I am?” O that our faith may be of that kind which animated the heart of Peter, and which elicited from the Master this benediction,—“Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee.” The people of God sometimes wonder whether their faith be a saving faith or not. The devil is permitted at times to cover their minds with darkness, and to utterly conceal from their eyes the nature of the good work which is going on within, and they stumble and draw conclusions which are as far from the truth as the heavens are from the earth. My dear friends, we cannot do without a living faith in the heart, and we can no more do without its great Author than the world can do without the influences of the natural sun. The soil which produces what man requires, may in itself be good and rich; but however excellent it may be, it requires the sun, the wind, and the rain, and other influences must be in perpetual operation, or all will become barren and desolate. As it is in nature, so it is in grace in this respect. Your heart may have been changed, and a living faith rooted therein, and that faith may have embraced the Saviour again and again; yet you are not independent of the great Author of faith, nor of the influences of heavenly love and rich and reigning grace. These are absolutely necessary; for if God hides His face we die; at least, our pleasure dies, and our spirituality withers. Therefore may the Sun of righteousness ever shine, may His warming influences ever enter and pervade our hearts and minds, and may that faith which worketh by love ever embrace the dear, and sweet, and precious name of Jesus; so that we

may be always ready to give a reason of the hope that is within us, with meekness and fear.

Then again, I think our Lord *appealed to the experience of His disciples*. This as to its spiritual power and reality perhaps was not very deep, yet, inasmuch as they believed in Christ, they had a measure of what is designated Christian experience. "Whom say ye that I am?" Who am I, and what am I to you? The Master would know from their own lips what He was in their estimation, and to their hearts. What am I in myself, and what am I to you? I do not suppose the words occurred to the mind of Peter, but methinks if they had he would have given utterance to them: "Thou art the chiefest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely." Why, it was Peter, who said, after our dear Lord had delivered certain truths, and many of His followers left Him, and walked no more with Him, and He had said, "Will ye also go away?" "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

"Depart from Christ! 'tis death! 'tis more!

'Tis endless ruin! deep despair!

I may hold my Saviour in a very awkward manner, and exercise my little faith upon His name very incoherently; yet, if I love His precious name, and have a measure of holy experience of what He is, and can say at times with the church of God, "This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend, O ye daughters of Jerusalem!" perfection will come by and bye. I may be cast down and distressed because I am not perfect here and now, yet perfection certainly will come; for sight must follow faith, and fruition must follow hope. Turn your eyes within—I do not often invite you to do this—look into the deepest recesses of your soul, and say what Jesus Christ is to you? A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, a perfect character, an amiable Being, that Being who gave rise to Christianity, and upon whose name the church of God is built. Ah, my friends, can you not go a little deeper? Does not the name of Jesus Christ go through and through your heart? Are there not moments when that dear name absorbs you altogether, and you are completely lost for a few moments in the great and glorious name of the Saviour? As the fish in the sea is at home, and remains there until it be caught or die, so the child of God would ever be immersed in the great name of the Redeemer. In the glorious ocean of everlasting love He would dive, and bathe, and live; and as the fish finds its food in the ocean which is its home, so the believer finds his satisfaction and his all in the Christ whom his heart desires to love. O that we could love Him more, and serve Him better; lift Him higher, and realize more of the infinite sweetness and boundless preciousness of His great and holy name.

Now, our knowledge of Christ has a considerable influence in forming our character. Religious knowledge, as it is called, always exercises a powerful influence upon character. Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. Their doctrine was leaven, which diffuses itself through the whole mass, and doctrines diffuse their influence through the character. If our knowledge of Jesus Christ be true and spiritual, our character will be true and spiritual also. Persons repudiate doctrines in the day in which we live, but be sure you never do so; for notwithstanding

their position and the manner in which people speak against the doctrines of grace, the doctrines one holds always have their influence upon character. The Pharisees and Sadducees were what they were owing to the influence of the doctrines they held ; and hence the Master says, " But whom say ye that I am ;" knowing well that their knowledge of His name had a great influence upon their whole life. Let me ever know the Lord as saved sinners know Him, and know Him so as to love Him intensely and increasingly, and my character will be acceptable in the sight of God. I want you to notice another point for a moment. Your estimate of Christ will influence you in forming an estimate of other matters. " Whom say ye that I am ?" Thou art my all in all. Well then, what do you think of sin ? I hate and loathe it. No being hates all sin unless he knows and loves the Lord. What is your estimate of yourself ? A man's foes are those of his own household. Self I would tread under foot and never follow it. It is a mischievous power ; Lord save me from myself. Enter my heart Thyself, and reign supremely and for ever there. What is your estimate of the world ? " Well, I see no harm in spending an evening in the theatre, or in the dancing room, or in the music hall, or in this, that, or the other entertainment." I rather think, my friends, that if your estimate of the Saviour were higher than it is, your estimate of theatres, dancing halls, and so on, would be very low. You would have low ideas, opinions, and feelings, in regard to them. Let Christ sit high in my heart, and occupy the best seat therein, or let Him have my best and noblest affections, and you may have all the theatres, entertainments, and their worldliness for me.

" Let worldly minds the world pursue,  
It has no charms for me."

I once loved it, but I have been taught and brought to love another. I once saw beauties in it, but then I did not see the world from a proper point of view, nor had I ever seen the greatest beauty in the universe. But having seen Christ, and having had to do with Him, the world has lost its charms. Self, I would trample in the dust ; sin, I would divest myself of it, if I might and I could ; and I sometimes long for the time when I shall be wholly stripped of it, for mine eyes have seen the King in His beauty, and beheld the land that is very far off.

In the second place, observe *the important confession of faith*. It comes as an answer to this question. " And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." What did the Saviour ask the question for ? Not for information ; He knew what their feelings were, and what their utterance would be. What may we suppose the Lord put the question for ? To elicit this confession, and to draw forth this expression of faith and experience. And Simon Peter, not merely for himself personally, but as mouth for the rest, said, " Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Short but weighty ; a very few words, but every word is full. " Thou art *the Christ, the Son of the living God*." Here we have an important confession. They all believed the same thing, and I suppose their faith was pretty much the same as to its measure in all their hearts. However, there was no dissentient, no difference, not one of them held back any portion of his faith. The

whole eleven, excluding Judas ; whether he was silent or not I do not know—the whole eleven godly men threw themselves for eternity upon that person who was their Master, and said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” First, in this confession of faith *the divinity of Jesus Christ* is brought out prominently. “The Son of God?” When I was a younger man, I used to speak with a great deal of fervour and zeal against Unitarianism and Socinianism. I suppose this is as a rule characteristic of young men; but I may be permitted to say to-day, though I am hardly such an one as John the aged, yet I am getting into years, and going down the hill, I am ready to say to-day with all the feeling I can command, that I do reject Unitarianism and Socinianism, and shall loathe it for ever. If I rob Christ of His Godhead, and reduce Him to a mere man, there is nothing in Him to save me. If He is only a man, a good man, a great man, the best man,—and I admit all that, yet He cannot save guilty sinners if He is no more than a man. I loathe the sentiment, and had almost said something more; but let me not express myself too strongly here. I loathe a sentiment, the result of the influence of which is to take the crown of divinity from the glorious head of the Lord Jesus Christ. “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Secondly, not only did they believe in the divinity of the Lord, they believed that He was a *divine person* in the Godhead, the Son of the living God. If that does not indicate personality, where shall we look for it? What does indicate it? Christ was, and is, and ever will be one of the glorious persons in God, equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Wonderful that Peter should have learned so much, and that the disciples should have seen so much in Him. Equal with the Father and with the Spirit. “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Thirdly, it included *His official work*. Christ is Divine, and a Divine Person, but He is Christ the Anointed, the Messiah, the Mediator between God and man. The confession comprehends all the Gospel. The Mediator between God and man. “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” And what is Christ to God and to His people? The great outlet of grace and mercy. Some of our towns have names which end with the word “mouth,” to indicate that their rivers are connected with the sea, such as Yarmouth and so on. Now what the river is to that part where it is connected with the sea, that the Lord Jesus Christ is to this poor desert world and His dear people that are in it. Christ the Mediator is God’s gracious mouth, through which He pours all His spiritual blessings into this poor dying world of ours. “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Peter saw God in the man Christ. He saw Deity in Him behind His flesh, His human nature, His poverty, and His humiliation. His deity was veiled; but every now and then His Godhead broke out, “And they beheld His glory, (the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth.” The important confession.

Thirdly, *the important revelation* : “Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven.” Bar-jona, the son of Jona or Jonas. Our Saviour referred Peter for a minute to His natural name and state. I do not know whether Peter’s father was a good man or otherwise. The Lord Jesus Christ did not say how it was; but He

knew his father and said, "Blessed art thou Simon Bar-jona;" but when you were educated, trained and instructed, the revelation of Myself formed no part of the work of teaching; "for flesh and blood hath not revealed this fact unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven." We are told that children come into the world perfectly pure and clean, and that they are just ready to receive like a clean sheet of writing paper what parents and others may impart to them. Well, whatever a child may bring with itself into the world, it brings no grace, nor the germ of saving religion, for that is subsequently revealed and given. "My Father which is heaven has revealed it to you, and not flesh and blood." Human nature can never discover the Saviour, nor find Him, can never get to love Him, nor come by its own power to rest upon Him for eternal life. Hear that trembling one as he stumbles along towards Christ, listen to him and mark him well, for he is a child of God though he stumbles.

"Lo! glad I come, and Thou, blest Lamb,  
Shalt take me to Thee as I am:  
Nothing but sin I Thee can give,  
Nothing but grace shall I receive."

The power of flesh and blood does not bring poor sinners here. This is the result of a Divine revelation. Revelation is an uncovering, and the discovery of something that had been hidden and concealed. It is not creation. Distinguish between revelation and creation? My Father in heaven has revealed it, not created it. Christ was in existence before the Father revealed Him; and He was lovely, glorious and sweet, before we saw His loveliness, or realized His sweetness. Now there is the eye, and the object, and the light. The eye is faith, and the object to be seen is Christ, the Son of the living God. What is wanted but light? Not any light, artificial, educational, moral, intellectual or rational light merely; the light required is heavenly, special and divine, conveyed by the Spirit into the heart; flesh and blood cannot reveal the Lord. Here is the altogether lovely Christ, and here is the altogether sinful creature; and there is the Father on the throne, looking with approbation upon His dear Son, and with love upon the sinner that wants to see Him. The heavens are open, and light divine falls upon the scene, and to the sinner Christ is revealed in the heart, the hope of eternal glory. "You preach mysteries, and go in your experience so far in one direction that we cannot follow you." The Lord the Holy Spirit help you to follow me at some future time, if I now go a little too far for you. If the preacher knows anything of the Father's revelation, this is how it takes place. Now this revelation does not give us an interest in Christ, nor is it the cause of relationship. The theory, the doctrine of the present day is, that something must take place within, before we can be said to be interested in Christ. My beloved friends, revelation follows interest and proves relationship. If there had been no connection between you and Jesus Christ before He was revealed to your heart, there would never have been a revelation of Him to your poor soul. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, and therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." How can the Father draw one unless something is presented wonderfully



powerful in its attractions. Well, the attractions of Jesus Christ are wonderfully powerful, and God says, He has loved, and therefore He has drawn. He reveals His Son; and we, feeling the power of His attractions, as the objects of His grace, sing,

“Gently He draws my soul along,  
Both with His beauties and His tongue.”

Fourthly and lastly, *the important benediction*: “Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee.” “Blessed art thou.” Christ had blessed him, and then pronounced him blessed, and I think I had some little sweetness in thinking over this part of the subject when it presented itself to my mind in this form,—that when Jesus Christ pronounced the words, “Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona,” He was at that moment full of spiritual blessings for Peter, for God hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places, in Christ. Christ, if I may so speak, spoke in relation of what He Himself held for Peter. He had all the fulness of Peter’s grace in Him, or all the grace Peter required to save Him. All the love of God towards Peter was in him; and, speaking experimentally, for I love the experience of My Lord,—the Master said, “Blessed art thou in Me, Simon Bar-jona.” Now this blessedness is *the best*. We have other blessings; they are all good, but the best of other blessings is inferior to this one. Temporal things are mercies. We thank our Lord for temporal good, but they are not our God. Peter was blessed with the best of all blessings. Another thought is this, that the blessing was a *present one*. Now look at the words of the text again. “Blessed art thou,” not, Blessed shalt thou be by and bye; but thou *art* blessed *to-day*. Blessed art thou even now. Was Peter, then, without sin? No, yet he was blessed, though sin dwelt within. Take courage, then, my dear friend; you may be a blessed man or a blessed woman, although sin dwells within. Did the Master—and let us tread softly here—did the Master see any error in Peter’s mind? Yes, Peter had carnal views of the kingdom of his Lord, and his faith did not go far into the spirituality of His kingdom; yet he was a blessed man. Did the Master foresee Peter’s fall, and how far his sin and cowardice would carry him? Yes, but the Master did not withhold the information on account of that. Did blessings continue to follow Peter? Yes, for the curse never follows the saving blessing of God. The world may curse you, the devil may curse you, and you may be almost ready to curse yourselves sometimes; but if God has blessed you with spiritual blessings to-day, He will bless you for ever and ever. The Lord add His blessing, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

# THE SAINT'S REST,—PREPARED, PROMISED, AND GIVEN.

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## A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JUNE 1st, 1884.

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*“And He saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with : but to sit on My right hand, and on My left, is not Mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of My Father.”—Matt. xx. 23.*

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ALTHOUGH the disciples were near to the Master when He was here in the flesh, many of their views and thoughts concerning Him were exceedingly carnal. They regarded Him not only as the promised Messiah, but as a temporal Prince; for He was in point of fact, the Son of David. They were looking that He should become the King of the Jews, assume the reins of government, and literally ascend His father David's throne. Therefore they said, “Wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom unto Israel?” This was the case on this interesting occasion, when the mother of Zebedee's children brought her two sons to Jesus and said to Him, “Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on Thy right hand, and the other on the left, in Thy kingdom.” The feelings of the mother ran in the general course, concerning the temporal reign of the Lord Jesus Christ. Her thoughts on this particular occasion had respect to Christ's ministers of state, and therefore being actuated in some measure by sentiments of ambition and pride, she desired to speak in time, especially as Jesus had manifested a peculiar partiality for James and John. “Grant that these my two sons may sit on Thy right hand, and on the left in Thy kingdom.” And Jesus said, “Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with? And they said, We are able.” The Master said, “Ye shall indeed drink of My cup, and be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with.” You are My followers, and members of My mystical body; you are My servants, and sons of God, and you must be conformed to Me in suffering as well as in spirituality and holiness, and therefore you shall drink of My cup and be baptised with My baptism. I have to drink of the cup of persecution, and to be baptised with the baptism of suffering and sorrow, and in the world ye shall have tribulation; nevertheless “to sit on My right hand, and on My left, is not Mine,” as Man, as Mediator, apart from My Father, to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of Him.

Let us look at the latter part of the verse: “To sit on My right hand and on My left, is not Mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared.” In the first place, let us direct our attention to

*the interesting and glorious privilege indicated here, viz., that of sitting on the right hand, and on the left of the Lord Jesus Christ in His kingdom.* I shall make no critical observations on the right and the left hands of the Lord Jesus: therefore we notice, first, that we have here the idea of eternal nearness to our Lord. If we in His kingdom sit on His right hand, and on His left, as it were, we shall be for ever near to Him, and nearer to Him than we can possibly be here. I do hope that most of my hearers this morning know what it is occasionally to be near to the Lord, and to hold sweet fellowship with God, in and through Him. You know what it is to enter into your closets, to leave the world outside, to rise above the influence of your circumstances, and to have communion with the dear Redeemer. How sweet are the moments when all one's thoughts are absorbed in the Saviour, and one's heart is lost as it were, in the grace of Immanuel. "That is fanaticism, sir." No; it is a part of the occasional experience of the beloved people of God; and if on earth, by faith, it is so sweet to sit at Jesus' feet, what must it be to "sit on His right hand, and on His left," in the eternal felicity of heaven, where we shall be near Him as we cannot be near to Him here! We shall be personally near to Him; our minds will be near to His; our bodies will be near to His, and we shall be for ever within sight of the beloved Son of God. We shall see Him for ever; for nothing will ever arise in that blessed world to divert our attention from the glorious Immanuel. Certain persons are near to Her Majesty the Queen; but the great majority of her subjects are at a great distance from her. The persons nearest to her are the Royal Family. Then many persons in official positions, as statesmen and others, are near to her, and various servants are in the royal palace, while outside is the nation itself. But all the people of God will be for ever near to the Redeemer. One will not be farther from Him than another. You are ready to say, "You cannot explain that mystery." I am glad I cannot. Our bodies and our souls will be universally spiritual; and what it is to be absolutely free from corruption, and from the flesh and blood which cannot enter into the kingdom of God, I do not yet know; but if we are saints, our bodies shall be made like unto the glorious body of the Redeemer; and then with millions of other happy saints, we shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. We shall enter heaven and see Christ as He is, and be like Him for ever. Here we meet together in God's house, and catch a glimpse of heaven, and of the Saviour, and then He disappears again, or at all events, we cease to see Him; and hence the complaint:—

"I count it long since I received  
A visit from the Lord."

But having entered heaven, and taken our seats in the presence of the Redeemer, we shall rest for ever. There we shall for ever view His face, meditate upon His grace, contemplate His charms, and so to speak, for ever lose ourselves in His boundless and mysterious grandeur and glory. And is it not a position of honour, to sit on the right hand and on the left of Jesus for ever? No trace of sin and guilt will appear, and no taint of iniquity. All shall be pure as the Son of God, and holy and transparent as Immanuel Himself; and no spot or blemish will ever

appear upon them. What must it be to be free from sin, absolutely free from all marks of transgression and iniquity ! Here we pray, and sometimes send all our thoughts for a few moments up to heaven, and then Satan comes and diverts our minds, interferes with our communion with God, and interrupts our joy. But then there will be no corruption in the soul, no depravity in our nature, and no remains of sin left ; and therefore there will be eternal honour as well as eternal nearness to the Saviour. A spot in heaven would unparadise the place. A blot upon the character, or upon the person of one of God's dear people, would leave peace and joy impossible. It is the determination of God so to wash every saint in the blood of the Lamb, as to remove every stain, and so to work by His Spirit in every heart, as to make every saint all-glorious within. There we shall be as if the fall had never taken place, and we had never sinned. Yet we shall never forget the fall, nor our sinnership, our vileness, our uncleanness, our character as fallen creatures, and hence the song will be "Unto Him that hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in His blood."

But, in the next place, so to sit in heaven with our Lord indicates eternal rest. There God's people rest from their labours, in the place which has been prepared for them. Here we are weary ; for we are journeying towards home and eternity, and we are oftentimes, if one may speak for others, cast down and distressed, because we cannot see our signs, and wonder whether our religion be genuine or not. I shall not preach so as to encourage doubts and fears ; and yet I would never discourage those who have them, for I have no whip for fearing and doubting ones. I know you would not fear or doubt if you could help it : but this is the experience of many of the people of God. Oh ! it is hard to be godly ; for it is to be in the field of conflict, and to be engaged in battle from day to day. There is always something to fight against, and always something to oppose ; but the time is coming when all that shall cease. The journey of life will be ended, the work done, the weariness past and gone, and the ransomed spirit shall glide confidently and righteously out of the body into a better world, and into the presence of the Redeemer. Some have said that they should be satisfied if they might only step over the threshold of glory and stand at a distance from the Master, and see His face in that position. You would not be satisfied in such a position, if there be such a place in heaven ; and Christ would not be satisfied to see you there : for all are loved with all the love of God ; and therefore, having passed over the threshold of glory you will go at once to your seats, for they have been prepared for you ; for "It shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of My Father." You shall go to your seats, and God shall place upon you the crowns of eternal righteousness, and you will rest in the presence of your best Beloved for ever. "It shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of My Father." Rest. What a sweet word ! Rest. What a gracious blessing it is to come into the house of God and rest in His presence for half-an-hour ; to leave the world on a Thursday, or some other evening, and enter into God's courts, to shake off the dust of business, and to cease to hear the noise and strife of life, to sit at God's feet, to receive a shower of Divine blessing, and to be fertilized by God Himself ! How sweet it is by faith to enter into rest

in this world of turmoil and trouble ! What must it be to be in heaven, and to rest from our labours in the presence of our best Beloved ! This "shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of My Father." A last idea here will be that of permanence. "To sit on My right hand and on My left." The posture is an everlasting one ; for the soul in the presence of Jesus is eternally there. "They shall go no more out for ever." Shut in by God in the best world in the universe, and seated before Him, there to remain for ever. No Sabbath evenings, and no Monday mornings there. Monday morning now comes, when we go into the cold, dusty, bustling world, where our minds become withered and our spirituality is weakened ; hence we want reviving in our bondage, and renewing by the Holy Spirit again and again. But there congregations never break up, and the Sabbath has no end. Weariness and drowsiness will never be felt, but

"There we shall sit and sing away,  
A long and everlasting day."

A cup of sweets without a bitter, a day that will last for ever, a Sun that will always shine, and rivers of pleasure that will ever flow, even the rivers of God's pleasure of which we shall drink for ever. Joy so great, and yet without an end. Peace so deep, and yet never to be disturbed. Tranquillity and serenity so pure, heavenly, and Divine, and nothing in all that vast world prepared by God to interrupt, or ruffle, or disturb it.

"A few more rolling suns at most,  
Will land us on fair Canaan's coast."

"There we shall see His face,  
And never, never sin ;  
There from the rivers of His grace,  
Drink endless pleasures in."

All this is a *Divine gift*. "It shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of My Father." Talk about earning glory ! about deserving it ! about meriting it ! about working for God, and bringing Him under something like obligations to the creature ! Let such words never fall from our lips, and such thoughts never enter our minds. There is no proportion between the heaven of glory, and the services, the sufferings, and the sorrows of God's people here. No, it is all a gift. A kingdom given ; not to be divided among many, but a kingdom given to each and everyone. Everyone shall be a king, and every seat shall be a throne, and every inheritance shall be a kingdom, and all shall be given by God Himself. But how given ? Oh, so lovingly ! You know there is much in the manner in which a gift is bestowed upon a receiver. You may meet a poor, needy being, and throw a shilling or even half a crown into his lap, or his hand, in a manner which almost prevents him thanking you ; or you may give him a sixpence, or even a less sum than that, with a smile upon your countenance, and a tone of tenderness in your voice which will almost break his heart. How will God give you a crown, and a throne, and a kingdom ? With all His heart, with an eternal smile upon His countenance. He is resolved to do you good, according to His resources and ability ; in fact, to do for you all that it is possible for a God to do for creatures such as we. "It shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of My Father." But where is all this to be enjoyed and experienced ? Not here, but there ; not in this world, but in that

which is to come. Some persons, and I think their minds must be very dry, are almost always speculating as to the future of this world, as to what God intends to do with it. I am sure I do not wish to be wise above what is written, and am perfectly satisfied to keep within the covers of this book. I am told that heaven has been prepared by God for sinners saved by grace ; and therefore, I am expecting to go to heaven, so far as I can believe that I am a child of God. I do not think our Lord will come down and pitch His tabernacle in the land of Canaan, and call His people together in the city of Jerusalem, which would not hold a millionth part of them; neither do I believe He will come down and convert the world into an Eden. As for the millennium, (and I do not wish to needlessly offend,) that Christ will come and live and reign a thousand years on the earth, I do not know whether it will be so, or not ; I can only say as the good Suffolk minister said, " If He should come and dwell with us a thousand years, we shall all be glad to see Him." Should He come and dwell with us here, we shall be delighted to sit on His right hand and on His left. I am not looking for that, however, neither can I speculate in those matters. He is gone to heaven, to prepare a place for His people, and has said, " If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again." And so far only am I expecting to see Him again in this world. " I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also." Well, it will be in heaven and not here, in that kingdom which God has prepared.

Let us now notice in the third place the *preparation indicated*. I have been trying to set forth the privilege and the gift, but we have also the preparation indicated. " It shall be given to them for whom it is *prepared* of My Father." And when was it prepared ? Very early, even before the foundation of the world. " Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." It appears, then, that heaven was the first world God made ; for He had built heaven, that great and glorious place, and brought that marvellous kingdom and inheritance of saints into existence before the foundation of the world. And therefore Christ is represented as " the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." And how was it prepared ? According to the resources of our heavenly Father. The man who is about to become a husband provides, or it is presumed that he provides, as good a home for his wife and for himself with her, as he can, and that his home bears some proportion to his ability and resources. The father is supposed to do the very best he can for his son and for his children ; and you may apply this to your Father in heaven. The preparation of heaven by God for you, bears a perfect proportion to the resources and ability of your God ; and I sometimes look at the world we live in, and through which we are passing, and say, if God has made a world so good, so great, and so excellent as this for men as creatures, and if He continues so to fill it with His goodness for men, though they are sinners, what must that world be which He has prepared for His dear people ! All His resources are infinite and were unitedly and inseparably engaged in preparing heaven for you and me. We shall find in heaven that which will meet every want, that which will drown every desire, that which will realize every hope, and that which will leave prayer, petition, and expectation impossible. " It shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of My Father."

Well, my friends this place has been prepared for us, and promised to us, and opened for us, and our faces have been turned towards this inheritance and we are journeying to the place of which God has said, I will give it to thee. I think it was last Lord's-day, in the hall yonder, that I referred to the fact that probably I had, since I had been in London, buried almost as many persons as were then present before me, and I do not think I exaggerated. I have buried a great many saints during the thirty-three years or thereabouts that I have ministered to the people here. They are gone not from my thoughts or yours, not from our affections, not from our feelings, not from our gratitude. We see them now, and our fancy or imagination tries to paint them, if I may so speak, as they now appear in heaven. They are there in the place appointed or prepared for them; for the place is prepared for the people, and the people are prepared for the place.

Look in the fourth place at *the promise*. We have looked at the privilege of living near to Christ for ever. We have turned our attention to the gift and the Divine preparation of the place, and now for the promise. *It shall be given* to them for whom it is prepared of My Father." God's promises are sweet, they melt the saints to tears. Promises that relate to our pilgrimage, and to our passing through the water and the fire, are very sweet and precious: but what about this promise? "*It shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of My Father.*" Then heaven is sure, and eternal glory is absolutely certain; the perseverance of the saints of God is certain, and it ought to be regarded as a fact beyond dispute. "I am God, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." God has given a promise, which is a representation and expression of His purpose, and He will never alter His mind, and here we have the testimony of Him who is the Amen, the faithful and true Witness. It shall be given to them. Look at this promise, first in relation to the Father Himself; He has prepared the place, and given a promise: and can the place be unoccupied? There are the seats and thrones, and shall they too be vacant? Was there not a fixedness of purpose in the mind of God, when He prepared the seats and the place for His dear people? Did He not resolve so to arrange all matters of providence and grace that every saint should arrive in heaven and be seated in His presence? My beloved friends, the promise considered in relation to the Father must be fulfilled. Again, look at it in relation to the Lord Jesus Christ. He has emphatically said, "*It shall be given.*" "*Not Mine to give.*" He does not mean that He has not power to give it, for He will be engaged in giving the seats to His beloved people; but it will be in harmony with His Father, and with the Holy Spirit,—not Mine officially to give. "*It shall be given for whom it is prepared of My Father.*" I do not know that I need to stay here to allude to Arianism and Socinianism. Some of you know that Socinians take this portion of the Word of God to prove what they assert as a fact, that Jesus Christ is not God, since he says here that it is not His to give places at His right hand and His left; but that it is given of the Father. Yet Christ never contradicted Himself. "*I give unto My sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand.*" All power in heaven and in earth is given unto Me." Jesus Christ is equal with the Father. He was here

speaking of Himself as man and Mediator, and as filling an important office in connection with the salvation of His people. It was My Father's office and work to prepare the place, My office and work to redeem the people from all evil, and the office and work of the Holy Spirit to prepare them for the place, and "it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared." Look at the subject or the promise in relation to the Holy Spirit. "He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God." And what does the Apostle refer to? "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God;" and He that hath wrought us for that building, "a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens," is God. The house is ready and the seats are ready, but at present they are vacant. A work is going on in our souls which we did not commence, which hell has opposed ever since it was commenced, and the influence of which often draws us in an attempt to call in prayer upon God. This work within sometimes brings tears into our eyes as well as cares into our hearts. And what of all this? The place there is prepared, and the people here are being prepared for the place, and over the people in whom the work is going on we read this promise: "It shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of My Father." Look at the promise in relation to the people themselves, and then finally, in relation to our enemies. Hell opposes. It shall be given notwithstanding. I have a deep sense of my vileness and unworthiness.

"Hardly sure can they be worse,  
Who have never known His name."

Yet it shall be given. But you do not know my unbelief, how deep my fears are, how high my doubts are; and if you could see what goes on within, you would not have a word of encouragement for me." But it shall be given. The home is a gift, and the gift is absolutely certain; for "it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared." Many have entered the heavens of glory since they were first opened, and God opened them for the sake of His beloved Son, immediately after the fall, when He gave the first promise. The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head. Abel, the martyr, was the first saint that breathed out his soul into the hands of his covenant God, and entered heaven, and took his seat; and he was followed by Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who are seated with their Lord; and millions, perhaps, have entered since,

"And we are to the margin come,  
And soon expect to die."

I shall not be thirty-three years longer preaching the gospel, for only the fag end of my life remains. My hair is grey, and years are increasing upon me, and infirmities also. Now is my salvation nearer than when I first believed. Oh may it be mine to die in the everlasting arms of God, and in possession of that sweet and simple faith which God has promised His people shall then be blessed with. Then in the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, but shall peacefully and calmly slide out of this poor, vile body into the presence of the Lord. Instead of the fathers shall come up the children; and they in their turn shall become fathers and pass away into the eternal glory of God. The stream of saints is always coming and going. "It shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of My Father."



Lastly, *the people themselves*, "*for whom it is prepared of My Father.*" What shall we say about the people? Two things are upon my mind, or I have only time to mention two. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Now, if you want evidences, there are two. Poor in spirit. Are you rich? are you full? are you great? are you satisfied? Are you not rather poor in spirit? not poor in circumstances; not poor-spirited, but poor in spirit. Well, what follows? "Theirs is the kingdom of heaven." You may be too rich, but you cannot be too poor; too fat, but you cannot be too lean; too strong, but you cannot be too weak. Oh for more grace to reduce us to nothing, in order that we may be found among the poor in spirit, for whom the Father has prepared the kingdom of heaven. And then the pure in heart. "Blessed are the pure in heart." Their hearts are not absolutely, universally pure, yet they are pure in heart so far as their desires go. You would from this moment, if it might be so, be pure and spotless, and white, like your Lord. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." And what operations are now going on in relation to this promise? The Holy Ghost is at work, and I trust He will descend and work in this renovated place of worship. A good many souls have been saved in this sanctuary, and many saved souls have been helped and blessed here. Let us pray for a large out-pouring of the Spirit, that the Word may be applied to sinners as well as to saints. The operations of Providence are going on for the purpose of fulfilling the promises. Christ is interceding in heaven, and His intercession keeps pilgrims on their feet, and sojourners travelling forward towards their eternal rest and home: The ordinances of God's house, the means of grace, the ministry of the word, and the attendance of angels, are fulfilling the word. "It shall be given to them for whom it is prepared." Then for the consummation when all the work is done, and all the people are at home, or ready to be taken home, and all the family are prepared for glory. Oh! what a scene it will be for assembled worlds, for fearing, trembling devils, and for millions of ungodly sinners, to see all the family of God free from fear, and doubt, and stain, all following their great delivering Saviour to their respective places, and all seated round about the throne of God and the Lamb, to drink in eternal pleasures from the Son of God in the world prepared for them.

"When God makes up His last account,  
Of natives in His holy mount,  
"Twill be an honour to appear  
As one new-born and nourished there."

The Lord command His blessing, for Christ's sake. Amen.

# “OUR ROCK.”

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## A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,  
AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,  
ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, 27th FEBRUARY, 1887.

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*“For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges.” Deut. xxxii. 31.*

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THESE words are among the last that Moses ever delivered from God to the children of Israel. The chapter opens very solemnly and gloriously. Moses said : “ My doctrine shall drop as the rain, and my speech shall distil as the dew.” And what was his doctrine ? “ I will publish the name of the Lord. Ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is a rock, His work is perfect ; for all His ways are judgment : a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He.” His doctrine was the character and the works of God. He says, “ My doctrine shall drop as the rain ;” that is, occasionally and irresistibly ; for who can prevent the rain from falling ? And as the rain cools, moistens and fertilises the earth, so the doctrines of divine truth and grace, when they fall upon the heart, cool, comfort and fertilise the soul, and cause it to be as a watered garden. The doctrines of grace cannot be dry, if they “ drop as the rain and distil as the dew.” The dryness is in the creature, and never in God. The emptiness is in man, and never in the word ; and if the doctrines of divine grace are dry to you and to me, it is not owing to any deficiency in them ; but the fault, if fault there be, is always to be found in the creature. And as a shower of rain nourishes the herbs and grass, so the doctrines of grace, and the grace they reveal, nourish and comfort the souls of the people of God. Let us, therefore, love these holy truths and hold them fast, and pray for showers of heavenly rain in connection with them ; and let us especially contend for those great facts which are embodied in the early part of this chapter. God is a Rock, His work is perfect. His work in creation is perfect. In six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them. Since that day He has never created a stone, nor a drop of water, nor a man, nor a fish, nor a fowl of the air, nor a beast of the field. He finished and completed as a Creator His work in six days : all was perfect and good, according to His own testimony. His work is perfect in providence as far as He has gone with it, for He leaves no imperfections behind Him. Sometimes workmen, even the best of them, do their work in a somewhat imperfect manner, although it is their intention to complete and perfect the work they have in hand ; but on reviewing what they have done they are not always satisfied. Our God, however, is always satisfied with what He has done, and on a review of the operations of His hand in the past He is satisfied and pleased. His work is perfect, even when it is not completed, and He will finish the whole. His work of salvation is also perfect, although in some respects it is not yet completed ; therefore it is said, “ Who are kept by the

power of God, through faith, unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." Now this is one of the doctrines of grace which was well known to Moses, which He insisted upon and brought before the children of Israel just before he stepped out of this world into heaven, and concerning which he said, "it shall drop as the rain, and my speech shall distil as the dew." He refers to the name of God, to the perfection of His work, and to His character ; that He is a God of truth and without iniquity, and that He is just and right. In this manner the good man commenced this song, introducing into it a number of very solemn and important matters until he reiterated the fact asserted in my text, for their rock,—that is, the rock of the enemies of the children of Israel,—“their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges.”

Now having thus reached the text, let us try to go round and through the fact asserted, and make a few observations upon it.

The first thought that occurs to my mind is this,—That *God is a Rock*. “their rock is not like our Rock.” This of course is a figurative, but a glorious representation of the everlasting God ; God is a Rock, and not sand. I think we have had some holy feeling in singing the words :—

“On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand,  
All other ground is sinking sand.”

Was the poet right ? Is not the assertion somewhat too wide ? Is all other ground sinking sand ? Think of those two lines in connection with my text,—“Their rock is not as our Rock, our enemies themselves being judges.”

To depend upon our works, our good behaviour, and good conduct, is to build upon sand. To trust in national privileges as the Jews trusted for salvation in their relationship to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, is to rest on sinking sand. “Do you mean to say, that if we do the best we can, every day and every hour of our life, we shall not be rewarded for so doing ?” We may obtain something for doing so here ; but our works are not rock, and are worth nothing as the ground of salvation. In this respect they must fail ; they are not perfect, and they are not sufficient to sustain a good, comfortable, or a happy hope as to the future and heaven. God and God only is the Rock. May it be yours and mine, therefore, to be found building upon Him ; for He is the Rock of eternal ages. But let us look more closely at this subject.

In the first place, God is said to be a rock *on account of His firmness and fixedness*.

“Is He a rock ? how firm He proves !  
The Rock of ages never moves ;  
And the sweet streams that from Him flow  
Attend us all the desert through.”

The Rock of ages. The patriarchal age is past and gone, but the rock of that age stands where it stood then, and to day our God is what He was then. What Abel, Enoch, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Joseph and others found Him to be, that you and I have found the Rock of ages to be to-day. The aspect of the world has changed since the days of the patriarchs, all of whom have left time for eternity, and are now in heaven ; and manners and customs have altered and changed : but our God remains, and is the same ; for Our Rock is not like their rock, being eternally firm and fixed.

Then we may notice the ceremonial age, which was an important one; for very much was done during that lengthened period of time. Were there two rocks for the two ages? No, one only, even Jehovah. Was He changed or altered in any respect from what He was in the days of Abraham, and Enoch, and Abel? No, for Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Ages with their freezing cold, and ages with their burning heat, ages with their rivers of blood flowing in war, and ages with all their multiplied changes came against our Rock, surrounded Him and passed away, and left Him the same, behind them all. This is what He is, my brother; no change can ever take place in Him. He is the Rock of eternal ages, therefore our Rock is not like theirs. And He stood not only during the ceremonial age, but the prophets wrote of Him, rested on Him, entered into Him, leaned upon Him, raised His honours high, and set forth His greatness and His glory; He was to them, and to the church of God through the whole prophetic age, what He is to us and to all. Another age came, and it is gradually wasting and passing away, the age of Christianity, and we are living in the 19th century of this dispensation, and oh what miserable and wicked attempts are made to misrepresent, or to conceal and hide this great Rock, and the persons who are making those attempts are guilty traitors in the sight of God! But they can neither alter nor move Him. He is, and will and must be, the same yesterday, to-day and for ever, notwithstanding all that enemies can do or say. What He was to Paul, what He was to Peter, James and John, the Apostles of the dear and blest Redeemer, that He was to the following generation, and to the next generation also; and as generations rose and lived, and laboured, and withered, and decayed and passed away, they all of them left behind them the Rock of eternal ages. When I first knew Him, or rather when my eyes were first opened some years ago, I embraced this Rock for shelter, and entered into Him; and what He then promised to be unto me and to do for me, all that He has been to me, and has done for me. Therefore I take an offering and come into His presence, and proclaim the greatness, and righteousness, and holiness of the character of my Lord. Yes, our dear Lord is a Rock on account of His firmness. He is firm as to His love. There is no love like His; it never changes; it cannot be greater, it cannot be less than it is; it could not have been earlier, and it will never end. Sin—it is not in the power of sin to damp or cool it; nor to divert or separate it from its objects. It is the love of God, and therefore not moving sinking sand, or soft clay, or changing earth; the love, the everlasting love of God is a Rock. I wish I could bring it vividly before you, and give you a due idea of its fixedness and firmness, amid the ever changing scenes that are taking place in time, in human affection and human character. Here is a fire, the steadiness of whose flame has never been interrupted. Here, to change the metaphor, is a mighty ocean, upon which there has never been a wave, it is placid, calm, serene, quiet, bottomless and shoreless. Winds and storms, and tempests have never raised a ripple upon the clear, and crystal and transparent sea of the everlasting love of God. Here is a divine fact vast as God Himself. He does not love a little, nor with an affection that can be measured. His love is Himself, for God is love; and if God can be disturbed, His love may be disturbed; if God is a Rock, and

can never move,—then, since God is love, His love is a rock, and vibration or oscillation can never happen there. Oh happy man and happy woman whose souls are lying quietly, calmly and believingly in the everlasting arms of the everlasting and ever-loving God. A Rock—not only as to His love, He is a Rock as to His purposes. “My purpose shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.” “My brother,” one says, “I have been thinking of what took place the other day; although we made such an arrangement, it now appears that we must alter it, for it will not do to proceed in the direction in which it was determined to proceed.” “God is in one mind, and who shall turn Him? and what His soul desireth, even that He doeth.” If I cannot bend circumstances to my mind, my mind must bend to circumstances. God will never bend His mind to circumstances and events; for His will and not circumstances give shape and form to the intentions of God. He will make everything yield to His own purpose, and never alter His thoughts or change His will. All shall be brought into conformity to the ideas of Him who is a Rock, and whose work is perfect. Then, my brother, what are His purposes concerning us? “All things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to His purpose.” Did He purpose to save you? then He will do it, “Oh, but sir, I feel this, and that, and the other.” My dear hearers, do not just now introduce your poor feelings. They are not rock you know, but like feathers floating in the air; you may feel thus and thus, and be here and there and elsewhere, but do you not know that God purposed to save you? You know He did so, you know your desire to be saved is so intense that you would give a world to know that you are saved. Then you are saved, my friend; for that burning, prayerful desire is a part of salvation, and a token of life in your heart. This is not a universal feeling. All men and women in the world do not want to be saved. They push away God’s truth concerning salvation, and turn their backs upon it, and loathe it on various accounts. They regard it as a state of bondage to keep the Sabbath, or consider it as the Lord’s day, to read the Bible, to associate with God’s people, and to pray and sing psalms; they deride, or if there are some who do not thus treat the things of God, they treat them with absolute calm, and quiet indifference; but you are not indifferent; your soul is agitated, troubled and tried, therefore the beginning of salvation has taken place in your heart and your mind. Then I want you to go back to the great origin of this salvation, even the purpose of God; for as He purposed to save you He will do it, although you have such bitter feelings. He has saved you, although you are the subject of such sorrow. The Rock of ages never moves, and you are on the Rock. You rise and sink upon it, and your hearts are contracted and expanded thereon, but the Rock itself never expands nor contracts, and it never shakes. What shaking hearts and trembling minds are found thereon! “Our Rock is not like their rock, our enemies themselves being judges.” God is a Rock as to His love and also as to His purpose; and is He not a Rock as to His fulness? The rock in the wilderness was smitten by Moses, and who thought there was water in it that would flow from it after Moses had smitten it, and who thought it would continue to flow and follow the people forty years! They all drank of that spiritual Rock which followed them, and that Rock was Christ. Do you think

the water was there naturally or miraculously, even for Christ's sake? There would have been no smiting of the Rock, and no gushing of water from it had it not been for Christ who was behind it all. They all drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. But the water that followed the children of Israel through the desert was material water, although it was no doubt better than the water obtained from places round about. It was rock water, brought out in a miraculous manner by God for His people. Here we have the Rock of ages smitten.

“Rock of ages, cleft for me,  
Let me hide myself in thee:  
Let the water and the blood  
From Thy wounded side which flowed,  
Be of sin the double cure,  
Cleanse me from its guilt and power.”

The water gushed out and flowed among the dry places like a river. Well, our Christ is a Rock in regard to His fulness, and these streams will ever run with waters sweet and clear. He is inexhaustible, and His blessings cool, comfort, and refresh the soul. We have tasted this water and there is nothing on the earth like it. We would go down upon our hands and knees, and drink and drink again of the water of life that flows from this Divine and glorious Rock. There is no rock like our Rock with regard to His fulness. I must pass from these matters. He is a Rock, then, as to His firmness, His love, His purpose, and His fulness. I want you to distinguish between immovable and immutable. The Rock of ages never moves, but that which is always in the same place may not always be the same in character. Jesus is immovable and He is immutable also, and can never change Himself. The Rock is always there, and He is always Rock; and the supplies that flow from Him are perpetual, and as I said just now their cooling nature is sweet and heavenly. I was never satisfied, and I never knew the meaning of the word satisfy, till I had a draught of water from this Rock, and was helped to say, “He loved me, and gave Himself for me.” May it be ours to sit under the shadow of this Rock, and to drink of these living streams during the few remaining months or years we may tarry on the earth.

Now their rock and our Rock were objects of trust. By their rock understand their idols, their deities, and by our Rock understand the true and living God. Now both are objects of trust, but theirs is not like ours as an object of trust and confidence. I do not think that the heathen who repose their trust and confidence in their idols are unagitated and unmoved in trouble, or with regard to the future; but when you and I are helped to cast ourselves unreservedly into the arms of God, and to rest upon the person, the promise, and the fulness of the Lord Jesus Christ, we do not go too far when we sing—

“My steady soul shall fear no more  
Than solid rocks when billows roar.”

Are we in the midst of the sea, and does it rise and rage? do its waves mount up to heaven and go down again into the depths? There is a rock even there, and you and I are upon it, and though the scene is terrible, and everything is in itself most alarming, our steady souls fear not upon the rock, upon which through favour Divine we are resting. Their rock

of trust and confidence is not like ours. They shake and tremble, and their hearts rise and sink again; but the good man resting upon Jesus Christ for all he needs here and hereafter is unagitated, unmoved, and undisturbed. Do you say I am going very high? I do so because I am standing on the Rock—if not experimentally so for myself, I am ministerially so for you. I am speaking of a high point of Christian experience; the child of God is not moved, and cannot be moved, so long as the Holy Ghost holds his feet upon the immovable Rock of everlasting ages. He raised me out of the horrible pit and the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my going; and I could not help singing, for he hath put a new song into my mouth. Their rock and ours differ in this respect,—theirs is an object of sense and reason, but ours is an object of faith. They have no god but what they can see, and the gods they see they have made for themselves and placed in their temples. Their rock is not like ours. Our God is in the heavens, and we say of Him as Peter said, “whom having not seen we love; in whom, though now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” Their rock is an object of reason. One says, “Do you believe what is stated in the Bible?” Yes, I do, sir. He replies, “I do not. It is contrary to reason.” I care not about that, I am not so deluded and empty as to base my firm belief upon purblind human reason. Our reason is not rock. “It is with me, sir.” Then your rock is not like mine, our enemies themselves being judges. If you say that what does not square with your reason, you will not believe, you are on the sand, and your building or hope will prove at last to be without a foundation. I shall not build upon reason, nor upon sense, nor upon a God I can see in a niche in a temple; and yet I would as soon build my hope for heaven upon an idol as upon human reason. What are you building your hope upon? The Rock of ages. Where is He? Everywhere. Where is He as the Rock of ages? In heaven, in the gospel, before me—and what is blessed, He is underneath my faith, my hope, my life and underneath my soul. “Why, you are a strange man, to build on what is apparently contrary to reason, and which you cannot explain.” I am glad I cannot fully explain the foundation of my hope; but my soul is thereon, and I hold fast the Gospel of God. Cleave to your idols, hang on your godless though religious systems, hug your Unitarianism and Socinianism to yourselves as tightly as you can, my faith shall go beyond all sense and reason, and beyond all creatures to the unseen though not unknown God, and all my hope shall rest there, whether I sink or swim, whether I am lost or saved. But I have no doubt with regard to the issue; for

“I shall see His face,  
And never, never sin,  
And from the rivers of His grace  
Drink endless pleasures in.”

Secondly *the appropriation*.. He is not only a Rock in Himself, He is *our* Rock. By the will of His love, and the love of His will, He is *our* Rock. He will be so because He loves us, and He loves us according to His sovereign will, for He is *our* Rock with all His heart. Now as He is *our* Rock—take the following facts. He is *our* Rock to hide in, not to talk about merely, though if we love His name and hide in Him; we

cannot help talking about Him; but He is not only our theme, He is our hiding place. More than that, He is our Rock, because we have *been hidden in Him*. What is the difference? To hide there is my act, but to be hidden there is the result of an act of another. I run to Him and try to hide myself there, but I am hidden there by God Himself. How is that? Behold, said God to Moses, there is a place by Me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock; and I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with My hand while I pass by." God places His people in the cleft of the rock, so that it is not merely run and hide in Him. We do run, and are favoured to hide in Him; but that is not the whole of it. It is the work of God to take the running, timid, trembling soul, and put him into the cleft of the Rock, and then the hand of omnipotent power covers him for ever. "I will cover thee with My hand." And what then? Why, "I will make all my goodness pass before thee." Let it be so, O God. We can well bear the sight, and the sight of all that agitates the world if we are in the cleft of the Rock and covered with Thy hand. Well He is our Rock to hide in. He is our Rock to rest upon, to confide in, with a calmness and tranquillity of mind, and experience which nothing can disturb. If He speaks peace, war cannot break out; and if He says to the storm, Peace, be still, there is a great calm, for He is obeyed in a moment, the wind drops, the sea becomes smooth, and all is quiet and serene. O, if you are on and in Him, resting upon this Rock, you enjoy a solid peace, such as the world can neither give nor take away. Your Rock to hide in, and your Rock to rest upon. And what is better, if possible, He is our Rock to inhabit. We live in the Rock of ages. "Let the inhabitants of the Rock sing, let them shout from the top of the mountains." And then He is ours, as I said just now, as to all His fulness; thus in Him we have peace, safety, and plenty.

Thirdly. *God our Rock is incomparable*. Their rock is *not* as our Rock. An incomparable God is ours, an incomparable rock is the Rock of salvation. He is incomparable as to His nature, as to His covenant relationship, and in various other respects also. I have already spoken of Him as the foundation of our hope, the home of our souls, and the rest of our minds. Now what is in Him, and what comes from Him? Honey, water, oil, blood. This is quite in accordance with the type itself, for even in this chapter we read of honey from the Rock. Sometimes infidels have rather sneered at the idea of honey from the rock, quite forgetting that a rock was one of the most common bee-hives in the land of Canaan. They obtained their honey from the rocks. Bees were abundant, and they produced their honey in rocks, so that honey flowing from the rock was by no means an unfrequent sight. This is beautifully descriptive of our dear Lord. Oh what sweetness comes from Him! His word is sweeter than the honey and the honeycomb, and as the honey flowed down the rocks in Canaan, so life, and spiritual heavenly peace flow out of Jesus Christ, the Rock of ages, for you and me. Their rock is not like ours. Then again oil out of the rock. Rather recently, you know, this has been verified; for now we have rock oil in general use, though the oil of Canaan was probably that of the olive. The unction, or the oil of the Holy Spirit is perpetually flowing from the Holy One, Jesus Christ. Here is oil to anoint, and honey for sweetness, from our Rock.



There also is water to slake our thirst, and wash our persons and garments in. But here is blood from the rock. You have this thought in the words of Toplady

“Let the water and the blood,  
From Thy wounded side which flowed,  
Be of sin the double cure,  
Cleanse me from its guilt and power.”

Cleanse me from its guilt by blood—justification, and from its power by the water—sanctification. Water and blood, a double remedy for a double disease, intended to effect a double cure. The blood and water come, and grace flows, and a cure is effected through faith in the dear Redeemer. Their rock is not as our Rock. We sit calmly therein and are safe, or stand upon its summit and look into eternity therefrom.

Take the following thought, and then I will close. Their rock is not like ours as to *guilt*. Man has a power within called conscience, and he cannot get rid of it, it is a moral power, and its operations are about moral matters. Sometimes conscience is burdened with guilt, torn, lacerated and bleeding, and there is no help, no remedy for a bleeding conscience apart from blood, and this flows from our smitten Rock. Conscience comes to Christ and relies upon Him. His blood is applied to the wounded soul, and peace, healing, and comfort are experienced. Our Rock is incomparable with regard to the conscience. Incomparable also in *trouble*. Where is the idol that can help its worshipper in trouble. In trouble the child of God may be calm, and then he says, “my Rock has left the words on record and we believe them with all our hearts.” That ‘all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.’”

“In trouble what a hiding-place  
Have they who know the throne of grace!”

Thirdly, their rock is not like ours as to *prospect*. Ascend mountains as high as you will, the Himalayas for instance, which, if I mistake not, are the highest in the world, yet you cannot reach heaven nor see into the future. Let me stand, however, upon this Rock of ages, and I shall see the King in His beauty, and behold the land that is very far off, and the future will not seem to be an uncertainty. The rock of idolaters leaves them in doubt as to whether they have souls or not, and what will become of them. Their rock cannot reveal this to them; but standing upon the Rock of ages, we look forward into the future and sing—

“There is my home and portion fair!”

Their rock is not like ours. We die where we live, and we live where we hope to die, on the Rock and in the everlasting arms of God. May the Lord be pleased to command His blessing, for Christ's sake. Amen.

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THE NEXT SERMON WILL BE READY ON MAY 15TH.

# THE BEST WISDOM.

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## A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,  
ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, 20th JANUARY, 1884.

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*"And unto man He said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom ; and to depart from evil is understanding."* Job xxviii. 28.

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"THE natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him ; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Nature can never rise above its own level, and the things of grace and eternal life and salvation are spiritual things, and as such cannot be understood or comprehended by the natural man. Hence the necessity for the work of God the Spirit. "A new heart," the Lord says, "will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you. I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh." The Lord has promised to impart grace and spiritual fear to the hearts of sinners. When therefore one has been constituted a spiritual character, "old things are passed away, and all things are become new." He is blessed with new light and life. Other objects are discovered to him by the eternal Spirit, such as the natural man never saw, and he occupies a position which is entirely spiritual. Hence the serious errors and mistakes which are made by natural persons concerning the character of God, His holy law, spiritual things, the covenant of grace, and the glorious gospel of the blessed God. There is a life in a spiritual man so mysterious that the natural man cannot comprehend him ; for all that are in Christ Jesus are new creatures. Hence in this chapter out of which the text this morning is taken, we have a threefold view of wisdom. Job was led first to speak of natural knowledge or wisdom, and, secondly, of the wisdom of God in the operations of Divine Providence, and in the text of that wisdom which is from above, and which is inseparable from salvation. In the former part of the chapter he speaks of that natural knowledge and wisdom which miners have displayed. "Surely there is a vein for the silver, and a place for gold, where they fine it ; iron is taken out of the earth, and brass is molten out of the stone." But if you will read the chapter at your leisure, you will perceive that Job here is speaking of the knowledge and wisdom displayed in going down into the bowels of the earth, and obtaining therefrom the hidden riches of nature. That wisdom, however, is not saving ; for man may know much about the surface and interior of the earth, and yet be destitute of the one thing needful ; and therefore a most important question is asked in the 12th verse : "But where shall wisdom be found, and where is the place of understanding ? The depth saith, It is not in me, and the sea saith, It is not with me." Heavenly wisdom is a boon so pre-

cious and so great, "that it cannot be gotten for gold;" for it has often turned out that the richest men have been destitute of this grace. Wisdom is not a purchaseable blessing for it cannot be obtained for gold and silver, neither is it to be acquired by human power, and it is so rich and great that it can never be merited; and therefore, "Where shall wisdom be found, and where is the place of understanding?" Job, having contemplated the depth and the sea, soars as it were into the clouds, and says, "God understandeth the way thereof, and He knoweth the place thereof. For He looketh to the ends of the earth and seeth under the whole heaven; to make the weight for the winds; and He weigheth the waters by measure." Wonderful words, and very wonderful are the facts they indicate. The clouds hanging over our heads are filled, so to speak, with thousands of tons of water, and yet they are upheld by an unseen Hand, and when it is needed they pour their contents upon the earth by the will of an unseen Being. Surely we have got at the best wisdom now and it is unnecessary to rise higher! The visible clouds and the aerial heavens where God's greatness and wisdom are so conspicuous, surely teach us all the wisdom we need, and studying God in these wondrous operations must surely be the highest wisdom! No, "Unto man he saith, Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding." The natural man, to repeat what I commenced with, knoweth not the things of the Spirit, because they are spiritually discerned. A person may soar to the clouds, and give us their dimensions and even the weight of water which they contain, and yet be ignorant of God, and have no knowledge of himself as a sinner, nor of the Way of Life, and no desire to be found therein. Therefore, He said unto man, "Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom."

"The Lord said unto man." Some have supposed that Job refers to Adam; that the Lord said unto him, when he was in a state of innocence, "The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding;" and thus gave him the law, which is holy, just and good. Is not this taking too limited a view of the verse? Should it be confined to the first man? Does he not speak thus to every man, and if to every man, then to every descendant of Adam, "Behold the fear of the Lord that is wisdom," and therefore, he that is destitute of this fear has not begun to be wise; for "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, a good understanding have all they that keep His commandments." I suppose those truths would be offensive to the minds of the learned, the philosophical and the intellectual, and hearing them from us they would contemptuously set us down as so many ignorant beings; but, Christian friends, I trust I am right in saying we know something about the importance and the nature of spiritual things. Let them sneer, condemn, and condemn and if permitted let them persecute, which may the Lord prevent, if it please Him. One thing is needful, and that through mercy we possess. Though the natural man knows us not, we know him; though he knows not the position we occupy, we know where he stands; and although he is a stranger to that experience with which we are blest, we are not altogether strangers to his spirit; for once, like him, we were dead in trespasses and sins.

Looking at our text this morning, I shall make a few observations

upon certain points which lie upon its surface; but, having on recent occasions directed your attention to the nature and operations of the fear of God, I shall not now tarry on that point. "Unto man He saith, The fear of the Lord that is wisdom." I notice that the fear of the Lord is wisdom, *because it invariably leads its possessors into a safe state.* Surely the man that knows where to go to be safe for ever, is a wise man, and not a fool. All that fear God are certainly wise unto salvation, and to be wise in this respect is to possess the richest and best wisdom under the heavens. The persons that are wise unto salvation may not know many other things; indeed, there have been thousands of God's dear people in the world wending their way to heaven, who have scarcely been able to read the letter of Divine truth. As for philosophy, they never knew the meaning of the word; as for philosophers, they never knew who or what they were; and as for science, they never understood or desired to understand it. The way of the Lord, however, is so plain, and straight, and clear, that a way-faring man, though a fool in other respects, shall not err therein. I may go to heaven without the slightest knowledge of scientific matters; but I cannot go there without the wisdom which cometh from above. Heaven is reached by many who never possessed great intellectual powers. One whose mind, indeed, actively considered is very feeble and limited in its operations, may yet be found in the way of life, and obtain heaven after all, but he can never reach those scenes of eternal bliss and glory unless he is blessed with light from the throne of God and the Lamb; therefore "Unto man He saith, The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom." It is so because it always leads its possessor into a state of safety. Now do you know what it is, my dear friends, to hide yourself in the glorious person of the Mediator? There is safety there. "A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished." You remember the time when your eyes were first opened, and you discovered yourselves to be lost and ruined sinners, and saw no signs of safety anywhere. You looked upwards, and saw nothing but the anger and curse of God; you looked downwards, and saw nothing but hell and ruin; you looked behind and saw nothing but a life of sin, which rose up in judgment against you; and before you was nothing but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation. There was no safety anywhere. At length the Son of God, the glorious Mediator between God and man, was discovered to you, and and you were enabled to flee for refuge to the hope set before poor sinners; and if you did not flee to your own satisfaction, yet you did flee; and if you have not yet confidently entered into that hiding-place, yet you desire to be there; and let me again assure you that you are really in God's sight where and what you desire to be. If you desire with all your soul to be found in Jesus, you are in Him. God finds you there, Satan shall find you there, Justice shall find you there, death shall find you there, and the troubles and changes of life shall find you there. Well, this is your desire, and I am now speaking to the little ones; you desire to be "found in Him, not having your own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Sink or swim, you feel you must abide here; and whether you be cursed or blessed, you must try to remain on this high

and solemn, and sacred ground. If you perish, you are resolved to perish at the feet of the dear and blest Redeemer. Well, you are a wise man or woman ; I cannot make you believe it, but the fear of God is before your eyes and in your hearts, and it has induced you to flee for refuge to the only hope set before you. You are safe from all danger. O that the Holy Ghost would apply the fact to your hearts and make it your own ! You are safe in this rock, in this Christ, and under this shadow. If you are resting here, you are safe with regard to the past. Adam's imputed guilt is gone, and you are safe with regard to that. You are safe with regard to your own sins ; they have been pardoned and forgiven. You are safe with regard to the future ; for being in Christ, saints are as secure as angels in heaven, for there are no degrees of safety in the spiritual and gracious government of our God. Safe you will be to-morrow, whether you live or die, and safe you will be next year, whether you be in England or Australia, on the earth or in heaven. Safety is of the Lord ; and you are with Him, and in Him ; for the fear of God has induced you to flee for refuge to Jesus Christ, the sinner's hope and Friend. "Unto man He saith, The fear of the Lord that is wisdom ;" for it leads its possessor to flee to the only hiding-place God has prepared for guilty, ruined sinners. Are the dangers visible, or invisible ? (and the invisible are far more numerous than those that can be seen,) it matters not whether they be visible or invisible, near or distant, great or small, physical or spiritual,—

"On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand,  
All other ground is sinking sand."

And there you are safe for heaven. Oh what a precious power then, is godly fear, if it leads its possessor to flee to this great hiding-place.

Such persons are said to be wise unto salvation. One word here, before I dismiss this point. Timothy was thus addressed by Paul : "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation." This most important fact is to some extent lost sight of in the day in which we live ; that the Scriptures, the Word of God, the revelation of heaven were never intended to teach man science, or philosophy, or politics, or astronomy, or any other branch of secular knowledge. They were designed by the God who gave the Word to teach men spiritual and eternal matters. The Holy Ghost comes not to teach men science, nor to instruct them in natural things, but to lead the mind into the things that relate to the kingdom of God, of Christ, and of heaven, things which cannot be learned at school, or acquired by nature's powers, and which are in all respects the simple and pure gift of God, the free outflow of His loving heart to His dear people. If you do not know even the meaning of the word science, yet you know Christ. If you do not know what philosophy is, yet you know the Lord, which is better ; for you are wise unto salvation. As to politics, you may hardly know whether you are a Conservative or a Liberal, or anything else ; but you are wise unto salvation. As to what party might be best in power, probably you do not know, and do not trouble yourself concerning the question ; but you love the House of God, you hold converse with the God of heaven, Christ and you are one, and you shall one day see His face,

“And never, never sin,  
And from the rivers of His grace,  
Drink endless pleasures in.”

Oh you are wiser than the most intellectual natural man that ever lived. You might have all the knowledge of Newton, and all the poetry of Milton, and all the powers of the great and learned,—and let me speak it with reverence and solemnity,—be lost at last. But you have the fear of God in your heart, you have been made wise unto salvation; for you know yourselves as guilty sinners, lost and ruined, and you know you are interested in the Saviour; and this is the wisdom which cometh down from above, even the fear of the Lord. Now these wise persons commit their all into the hands of Christ, and Paul was wise in this respect, and and some of my hearers possess a measure of the same wisdom. “I know,” said that great man, “whom I have believed, and that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.” And what had Paul committed unto Him, but his everlasting all? He felt that he could not keep, save, exalt, protect or preserve himself, and that was a feeling which arose from that heavenly wisdom, which sprang from the fear of God in his heart. He feared God, and that fact made him wise, and his wisdom induced him to gather together all that was dear to himself, both mortal and immortal, his body and soul, for life and for death, and he went to Jesus and committed all into His hands. If you and I have been led to commit our immortal souls into the hands of this risen and reigning Saviour, we are as safe as Paul was, and may say with him, “I know whom I have believed;” not “*in* whom;” but “*I know whom* I have believed;” and I am calm and serene because His hands are strong to keep what I have put into them, His character is untarnished and untarnishable, and because He was never known to fail. I have such a knowledge of that dear Friend unto whom I have committed my all, that

“My steady soul shall fear no more  
Than solid rocks when billows roar.”

Oh am I safe in Jesus? Is it a fact that I am in this great hiding-place, under the shadow of this blessed Rock? Yes, the fear of God has made me wise to run away from myself, to leave the world behind, and to commit my all to the great and glorious Son of God. To creep beneath the wings of Jehovah, is the part of wisdom. “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.” “Under His wings shalt thou trust.” I do not mind whether take you “wings” there to indicate those of the cherubim on the mercy-seat, or the wings of a fowl. We are not hiding under the wings of an army, and not under the wings of the cherubim merely; but under the perfections, and purposes, and providence of the Lord our God.

“Just as a hen protects her brood  
From birds of prey, which seek their blood,  
Under her feathers, so the Lord  
Makes His own arm His people’s guard.”

London people, or perhaps, many of them, are not well acquainted with the habits of fowls; but if a kite or a hawk appears over the brood

the hen calls in a very peculiar manner, and the young ones at once run towards her. She sees the danger, and calls them, and they run and creep beneath her wings, and are all concealed there. Our God sees our danger, and speaks to us in a peculiar manner in His invitations and His promises; and having implanted godly fear in our hearts, and so caused us to hate sin, and to distrust ourselves; when He calls, we run and creep beneath the wings of His power, providence, and grace. The fear of the Lord leads us to Him, and the wisdom that springs out of that fear leads us to creep beneath His shadow. This proceeding on the part of the brood is not forced, but quite natural; and it is not forced work on the part of the sinner that he flies to God for refuge.

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

“But if I die, with mercy sought,  
When I the King have tried,  
That were to die—delightful thought!  
As sinner never died.”

Therefore, O God, I am come to put my trust under the shadow of Thy wings. “The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.” Now such persons can never be lost; and the principle of godly fear in the heart can never be destroyed. “I will put my fear into their hearts, and they shall not depart from Me;” and my fear will bring them from the world, and from sin, and from themselves into My presence, and induce them to hide under My shadow, and they shall there abide. I remember when I was sixteen years of age, and joined the church, a number of persons who were employed on the same premises, partly owing perhaps to the fact that I was a mere boy, sneered very much, especially when it became known that I had been baptized. I had many doubts and fears respecting the future, and I think I did most earnestly and fervently pray that God would keep me, and never permit me to bring a blot or reproach upon His holy cause.

“I have been upheld till now,  
Who could hold me up but Thou?”

The fear of the Lord never leaves its possessor to trust in himself; but it induces him to come out of self, and enter into this place of safety. This is all I have time to say on this point. The fear of the Lord is wisdom, because it leads into the place of divine safety.

In the second place, it is wisdom *because it leads its possessor into peace*—not only into safety, but into peace. Is it a blessing to know God? That person, whoever he may be, and whatever he may know, is a stranger to safety and peace, who is ignorant of Him. “There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.” Let me be in the dark concerning God, and I am not safe or tranquil, or secure; but if I know God, and the relation in which I stand to Him—“Ah! that is it, Sir!” Yes, I know: but let us go on gradually; if I know Him, and the relation in which I stand to Him, and that the great God of heaven is my God, my Father, and my Friend, then I am wise unto salvation; and possessing such a knowledge

I have a good hope within, and a peace, such as the world can neither give nor take away. The fear of God in operation, and pervading the whole mind destroys all tormenting fear. At times we have many fears which are not godly, but this fear in vigorous operation overcomes them all. The fear of man brings a snare, but the fear of God never does. I venture to say there is no one in the house of God who better understands this than the preacher. I have been sorely tried by the fear of man hundreds of times, and well do I know that it is a snare ; but if the fear of God prevails in my mind, and holds all my faculties and powers, then I do not mind who may be present to listen to me; places, persons, circumstances and scenes, all fade into comparative insignificance before the fear and love of God. In this respect, therefore, the fear of God is wisdom. Then there is the future ; and one says, " I have a large family and small means, and I am deeply tried about the future." May the Lord increase this grace in your heart, and in mine too. I am not one to flog you because you disturb yourselves as to the future. Many do so sometimes. May the Lord give us more grace, and increase His own fear in our hearts; for so shall we be enabled to leave the future where it is, even in His hands, and have no carking care whatever about it. The fear of the Lord brings its possessor to rest in God as to the morrow, and He that rests in God is wise. Then there is the fear of death, for, in some respects, it is an enemy. Perhaps it is not sinful to shrink from death, for God has created the love of life in us, or implanted that sentiment in our very nature, and, therefore, its existence cannot be wrong. " But Sir, there is something that triumphs over death." Just so, but there is only one thing that can enable us to do this, and that is the fear of God. Let me know that my sins are pardoned, that my soul is one with Jesus, that I am in Him ; let me read my title clear to mansions in the skies, and let me be filled with a sense of the greatness of God's love to my soul, and I am not afraid to die ; the fear of death is then carried away, and I have confidence in relation to death and to eternity. Yes, this fear is wisdom, because it destroys all other fears in its possessors' hearts.

Now from this it appears that the fear of God is quite consistent with courage. We fear God without being afraid of Him, and those who have had most of this fear in their hearts have been the most courageous characters. " So did not I," and Nehemiah is referring to a certain course of conduct which had been taken by Jews, and speaking of himself, he says,— " So did not I, because of the fear of the Lord." I also should have done as they did, but for the fear of God." What was it that kept Joseph ? " How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God." Was it not the part of wisdom in Joseph to act as he did? and it was godly fear that shaped his conduct on that occasion. To depart from evil, that is understanding. But there are degrees of godly fear, and I have often thought of Obadiah. Mysterious are the operations of Divine Providence, and the reign of grace. Obadiah was governor of Ahab's house. Perhaps a worse man than Ahab, or a better man than Obadiah never lived ; for of Obadiah, it is said that he feared the Lord greatly. I wonder why Ahab had such a man in his house, and why he so exalted him as to make him governor of his household. The wicked sometimes see something in the just that is commendable, and this may have led Ahab to confide and



trust in him. Obadiah feared the Lord greatly, and that fear induced him to conduct himself wisely in that wicked court. And then it is said again in Nehemiah, concerning Hananiah, ruler of the palace, that he "feared the Lord above many." Thus we have Joseph fearing the Lord, and fleeing from evil, and Nehemiah, stern, and courageous, and bold, saying, "So did not I, because of the fear of the Lord; and I shook my lap, and said, So God shake out every man from His house;" and Obadiah, who feared the Lord greatly, and Hananiah, who feared the Lord above many. To fear the Lord that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding. Dear friends, there is peace here, because godly fear leads the soul to rest where God Himself rests and is pleased. To rest where God's perfections are all in harmony, where all is tranquillity, even in the atonement of Jesus Christ. Godly fear brings its possessor to the atonement, there God is found, and He and sinners are sweetly reconciled. Thus the fear of the Lord, said God to man, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.

My time is gone, or I had some other points to mention; for instance, I intended to look at the subject in connection with the circumstances of our life, and with the world, and with the future. It is a good thing to be well prepared for the future; and he who well provides and prepares for it (and I speak of natural things now), is sometimes said to be a wise man. Well, you may apply this to the things of God. Lay up for yourselves a good foundation against the time to come. The future with regard to all its circumstances,—are you prepared for that? Yes, I fear God, and He will provide. I am satisfied, and I leave myself, and my affairs in His hands. He has provided, and He will provide. Then there is death. "Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel." They that are prepared for this are wise. Are you washed in the Saviour's blood, and clothed in His righteousness? Are you filled with His grace, and led by His Spirit? If you are thus prepared to meet God, you are wise; to meet Him in death; to meet Him in heaven; to meet Him on the judgment day. Prepared to hear the last trumpet sound; prepared to rise from the grave; prepared to fix your eyes upon your descending Lord; prepared to be caught up to meet Him in the air, and prepared to be for ever with the Lord. To man He said, "The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil,—the evil of error, the evil of sin, the evil of the world, and the evil world itself, and the evil one,—is understanding." Some people are for going as near to the danger as possible. God says it is understanding to depart from it. Yonder is an Atheist, and he is very clever, if you can keep out of his way do so, for the serpent is more subtle than any other beast of the field. If you feel your feebleness and inability to cope with the evil, depart from it, for to do so is understanding. The Lord add His blessing, for Christ's sake. Amen.

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“WHAT WILT THOU THAT I SHALL DO UNTO THEE?”

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## A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,  
ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, 8th MAY, 1881.

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*“And Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought unto Him: and when he was come near, He asked him, saying, What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight.”—Luke xviii. 40, 41.*

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EVERY branch of the mediatorial work of the Lord Jesus Christ is of unspeakable importance to all who are concerned therein:—to God, to angels, to all that are in heaven before the throne, and to all God's dear children now living on the earth; and since there are perhaps millions of the objects of God's love not yet in existence, the mediatorial office and work of Jesus Christ are important in relation to them. Salvation is one great whole, and God is accomplishing His merciful purposes in relation to that glorious work. The operations of Divine power are advancing, and our great God, seated on his throne, says, “I will work, and who shall let it?”

The sufferings of our dear Redeemer on Calvary, constitute a divinely important part of our salvation; and the Saviour's intercession in heaven is an equally important branch of His work. It is a most encouraging fact that He ever liveth to make intercession for all that come unto God by Him. In the intercessory prayer of the Son of God addressed to His Father just before He left the world, He said, “Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him.” It appears, therefore, that Jesus Christ has been communicating eternal life ever since these words were uttered, and that fact was expressed by Him. There are not many of us who fully appreciate the marvellous truth, that the stream of eternal life is perpetually flowing from the throne and heart of God. With our mortal eyes we see things that are visible, and with our mortal ears we hear the sounds that are round about us; but how seldom do we contemplate the sacred spiritual mystery referred to! Our dear Lord loves to communicate those blessings He has obtained for His people, and the right to distribute which He has acquired! In the days of His flesh His salvation was occasionally very manifest; but now as it reaches the hearts of sinners, it is, for the most part, a blessing invisibly communicated.

When the poor man, to whom my text refers, was made experimentally the subject of faith, I do not know; it is, however, certain that he was a believer; for the Master said, “Thy faith hath saved thee;” and therefore he was a spiritually living person. He was, however, tried with poverty, and afflicted with blindness; for he was a blind beggar, sitting by the way-side, asking alms. Hearing a crowd of persons approaching, he inquired what it meant, and was told, “Jesus of Nazareth passeth by:”

and he cried, saying, "Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me; and they which went before rebuked him," Bartimæus, as Mark tells us he was named, is not the first that has been rebuked by his fellow-men for calling upon God in prayer; we are prone to injure one another, and there is something very solemn in wounding the heart of an individual who has been touched and saved by grace. That friend near you may not express himself as you do, his language may be somewhat strange; but deal kindly with him, it may be that there is a little grace in his heart; and although he is awkward in his expressions, do not cut him off, nor rebuke him because of that fact. Notwithstanding all rebuffs, the blind man cried so much the more, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on me!" Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh; and if the water is dammed up, the banks will be overflowed, and the country flooded. He cried so much the more, "Have mercy on me!" His religion was not to be quenched; his wants were not to be supplied by any other person than the Saviour; he had an experience which was at that time peculiar to himself; and he said, as it were, mine is an urgent pressing case. And Jesus heard his cry, and stood, and commanded him to be brought unto Him. He did not request His disciples to do it; neither did he invite the poor blind man to find his way to Him; but he commanded him to be brought; and when he was come near He asked him saying, "What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?" and he said, "Lord, that I may receive my sight."

The words to which I would more especially draw your attention this morning are these: "What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?" In offering a few observations upon them, let me first call your attention to *the character of the Speaker*. "What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?" In the second place, let us look at *the character of the person addressed*, for though he was poor, and a beggar, we shall have something to say of the excellency of his character; and thirdly, let us look at *the importance of the question* put to him by the Lord.

I. In the first place, let us make a few observations on *the character of the Speaker*. Jesus is the Speaker, and He is represented in the context as the "Son of David," and "Jesus of Nazareth;" the poor man himself called Him, "Lord;" and therefore it will be important, and I trust somewhat profitable, for us to contemplate the character of the Speaker here. I notice in the first place that the poor man who cried to the Saviour regarded Him as *the promised Messiah*, as the Son of God, as He concerning whom Moses and the Prophets had written; and when the people said that "Jesus of Nazareth passeth by," he did not address Him by this title, but at once said, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Now there is something very significant and important in the fact that Jesus was not called the Son of Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob; He is said to be the seed of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David; but not in so many words the Son of Abraham; and yet He was one of his descendants. How was it that He was addressed as the Son of David? Abraham was never a ruler and a king; Jesus Christ is King, and Lord of all. I want to call attention to the fact that He who addressed the poor man on this interesting occasion, was a complex person, He was the great God-man

and Mediator,—the Lord Jesus Christ,—bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh ; and it may be said of the circumstances recorded in the text, “God was manifest in the flesh.” Jesus appeared on that occasion as a man, “ clothed with a body like our own,” dressed in our human nature. He did not assume any other nature, for no other one was interested in his doing and dying ; but “ He took upon Him the seed of Abraham.” Now, this is a great mystery, and it will remain infinitely deep to all eternity, how two dissimilar natures are united in one great and glorious person. He did not assume an angelic nature, nor another nature differing from the human ; He might have created another nature for Himself, but had He done so He could not have saved human sinners, and therefore He assumed human nature ; the God appeared in the man,—the perfect God appeared in the perfect man ; and we have the words of a God here speaking through a man’s lips. “What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee ?”

Unmediated Deity, God out of Christ, can do nothing for sinners ; and the sinner can have no consecutive or comforting ideas in his own mind concerning unmediated Deity. God out of Christ is indeed a consuming fire, and can never say to a guilty wretch, “What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee ?” No, He took the nature that had sinned, and veiled His majesty and divinity behind it, and came as the great healing God of heaven and earth, and addressed Himself to that poor wretched beggar, and said, “What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee ?” He did not appear to him as a legislator, or as a judge ; for it is never the business of a law-giver or judge to consult the will of a criminal. What would be thought of a judge if he said to a prisoner on trial, “What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee ?” It is the business of a judge to administer and enforce the law, and to consult, not the criminal’s will, but the law and righteousness, and justice concerning the case. No, had Jesus appeared to him as a Law-giver, or in His judicial character, the will and feelings of the poor man would not have been referred to ; he would have been told to go his way, into utter darkness. But having assumed the nature of the man, and having resolved to save him ; and having, in fact, already done so, and created spiritual life in his soul, He appeared to him in a human form, full of attractions, excellences and beauties ; and checked the impetuous feelings of the suppliant’s rebukers. The blessed Jesus is human and divine ; all the majesty of God is in Him, all the omnipotence of Jehovah is in the Man Christ Jesus, for He is the everlasting fulness of heaven and earth, and His divine excellencies constitute that consuming fire before which the wicked cannot stand ; but all that majesty is softened and modified by His humanity, and all the glories of Deity fall in saving power and influence upon blind beggars, and lost and ruined sinners.

Now let us pass on, as time is going, and notice in the second place that the words of the Saviour implied *His Divine fulness*. Make known your requests ; ask ; open your mouth wide ; ask for as much as you will ; “What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee ?” “It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell ;” and if *all* fulness dwells in our Lord all the fulness of nature must be there ; all the fulness of light is there else He could not have been the Light of the world, nor given sight to

the sightless eyes of that poor man. All the fulness that saints require here, and all the fulness they will require hereafter dwells in that Man of sorrows, who was poor, and walked along the dusty roads of Judea, and who, sitting on a well, said to the woman, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water." Great is the mystery of godliness; the Author of heaven sat on that well; the author of all heaven hung on that accursed tree. He it was who said to Peter, "Of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children or of strangers? Peter saith unto Him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, "Then are the children free. Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea and cast an hook and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth thou shalt find a piece of money, that take and give unto them for Me and thee." As tribute was due, and He had not the money to pay it with, He had to work a miracle for the purpose of appearing honest in the sight of all men. That poor Person, who for *our sakes* became poor, contained within a poor human body all the fulness of the Godhead, all the fulness of the Christian's life, and all the fulness of heaven. I do wonder why ministers of the gospel and preachers of religion want any other theme to dwell upon, and that they should depart in preaching from the great and glorious person of our Lord. He is the wonder of heaven, the masterpiece of all the works of God. Angels can never explore the mysteries of His glory, for there is indeed everything that is unfathomably deep and indescribably excellent in the dear Son of God. He never experiences a difficulty in saving a soul. He speaks, and it is done; He commands, and it stands fast. He put on our body, and wore it at once, and will wear it for ever. He experienced no difficulty in fulfilling the law, and He experienced no difficulty when He met His heavenly Father. And when the curse was inflicted on Him, there were no regrets on the part of Jesus Christ; He never said, The punishment is more than I can bear. Omnipotence was under that burden; an omnipotent Saviour was underneath that withering, flaming, burning curse; an omnipotent Saviour was underneath the interests of countless millions; and no difficulty was experienced by Him, for in Him all fulness dwells. And now He comes to sinners and saves them. To me it is most astonishing that men should misrepresent Christ in His saving work as they do in the day in which we live, saying that, He stands by the sinner and entreats him to be saved, and holds out His hands to him from hour to hour; and having sent out thousands of invitations which are not accepted, He turns away disappointed, and that because the sinner will not allow Him to save him. The Saviour spoke like a God, "What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?" His fulness is Divine; He touches the will and the affections, and detaches them from sin and the world in a moment; He touches the immortal soul, and snatches it from the fire, and rescues it from the tyrant's hand, puts it into His precious blood, and washes it and makes it whiter than snow, saying, "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee."

My dear brother and sister, has He healed you, and opened your eyes, and unstopped your ears? Can you grasp this idea, that your health and life are in the Lord Jesus Christ, from whom you have received your salvation, and that there is health enough in Him for you, and life, and pardon, and peace, and heaven enough in His dear person to fill your vast desires for ever and ever?

My friends, if there are ten thousand worlds in the material universe, Jesus contains more than they all contain; for He is their Creator, He made them all; and so the Saviour is greater than His salvation, as the Creator is greater than creation; and therefore all fulness dwells in Him; and this full Saviour, who has never out-promised Himself, and whose purposes have never proved larger than His power, took all His fulness to blind Bartimæus, and said, "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" First, the Messiah, and secondly, His eternal fulness, appear in connection with His character.

Now let us notice another point, viz., *His deeds*, or His operations. He has only to leave the sinner where he is, He has only to leave us in our sins, under a broken law, and we shall, as sinners, sink into eternal woe. If the Saviour should say, "Let him alone," and pass on, and do nothing, hell, and perdition and eternal darkness are absolutely certain. It is not merely His thoughts about us, and the expression of those thoughts in the glorious gospel of His grace; it is not merely what we have done for ourselves, or what others have done for or against us; but it is, "What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?" My beloved friends, if Jesus has done anything for us, we shall never forget that blessed work? It is well to forget a good deal that our fellow creatures have done for and against us. I should like to forget hundreds of things, but though my memory is treacherous to good things, yet I can remember hard words, or blows, and cruelty from my fellow man; but I cannot always remember all that the dear Lord has done for me.

There are some points, however, that can never be forgotten by me. When I was but a youth of sixteen years of age, I was dancing in the road that leads to hell, and was making as much haste to eternal darkness as such a boy could make. I well remember a dear old saint and his wife, who lived alone in a little cottage, and who were in the habit of reading the word of God and praying every night; and night after night I went and gathered up a handful of small stones, and threw them at their window to disturb them at their devotions. But subsequently that dear aged saint of seventy-two, and that boy of sixteen years, who had persecuted him, were baptized on the same occasion, and became members of the same church. And I well remember the dear old people pouring out the feelings of their hearts when I told them that it was I who used to trouble them.

Well, I shall never forget what the Saviour has done for me; how I lifted up my hand against Him, and He would not be wroth with me; and how I smote His people, and He loved me notwithstanding all; and by and bye He put the hand of His grace on my heart, and killed my natural enmity, and made me a friend; and now I rejoice that

“Jesus sought me when a stranger,  
Wandering from the fold of God,  
He, to save my soul from danger,  
Interposed His precious blood.”

There is another thing in connection with the Saviour that will never be forgotten by us, and that was the time when He proclaimed liberty to the captives, and took the chains off our souls, and the sting of guilt out of our consciences, and quenched the fire of apprehended wrath. Truly, we have abundant cause for sweet meditation upon this blessed question put by our Lord.

Many times have I been in the pulpit, full of doubts and fears, my knees knocking together, as if I had not the slightest strength in my legs, when suddenly all my doubts and fears have been removed, and as I have proceeded, I have been set at liberty. “True religion’s more than notion ; something must be known and felt.” When this dear Saviour comes, and does something for us in trouble, we remember it all the days of our life, for the manifold works of our dear Redeemer can never be forgotten by us.

Lastly, as to His character, it is *perfection*. “He which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” I will say for your comfort, if the Lord will be pleased to comfort you with the observation, that if He has laid the foundation of your faith, He will finish it ; “and He shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it.”

If you go about the suburbs of our great cities you will see carcasses of numerous houses that have not been finished, perhaps for lack of funds ; but there are none of the Lord’s people, standing and waiting for further means and further ability in the dear Redeemer. He is full enough to satisfy all on earth, and to fill all in heaven ; and if, therefore, He has given you a little faith, a little love and grace, He will give you glory by and bye. A sermon is delivered by a preacher, and he is ashamed of it, or dissatisfied with it. There is a piece of work performed by another individual ; it is like him, and it is not finished, and far from excellent. But here is a beggar, only he is blind, but not spiritually so. He is poor, and asks alms from door to door ; but he is a believer, a child of God, one of the Lord’s precious jewels, and there is a place for him in the Mediator’s crown, and Jesus will bedeck Himself with that jewel, and will wear it among the rest. A great deal must be done before He can enter into bliss, but the Saviour has pledged Himself to finish His work, and glorify that individual. “And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels.”

A few words only on *the character of the person addressed*. May I give you a *test* ? There are two classes of persons in this world, and there are two classes of persons in the two worlds that are to come. There is a worse world than this, and the wicked are there ; and there is a better world than this, and saints are there. There are two classes of persons here—saints and sinners. If the Lord Jesus Christ came to you with this question, “What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee ?” what answer would you return Him ? Would it be, “depart

from us, for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways?" Oh, no I could not for ten thousand worlds say, Depart from me. But if you were a stranger to eternal things, a sinner dead in trespasses and sins, that is what you would be saying, and that is what you would mean; and when anything like a Bible thought came into your mind it would disturb you, and you would crush it if you could. Nothing is so unwelcome as thought about the future to a natural man or woman; but if you are a living soul, such thoughts are welcome; so too is He that produces them, the Lord Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit. It is not, Depart from me, but

"Come nearer, nearer, nearer still,  
I'm well when Thou art near."

When blind Bartimæus was brought to Jesus, how his heart thrilled with pleasure as He approached the Saviour, and when he heard those omnipotent words, "Receive thy sight," and opened his eyes; how he leaped with joy, and with what heartiness he became a follower of his living, loving, and saving God!

I would say first, that he was a *living character*, because he was a believer: "Thy faith hath saved thee." The Master knew that by the way-side, nigh unto Jericho, the poor man sat begging, and He was drawn to the spot by blind Bartimæus and his faith; for faith attracts the Saviour, and faith and its Giver are sure to meet sooner or later. Bartimæus had not previously met Jesus; he had faith, however, in the promised Messiah, and when he heard that He was passing by, he cried, saying, "Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me." And then we see grace and its Author meeting and embracing each other.

Secondly, he was *willing to be saved*, and willing to receive and experience the operations of God's grace. I beg attention to a fact here. "What wilt *thou* that I shall do unto thee?" Is it not most unusual to consult the will of His creatures? No, not so unusual as you suppose. Does He consult our will? It seems so, "What wilt thou?" Well, if He consults the will of His creatures, and follows it, He first rectifies the will; for "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power." And having done this great work, He then places Himself before the needy one with, "What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?" If you desire Him, He will receive you; for your will has been rectified by His Spirit, and your experience will be as described in the text.

"Those feeble desires, those wishes so weak,  
'Tis Jesus inspires, and bids you still seek."

Lastly, he was a *saved sinner*. "Go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole," or saved thee.

One word on *the importance of the question*. "What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?" Why did the Saviour put it in this form? To discover character for the information of others, and perhaps for the further information of the poor man himself. The Lord had formed his character, and delighted to manifest the operations of His own hand. He put the question for the purpose of making it apparent what the man was in himself. And was not the question asked for the purpose of



eliciting prayer? He did not put the question for His own information, He knew what the man wanted and what he was about to receive; but He will have His people, by prayer and petition, ask for the blessing. What wilt thou then, Bartimæus? "Lord, that I may receive my sight." Receive it, said the Lord; and his eyes were opened; and he glorifying God, followed his healing Saviour. Do you not in this see the authority for prayer? The Master says to you and me, "What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?" Open thy mouth, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it;" do not speak as though there were any limitation. If you want things for the body, and mercies for the soul, and blessings for this life, tell me. If you want meetness and a title for the world to come, open thy mouth wide.

"He Himself has bid thee pray,  
Therefore, will not say thee nay.

"Thou art coming to a King,  
Large petitions with thee bring;  
For His grace and power are such,  
None can ever ask too much."

I do not know whether he was born blind or not; but his eyes were opened, and he saw. If he were born blind, he saw himself naturally in a new position, and viewed objects he had never seen before, and never realized in connection with their colour, or form, or shape, before the opening of his eyes. It was this that gave him, for the first time communion with the world he was living in; for light and sight give us communion with the objects before us. In receiving spiritual sight, he saw sin, and the world, and its emptiness; he saw his Lord, and he saw his all in Him, and became a follower of his Benefactor and Saviour. The Lord add His blessing, for Christ's sake. Amen.

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**"THE DEATH OF GOD'S SAINTS PRECIOUS IN HIS SIGHT."**  
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ON THE OCCASION OF THE

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TOGETHER WITH

**THE ADDRESS AT THE FUNERAL SERVICE,**

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# THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

## A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,  
AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,  
ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, 4th MARCH, 1884.

*“For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.” 1 Cor. iv. 20.*

As the everlasting love of God is expressed in effectual calling, it is said, “Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.” God had His eye upon Saul of Tarsus before he was called by grace. He was preserved in Christ Jesus before His soul was born again. His name was in heaven and his person was beloved by God in Christ, and therefore, notwithstanding his pharisaism and cruel and bloodthirsty persecution of the church of God, he was followed from place to place by a special providence and in due time conquered by irresistible grace. “Other sheep,” said the Saviour, “I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring; and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd.” Saul was not in the fold when the great Shepherd of Israel uttered these words. He was then a very young man, but he was a pharisee of the strictest sect, notwithstanding his secret and unknown interest in the everlasting love of God. The time of love, however, came; and when the period had arrived, it broke forth, and the long concealed grace and mercy of God arrested him. His heart was then broken, his conscience was stung, his soul was filled with godly sorrow and repentance; and as God had said, “I will turn to the people a pure language,” his language was changed and he was heard saying, “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?” Taken into a street in the city of Damascus, Ananias was sent to him. That sheep, however, Ananias, objected at first, to the visit, fearing that he was still a wolf. “Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to Thy saints at Jerusalem, and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call upon Thy name.” “Go thy way,” said the Shepherd; “for he is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.” And not only so “I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name’s sake.” That prediction was soon fulfilled. Saul received Divine assurance of forgiveness; His spirit was led into the sweet enjoyment of gospel liberty; He received spiritual and official gifts from his Master for his work, and commenced preaching the glorious gospel of the grace of God; and from the very first of his official career he suffered in the Saviour’s cause. Having himself been a bitter persecutor, he met with persecution and fiery trials all the days of his life; some of his sufferings being described in the chapter out of which I have taken my text. It is very mysterious that the prime ministers, if I may so speak, of the church of Jesus Christ should have suffered as they did, yet so it was; and the Apostle in the 9th verse says, “I think that God hath set forth us the Apostles last, as

it were appointed to death ; for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men," in allusion, perhaps to the cruel and bloody entertainments which were provided for the people in the city of Rome. Their theatres were filled on various occasions with thousands of spectators whose object was to see their fellow men destroyed by one another, or by wild beasts, and the most celebrated of all the sufferers were the last that were taken into the arena, and the eyes of all were fixed upon them ; and the Apostle says, " I think He (that is God) had set forth us the Apostles last, as it were appointed to death, a spectacle unto the world, to angels, and to men." The world sat round about as it were and watched their movements and sorrows, and angels good and bad watched their engagements and sufferings. " We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ ; we are weak, but ye are strong ; ye are honourable, but we are despised : " and then follow statements which are truly wonderful. " Even unto this present hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted and have no certain dwelling place. Where are the ministers of the gospel of the present day that can truthfully use this language ? The apostles hungered, wanted bread ; thirsted, wanted water ; were naked, badly clothed, and had no home. No man knows either love or hatred by all that is before him. A proud blasphemer, one that curses the name of his Maker, and hates the hand that supplies his wants from day to day, is sometimes very rich, whilst a dear saint of the Most High who lives near to God and has much to do with Him, is pinched with poverty or like Paul is almost forced to say, I hunger and thirst, am badly clothed and almost homeless. Whilst the Apostle was an object of Divine love, and could say, " Christ loved me, and gave Himself for me," yet he went through scenes of privation, persecution and temptation day by day. This object of Divine love, living in fellowship and communion with God, was yet naked, homeless, and without the ordinary comforts of life. The Lord Jesus Christ, however, never left him : Paul was never forsaken, but was sustained in his work ; and, the love of Christ constraining him he was determined in preaching the gospel " to know nothing among men save Christ and Him crucified. But the apostle was not only hated by Satan and the world, and his own nation the Jews, he was despised by a number of the members of the church at Corinth. " Now some," he says " are puffed up, as though I would not come to you ; but I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power, for the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power."

Now, let us give our attention to this portion of the Word, and make a few remarks on *the kingdom of God indicated in the text*. By this kingdom I understand the dominion of reigning, saving, sovereign and eternal grace and mercy. The dominion of grace under the gospel dispensation, and not as it appeared under the ceremonial dispensation, though that also was the kingdom of God. The phrase " the kingdom of God," in the New Testament, often relates to the Gospel, so that here we understand the rule, the empire of grace in the church of the living God, and its reign in the hearts and consciences of saved sinners. Now, this kingdom is not in word only, whether it be considered in connection with the gospel dispensation or

the church of Jesus Christ, or as seated in the hearts of regenerated persons; the gospel of God comes not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance. This kingdom is to be contrasted with other kingdoms. Pilate had strange feelings when looking at the suffering Man who stood before him, he said, "Art thou a king, then? And Jesus said unto him, My kingdom is not of this world; for if it were, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom," not from hence; or I have a kingdom, but it is spiritual. The kingdom of God is to be contrasted with the kingdoms of the world, with the legal dispensation, and with the various systems of error which were then in existence and are in existence now, and which perhaps, will continue to exist until the end of time. But this Divine kingdom is to be contrasted with another kingdom which is not often referred to, I mean antichrist—the man of sin—or mystical Babylon. As Egypt and Babylon, both of which were the oppressors of the people of God, were destroyed, so the time is coming when Rome or Antichrist shall cease to exist, being cast as a mill-stone into the sea, and be found no more at all. That kingdom is now in existence, and it consists in words and forms and ceremonies, and the power connected with it is political, human, and carnal, and the power of error; and therefore, the whole of it is delusive and dangerous, and presents a striking contrast to the kingdom of God. The grace of God is not popery, for that has nothing to do in fact with grace in the heart, seeing the kingdom of God is not in word but in saving power. That is a part of the kingdom of Satan, and round about are the kingdoms of the world; but in the midst of these kingdoms God has set up a kingdom, which is inhabited by the saints of the Most High, where they shall live, and flourish, and thrive, until the end of time; and when all is perfected and completed, then Christ will deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority, and power. All other rule is to terminate, righteous and unrighteous; for there is such a thing as righteous reigning and ruling on earth. Our Queen is our rightful sovereign, and, permit me so to express myself, the men in authority over us are in their proper places, but all authority, power and dominion shall be put down, and one kingdom, one King, and one throne only shall appear, and stand for ever, and be surrounded by the subjects of God's grace. That King, that kingdom, that throne, and the millions that are loved with an everlasting love, and are bought with the precious blood of Jesus, and constituted the temples of God the Holy Ghost, are God's, "who shall be all in all."

What is the origin of the kingdom of God? Why, God Himself is its Author: it originated in the mind and bosom of Deity. The whole of it was foreknown and fore-ordained, all its subjects were perfectly and universally known by its great Proprietor and Ruler. This kingdom is gradually and progressively coming into actual existence, as it was originally conceived in the mighty mind of the great God. All the thoughts of His mind and the love of His heart are being really and truly actualised as time progresses, as generations rise and depart, as devils tempt, and as angels watch over the people of God; and as Jesus upon His throne, works and applies His word here, there, and yonder. His eternal thought comes up

into fulfilment gradually and progressively as time advances. This is the origin of the kingdom. Then for the establishment of it in the world. It arises out of love, and it is founded on the blood of the covenant, even the precious blood of Jesus Christ. He came to lay its foundation, yea, He is the foundation itself. It is a mediatorial kingdom, being based on the mediation of Christ, which is inseparable from it; for to separate mediation from this kingdom would be to remove its foundation. The whole would collapse, fall and disappear, if Christ could be removed from it; for the kingdom of God is based upon His dear Son. "What shall one then, answer the messengers or ambassadors of the nation?" said the children of Israel, when they come and see us in such confusion and surrounded by hosts of soldiers, and having thousands of beings hostile to us, and being hated by all the world? Why, tell them that "the Lord hath founded Zion," notwithstanding the troubles that surround her, "and the poor of His people shall betake themselves unto it." In the infinite mind of God, the grand plan of the kingdom was formed, and the dear Redeemer putting away sin, and harmonising the perfections of God, the kingdom was established. And where is its seat? Vitally, it is in the heart, locally it is in the world. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." And we have it here in this little island home of ours among the nations of the Gentiles. But the kingdom of God is within you. It is not only near to us, visible to us, it is in contact with, yea, in vital connection with us. If there is nothing of grace in us here, we are not subjects of the Lord Jesus Christ, for the kingdom of God is in the heart.

What is the extent of this kingdom? I do not know. We are told, however, that when God's operations are completed, a number shall appear before His throne which no man can number. It appears to me that notwithstanding the restricted and limited views which some people seem to take, God's kingdom will be the largest, as it will be the best, the richest, and the noblest and the most glorious of all kingdoms. The kingdom of God will be the greatest of kingdoms, for in all things Christ shall have the pre-eminence. I will not speculate as to whether there will be more sheep on the right hand than goats on the left, nor as to the number of the subjects of this kingdom:

"Saviour, if of Zion's city,  
I through grace a member am,  
Let the world deride or pity,  
I will glory in Thy name."

And then with regard to its duration. How long will it stand? Well, it will stand till all other kingdoms disappear; it will stand till the end of time; it will stand when the heavens are opened to receive the millions of God's people, and it will endure in heaven as long as God Himself endures, for Christ will be a King and will have subjects for ever. He will sway His sceptre and wear His crown for ever and He will for ever have happy worshippers before His throne. The kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and the dominion of grace shall never, never end.

"Grace, till the tribes redeemed by blood,  
Are brought to know themselves and God,  
Her empire shall maintain,

To call when He appoints the day,  
And from the mighty take the prey,  
Shall grace triumphant reign."

"The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." I might just say here, that I believe this kingdom is an aggressive one. Infinite benevolence is associated with it ; but whilst it is here, it is in a militant condition. It is by means of His kingdom on the earth that God is spreading abroad the knowledge of Himself. Some of you are aware that I am officially connected with a little Society, called the Strict Baptist Mission, which has stations in India and Ceylon, in which the ordinances of God's house are observed, and the truth of Jesus Christ is preached ; and when I think that Christians are disseminating the word and endeavouring to spread abroad a knowledge of the plan of salvation and of the Saviour's name and that God is blessing these efforts, I see an illustration of this fact, that the kingdom of God is aggressive. The Word of God is in this kingdom, and His grace is seated there for it is the creation of His grace and the exponent of His eternal truth. The grace that has made us what we are should evermore appear in our character, our course, and our conversation ; for in bringing the kingdom of God into the world, and giving it a visible existence here, grace has appeared to all men, as to its power and effects. If you want proofs of the grace of God, look at God's kingdom in this hostile world. If you want proofs of its sovereignty, look at a saint going home to heaven, against wind and tide, being carried along by an unseen influence which enables him to persevere in a course of holiness against himself, and the world, and the devil. The perseverance of a saint proclaims the sovereignty of grace and the nature of true religion.

Let me now notice a few things in connection with *the power of the kingdom*. First the Author of this power. The Apostle puts it negatively and positively. It is not in word, but in power. Not in the word or words of any creature, angels, great men, ministers of the gospel, nor the Apostle Paul himself ; for he says "I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase." If the Apostle Paul could do nothing more than sow the seed, and could not cause it to grow, what should be said of myself and other ordinary ministers of the Gospel ? Not in word ; and yet the Apostle's words, were righteous, scriptural, and forcible ; they fell from sanctified lips, and expressed the faith and feelings of a sanctified heart ; but the kingdom of God is not in word, but in the power of God. Look at creature power. We have political, civil, and intellectual power ; but these powers can never vitally christianize an immortal mind. We have many Christians who are made so by words, or by a few drops of water sprinkled upon the faces of little helpless and unconscious babes, which are said to constitute them Christians ! That, however, is not how God makes Christians, not how grace gets her subjects ; for the kingdom of God is neither in word, nor in human or any creature power. The power of eloquence is great, and an eloquent preacher brings together hundreds, perhaps thousands of hearers ; and religion is so superficial in these days, that the thousands who surround him, are in the opinion of the public, the sons and daughters of God. May it not be said (and I

am not bitter) that in a very great measure the faith of many such persons "stands in the wisdom of men, and not in the power of God?" Let the eloquence of the preacher leave him, or let the eloquent preacher leave the congregation, and it will as a rule melt away as snow melts before the sun. Salvation by grace is not in word but in power, and its author is God Himself. And He continues to work without weariness. Under shepherds are weary, tired and get worn out, and all human power becomes exhausted; but God goes on working without weariness, for He "fainteth not, neither is weary; there is no searching of His understanding." The mother says, especially if she has twins and brings them up herself, "I am faint," and well she may, having two strong children sucking her breasts from day to day. She is faint and weary. God's breasts of consolation, however, are sucked by millions of His people, but "He fainteth not neither is weary." His breasts are always full, His arm is always at strong, His fullness is always the same, and He fainteth not. "I will work, and who shall let it?" What a blessing it is to be interested in a God whose arm never aches, whose eye is never dim, whose supplies can never fail, whose love can never change, whose ear can never become heavy, and whose watchfulness is incessant, divine, and perfect like Himself! The kingdom of God is in Divine power. It is a new creating power. It was a marvellous act by which matter was brought into existence, and various shapes and forms were given to it, and which vitalized the creatures made. God completed His work in six days, and reviewing the whole He was satisfied and pleased, for it was good. Now, there is another act of power in progress by which the new creation of God is gradually coming into existence. God brought the old creation into existence in six days, and He is now proceeding with His new creating work, and will not finish it until the last day, when the bodies of His people shall be raised and reunited to their spirits, and the heavens shall be filled with the subjects of His grace. Was the whole creation satisfactorily completed when it was finished? He will complete His new creation, and be infinitely pleased and delighted then with His work.

"When God makes up His last account,  
Of natives in His holy mount;  
'Twill be an honour to appear  
As one new-born and nourished there."

May you and I be found in the kingdom of God as the subjects of His grace.

Thirdly, *the nature of this power*. If God is its Author, it is Divine, you say. Well, just one or two thoughts here. If God is the source of this power, it is sovereign; or if you like it in another form, it is Divine power sovereignly displayed, as to places and persons. There are dark corners in the world, and even in this land of ours, notwithstanding that it is called a Christian country. I have some villages in my thoughts now, in which there are churches and preachers, and large incomes, where the parishioners are without knowledge, and I grieve over it. Many years ago I laboured not far from the places I am now alluding to, and the people were, and still are, as to divine and eternal things, almost as ignorant as Hottentots, not knowing their right hand from their left, as

to the character and government of God. God is a Sovereign, and does not always send a flood of gospel light all over the world. How is it that when one stands up in His name to preach the Gospel, God does not call every hearer under the word? I do not know. He puts His fear into this heart, and that, and the other, and He giveth no account of any of His matters. And then you sometimes come to the house of God dejected and depressed, and go away in the same state; and another time you come depressed and faint, and cast down, and you get a blessing. How is it you are not always blessed, and always fare and feel alike? Oh the kingdom of God is not in word, but in the power of God, which He displays as He pleases. If God will help me, I can preach a little; but I have no power to apply the Word; for if I had, I love the Word and your souls so well, that I would always lay the promises on your hearts, and give you the grace of the Word. I would always sweep away all your doubts and fears, and break your unbelief, and give you faith; but power belongeth unto God, and His kingdom is not in word, but in power, which is sovereign in its operations. And then is it not irresistible power? It is said that we resist the grace and Spirit of God. Well then, if we admit the word "resist," let us follow it by another—"frustrate;" if we resist, can we frustrate the will and defeat the purposes of God? You walk in the field, or in the road, and a hundred ants crawl upon your boot, all possessing stings. You take your handkerchief, and wipe the little resisting things away, and do not feel their resistance. The sinner resists God's grace, and the poor lost rebel resists His power. And does God stop because He is resisted? Does power divine hesitate or falter, because the rebel means, if possible, to continue in rebellion? God says, "I will work;" and He takes the heart, and turns it, I had almost said, inside out; and, according to the good pleasure of His will, He discovers the guilty sinner to himself, who then says, "God, be merciful to me a sinner." The kingdom is in divine, sovereign, irresistible power. I should like, however, to say, since we are living in stirring times, that this power is silent in its operations. You know what I mean. People in the present day appear to me to have an idea that there is no religion without noise and show; hence we have pipes, and fiddles, and drums, and banners, and I don't know what, as if true religion and the kingdom of grace consisted in noise, and pomp, and show. But "the kingdom of God cometh not with observation." Paul was in the city of Corinth; and God said, "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace, and no man shall set upon thee, to hurt thee; for I have much people in this city." Ordinary observers would not have thought that God had much people there; but Paul preached, and God applied the Word that was spoken, without the use of banners and musical instruments. God does not require them; they are altogether foreign to the simplicity of the Gospel, and the salvation of heaven; for the kingdom of God cometh not with observation, but with a power which nobody sees, for its operations are silent and internal. The power is represented as being the power of life. You cast a grain of wheat into the ground, and if the vital principle be good and perfect, the influences of nature being favourable, it will take root downwards, and spring upwards, and though the first little blade be so tender that you could



scarcely take it between your finger and thumb without injuring it, yet notwithstanding its softness and tenderness it will force its way through the hard soil towards the sun, which influences it, though a weight of soil lies upon it, for there is wonderful power in life. It is neither a mechanical power nor a dead weight, but a vital power which grows. The power of the Spirit is compared to fire, which warms, consumes, and melts; to wind, which is sovereign and irresistible, and to oil, which dropped upon the soul silently permeates the mind, and sanctifies its recipient.

*The operation of this power.* Take this one thought. It is a transforming power; it changes the sinner towards God, but not God towards the sinner. Repentance is a change, but not a change in God towards the penitent. This power of God changes the sinner towards God, towards the Bible, towards the church, towards the world, towards sin, towards the devil, towards the saints, and towards heaven. It transforms him in all these respects. It finds him hating God; it leaves him loving Him, or desiring to do so. It finds him at a distance from God; it brings him near. It finds him neglecting the Bible, it leaves him a prayerful Bible student; it finds him sneering at the saints, and persecuting them, it leaves him singing—

“With them numbered may I be,  
Now and through eternity.”

It finds him loving sin, it leaves him hating it, and loving holiness. Yes, the power of God, in which this kingdom stands is a transforming power. And then as to one's experience of this power, how blessed it is to receive pardon from God, and to be led into liberty by God the Spirit! to receive an application of atoning blood, and of the promises. Have you not sometimes been in the house of God, overflowing with holy feeling, your eyes and your hearts, and your mouths being filled, when the last hymn was sung? Oh there is a secret joy connected with God's reign of grace in the heart, a secret power which cannot be resisted, which melts the soul, fills the eye, makes the man stronger than his enemies, and carries him out of and beyond himself. Yes—

“The hill of Zion yields  
A thousand sacred sweets,  
Before we reach the heavenly fields,  
Or walk the golden streets.”

The kingdom of God is in power, and not in word. The medium through which this power is communicated is the Word of God. You know efficiency is never owing to the adaptability or excellence of the instrument. The pen on your desk may be a perfect one, but it requires a hand to use it, and the writing then will not be good, notwithstanding the excellence of the pen, unless the agent be a good writer. Efficiency is always owing to the agent, and not to the instrument. Bad work may be done with a good instrument, and good work may be done with an indifferent one; but when the instrument and the agent are both perfect, the work will surely be satisfactory. The instrument is the Gospel, the Agent is the God of the Gospel, and when God uses His own Word by His own hand a wondrous change is effected, a change that is worthy of Himself, and over which angels rejoice and sing. “The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.” The Lord add His blessing, for Christ's sake. Amen.

# THE RIGHT HOPE.

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## A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,  
AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,  
ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, 2nd MAY, 1886.

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*"And hope maketh not ashamed."* Romans v. 5.

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THIS is one of the most comprehensive chapters in the Word of God ; an epitome of the glorious gospel or of the covenant of grace. It is impossible to over-estimate the glorious doctrine of justification by faith. A very important question occurs in the Scriptures, "How can man be justified with God ? or, how can he be clean that is born of a woman ?" Yet God justifies the ungodly, and He is just in doing so. His glory is not tarnished, and none of His attributes and perfections are concealed ; but the whole of His character stands out most gloriously in the justification of sinners. The chapter opens with the word "therefore," which directs our attention to what the Apostle had previously written. The last verse of the preceding chapter reads thus :—"Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." Surely this is the very marrow of the gospel, and the very spirit of the new covenant. Jesus Christ, who was delivered to death, was the Son of God. All the brightness, greatness, and glory of the Godhead are in Him ; therefore all the perfections of Jehovah are inseparable from His great sacrifice, so that their is more in the sufferings of Christ to put away sin, than there is in sin itself to put away the sinner ; and we sing of the blood of our Lord :

"It rises high and drowns the hills,  
Has neither shore nor bound ;  
Now if we search to find our sins,  
Our sins can ne'er be found."

It is the Spirit's work to glorify the Son of God, the dear Redeemer, in the heart, by exalting His person and His precious blood above all the sin, iniquity, and guilt of the sinner. Yes, the Son of God was delivered to death for our offences ; and as He did not die in vain, but fulfilled the great purpose which He came to accomplish, He returned to heaven with those honours which He gloriously and justly won for Himself. "He was raised again for our justification." It is perhaps impossible to say which of the two branches of eternal salvation is the more important ; the death of Christ, or His resurrection from the dead. Our great Lord died to put away sin, and it was put away when He said, "It is finished !" but He was afterwards buried. He is risen, however, from the dead, and is seated at His Father's right hand, and all His people are risen with Him ; and if He, as the Head of the church, is justified, they are justified in Him, and for His sake. Therefore, says the Apostle ; "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." Oh the blessedness of standing before God clothed with the righteousness of His Son, having received it by faith ; and how happy are they who can

say for themselves, He loved us, and gave Himself for us. It is a great thing to be all right, to stand before the throne of God without fault, and to be passed on for eternity, and for heaven itself, by the infinitely holy Jehovah. If, my brother, you are clothed with the righteousness of the Saviour, you are for ever justified, and in that respect, you are before God all perfect and complete; for "ye are complete in Him." Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God. What a privilege is this peace, not only on the earth, and in our hearts, but in heaven also. Peace with God Himself, being in harmony with all His perfections. We are rather prone, I imagine, in contemplating this subject to feel that we and mercy only are bound together. My dear friends, if we are justified ones, we have peace with God's justice, and righteousness, and holiness also. We do not more deeply adore and reverence divine mercy, than we reverence divine equity and truth. All the attributes of God concur and for ever agree in our salvation, and they all appear in everlasting harmony in the formation of our character, and in our eternal inheritance of a better world. Hence we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Not only so, the Apostle says, "By Him also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand." Wonderful arrangement! and glorious indeed is the plan of salvation. The righteousness of Jesus is put upon the sinner, who now appears before the Lord who wrought it out. And the Saviour introduces him into the presence of His Father, and our Father, who accepts him therein, and for the sake of that High Priest who introduces him into His presence. "We have access into this grace wherein we stand," as righteous persons, as individuals who are free from guilt and condemnation, "and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." And such is the influence of the grace of justification upon the heart of the justified one, that the Apostle proceeds to say: "We glory in the tribulation also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience." Glorifying in grace, and in the Lord Jesus Christ, is something that we can understand; but where is the man that can glory in tribulation? He that can say for himself, "I am justified by faith in Christ, and the love of God is shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto me;" can say also, "I glory in tribulation, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed." Having preached from the latter part of this verse, I have not read the whole of it for my text this morning. Let us for a few minutes look at this portion, and try to express a few thoughts and feelings upon it. "And hope maketh not ashamed."

I should like, in the first place, to try to show you *what the believer's hope implies*. I desire to dwell upon the nature and operations of this grace this morning, because we are living in a day when some very strange things are said concerning the hope of God's people. Well, what does the believer's hope imply? It implies this fact among others, *that more has been promised than we have yet received*. So long as promises remain unfulfilled, the believer will be in a hoping condition. This is important, because there are persons, and their number is considerable, who wish to be thought very good people; and doubtless some, or many of them are so, who have some strange notions concerning the hope of God's children. They ask how you are getting on in relation to the things of God, and if in the simplicity of your minds, you answer that you hope you are

right, or that you are the Lord's, or that you are a saved sinner ; they stop you very suddenly, as if they were half-angry with you, with, "*Hope ! hope !* have you not yet got beyond hope ?" You are a professor, and have been one for many years, and you ought to be able to express yourself now more confidently. Well, my dear friends, I love the grace of hope and its operations in my heart, and I find that the Holy Spirit in the Word has been pleased to honour that grace ; and therefore I cannot speak contemptuously of it, nor of any person you says in the simplicity of his heart, "I hope that my soul is right in God's sight." Now let us look at this point for a few minutes. The promises of God are numerous and great, and such is their nature, that very many of them cannot be perfectly fulfilled unto us in this world. Since the promises are revealed and recorded in the Bible, and cannot be perfectly fulfilled unto us here, we must be the subjects of hope, looking into the future, and expecting something more than we already possess. The promises of God go right into the future ; they go into death, and pass quite through its valley, and enter into heaven itself, and cover all eternity. So long as there are unfulfilled promises, believers will look and hope for the promised good. The child of God cannot in the nature of things be satisfied on the earth. This is not his rest. The Lord did not create this world to be the home and the resting-place of His dear people. I do not think that our God will ever do anything to, or in the world for the purpose of constituting it the final home of His family. "Where I am, there shall ye be also." Well, Christ is at the Father's right hand, He is in that better country. "This day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." Our Lord, therefore, is in paradise, the perfect and unloseable garden of Eden, in the kingdom of eternal bliss and glory ; and where He is, there His people must be also. If this world is not their home, if it is not to be their final resting-place, if they cannot possibly find all they require here, the grace of hope in the heart is given for the purpose of keeping them, as it were, on the look-out. They are sending their thoughts and expectations into the future, into that rest which is prepared for them in heaven, and which remains for the people of God. The strongest saint, and the most vigorous believer that has ever lived, was imperfect, and the most fruitful believer now on the earth is so also ; and so long as there is a sense of imperfection, there will and must be hope. If we were brimful, and could hold no more, we should cease to hope. If we were perfectly satisfied, and required nothing more, then we should cease to hope ; but although we have something in hand, we are not yet in possession of all that God has promised. Although we are saved sinners, we are not yet perfect. Therefore we are saved by hope, which maketh not ashamed. No, the child of God cannot be satisfied with his present attainments. Those persons to whom I have referred have not got beyond hope themselves, or if they have, they are living presumptuously. A humble hope in God is better than a whole heap of fleshly hollow confidence and presumption. I do not want, so long as I am here, to get beyond a good hope. I hope for help, and help comes ; and I shall hope on, and on, until I am helped for the last time, which will be in death, and then I shall enter into the hoped for bliss and glory. My hope will then expire in full fruition, and I shall look forward with expectation no more. We are saved by hope which maketh not ashamed. Is it not thus with you ? Am I not giving ex-

pression in a humble manner to your thoughts, and feelings, and experience? Can the child of God while he is here, and the subject of indwelling sin, be in a position in which it may be correctly said of him, that he is beyond hope. So long as there is sin in us, we shall hope for the time when it will be removed. So long as we are conscious of imperfection, we shall hope for that period when we shall be made perfect. So long as we are not perfectly like the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall hope for that change when we shall see Him as He is, and be for ever with and like Him. The hope of the child of God implies the fact, that he is not yet satisfied, that he needs more, that God has promised to give him more than he has yet received, and that he is to be what he never yet has been. For,—

“It doth not yet appear  
How great we must be made;  
But when we see our Saviour here,  
We shall like our Head,”

Again; the believer's hope *implies righteousness on the one hand, and spiritual relationship on the other*. It implies righteousness. What is before and behind the child of God? His sin, his guilt, his transgression? Then he cannot hope. If sin has not been put away, if guilt has not been expiated, if God, in relation to transgression, has not been atoned, then there is no ground whatever for a sinner to hope for God and for heaven. But what is really behind and before the child of God? The atonement of the Saviour. His well done and finished work. Then he may and will hope. If sin has been carried out, and righteousness brought in, if the offence has disappeared, and that which is infinitely pleasing to God has taken its place, then one says, who can tell? I am a guilty sinner, but I venture to hope that God will have mercy on me. He can be merciful to sinners without injuring Himself, or dimming His character and glory; and since he can show mercy to the guilty, I will hope for mercy, and

“I'll go to Jesus, though my sins  
Have like a mountain rose;  
I know His courts, I'll enter in,  
Whatever may oppose.”

Well, here is the atonement, trembling sinner, and you who have recently been convinced of sin may cast yourself upon it. The Lord help you to build your hopes for pardon and for heaven, upon the precious blood and glorious righteousness of God's dear Son. But I said, there must be righteousness on the one hand, and relationship on the other, before there can be true comfort in connection with our hope. Where are you, and what are you doing? You are resting upon the atonement of Jesus. But what are you hoping for? Heaven, the inheritance? The heavenly inheritance goes to the heirs of God, even the joint-heirs with Christ; all these heirs are God's sons and daughters. If you are His child, hope for the heavenly inheritance; but if you are not spiritually related to Him, there is no ground whatever upon which you may hope for heaven. “Ah sir, Jesus died for me, and I stand there! The Holy Ghost bears witness with my heart, not only that Jesus died for me, but that I am a son of God, and joint-heir with Jesus Christ.” Then, hope for all God has promised, and for all He has prepared. In the first place, your guilt has been expiated, and God will never curse you. In the second place, you

stand related to God as a son or a daughter, and He will for ever bless you. Such a hope maketh not ashamed. Again, this hope *implies faithfulness and fulness on the part of God*. Suppose God should alter His mind? If that were possible, our hope would shake and give way. If His nature and love could change, we could not confidently hope; but He is in one mind, and none can turn Him. He loves with an everlasting love, and will never cease to be our Father, and we shall always be His children. He is the ever faithful God, and here you may build your hopes. But you are hoping for so much; yes, but not for more than there is in God. He is faithful to His promises, and faithful to His children; and He has not surpassed or gone beyond His fulness with His promises. They are large, but His resources are infinite, and therefore we hope for great things, and for the best, even for the best world, and the richest bliss and joy, all of which shall be everlasting. "And hope maketh not ashamed." I have made these observations on this point for the purpose of attempting to comfort the little ones in the family of heaven. Do not be cast down, my brethren, if you meet some of those strong and gigantic Christians who are always on the mount, always above doubt and fear, and who have got beyond hope. If you meet them, and they condemn you for your hope, do not be dejected. Look at the great man David. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? *Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance and my God.*" Yes, we rejoice in hope of the glory to God. We have not yet received all; we have much in hand, and much in possession, but there is more in hope and in the future. Hope, therefore, for the perfect fulfilment of the whole Bible; for this grace must abide and prevail until the whole volume of heaven is divinely fulfilled. So much for the implication which the existence of a good hope carries with it.

In the second place, let us say a word or two upon *the nature of this hope*. The germ of it comes into the heart in regeneration or the new birth, and it is inseparable from that principle of divine life, the possession of which constitutes one a Christian. The new birth is a perfect birth. The infant, notwithstanding its smallness, is perfect, and possesses all its parts and members at once. Development and growth will follow the birth. Its little arms and legs will become larger. And as it is in nature, so it is in grace in this respect. The new-born child of God is perfect as to his nature and parts, though not as to his strength and development. Therefore when the new birth has taken place, the germ of hope, and faith, and love, and patience, and joy, is in the heart. These graces are all latent, if I may so speak, in the principle of grace which the Holy Ghost at first communicates to the soul, and circumstances and facts will, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, develop them. A new-born child of God sees and feels he is a guilty sinner, and a sense of guilt makes way for hope; and in proportion as the character and nature of sin are felt, hope, is intensified, and as God reveals His mercy in harmony with His justice, faith rises high, and the soul becomes hopeful and sings,—

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

“But if I die with mercy sought,  
 When I the King have tried,  
 That were to die—delightful thought!  
 As sinner never died.”

And therefore, if I perish I will perish at the feet of Christ; if I die, I will die in His presence; and if I am cast into hell, I will humbly hope until the last. Delightful thought! no sinner with this hope was ever lost. This is the nature of this hope. But I want to tarry a moment or two on a point which I feel is important, viz., that *this hope is sure and steadfast*. I have reached the conclusion that this is the only hope in the universe, so far as we know what is in the universe, that is absolutely sure and certain. When I speak of the believer's hope, I do not refer to something uncertain, but to that which can never be lost. There is no room for doubt as to the final fruition of the believer's hope, and I am speaking solemnly; the believer must sooner or later possess, as the Lord liveth, all that God teaches his heart to hope for. Our God is the God of hope, and it is not like Him to induce a heart to hope for that which He does not absolutely intend to give. It is not like Him to bring us to expect blessings which we shall never receive. It is not like Him to create a desire and then to quench it; for “He shall fulfil the desire of them that fear Him.” It is sure and certain. What other hope is so? “I hope I shall live and see certain things.” But you are not sure that you will live to see them, for life is uncertain. You hope for health and strength, but you are not sure of them. You hope when you commence a journey that you will reach your destination, whether it be by land or sea; but that is uncertain, for you may die before the end is reached: you may, and you may not. These are words which will not apply to the believer's hope. One is going to Australia, the captain of the vessel is an experienced man, the vessel is said to be a faultless one, and there seems to be no human reason why Australia should not be reached. The voyage is commenced, and hope fills the breast; but it is an uncertain one. Now look at the believer, the child of God, in whose heart there is a heavenly hope. Grace has turned him, and hell and the world are behind him, and heaven and glory are before him. May there not be some failure? No. May there not be some disappointment? Certainly not. God has started him for heaven, and heaven must be reached, for his hope is sure and steadfast. God has set him in the way, and given him to hope for grace until the end of the journey, and has said to him, “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee, until I have done that good thing which I have spoken to thee of.” Walk on, my brother, and let us travel together. The way is straight and safe, and our Leader is infallible, and perpetually with us, while the hope He has given us is inseparably connected with God's honour. Nothing can quench it, nothing can disappoint it, for it is the hope mentioned in my text; it maketh not ashamed, but is sure and steadfast. “But all hopes are not uncertain, are they?” Yes, all are. You have a dear brother, on whose love and resources you are resting important hopes. Have you never known brothers to become helpless or treacherous? Ah, but there is the wife or the husband, and we may confidently hope in such relations. But have you never heard of a husband or a wife, after living in peace and pleasure a number of years, becoming changed? There is no absolute certainty, no absolute fixedness connected with any hope, but that which

is heavenly and Divine. Yet natural hope is a pleasure, and we could not live without it. The world would be dark and miserable indeed, if it were a hopeless world; yet the hopes of the world are all of them, more or less, uncertain, unfixed, and unsteady. This is the only hope that maketh not ashamed. I had some important hopes a few years ago, but I have lost them; I will not tell you what they related to, but they were strong, and I felt as sure and certain about them as any person can feel about earthly matters. Disappointment has taken place. Oh! hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance and my God. First, then the implication which hope carries with it, and secondly, the nature of this hope.

Thirdly, *the objects of it*. The objects of hope are unseen as we read at the commencement of the service this morning. "For hope that is seen is not hope, for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? If we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." The hope of a believer goes through clouds, and beyond death, and the grave, and time. In the nature of things, the believer's hope must get into some bright place, and it remains on the wing until some fixed point is reached, or some desirable position appears. Hope cannot sit quietly and calmly in the midst of darkness and danger. One may be in these circumstances, but hope goes forward into the future; through the fog, and the cloud, and time, and out of this world into heaven, and rests in God, the invisible Jehovah. Guided by His word and directed by His Spirit, hope finds God and rests in Him. Faith believes the Word, and hope stands upon the threshold and looks out for the fulfilment of it. The soul sends its expectation forward into heaven, and into the future, beyond impossibilities and possibilities, into the omnipotence of God, and says, "I shall yet praise Him."

Fourthly, *the influence of hope upon its possessor*. Now you know, the object of hope is always desirable and attractive. We may expect evil, but we cannot hope for it. Hope longs for that which is good, excellent, valuable, necessary, precious; and this hope has an influence upon its possessor. In proportion as the attractions of the objects of hope are great and powerful, the heart is drawn towards them. God in Christ, is the object of hope and heaven; and heavenly glory are the objects of our hope. Christ draws hope; for souls are neither driven nor dragged to God. "Draw me: we will run after Thee." The beauties of the Saviour, and the attractions of heaven draw and influence our spirits. Then the very spirit and character of the object of hope are impressed upon hope itself. I beg your attention to this point, which I trust I have clearly put before you. Hope imbibes the spirit of its object, is impressed with it. If the object of hope is something earthly, the hope is an earthly one, and if something sinful and vile, the hope is an impure one. Thus if Christ is the object of hope, He is stamped upon the hope itself; and hence "every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as He is pure." As the object of the believer's hope is a pure Christ, so the person that hopes in Christ would be perfectly holy, and he is hoping for the period when all his impurity and imperfections will be lost, and he will be for ever like his Lord. Do not think that a hope so much Divine, so good, and so excellent, can be unclean or impure. Imperfect it is as to its operations and influence; but



it is a pure hope, like its object, Jesus Christ. He who possesses it is not a perfectly pure character ; but the grace itself, like its Author and object, is holy.

I thought I would say in the fifth place, a word or two, if time permitted, on *the final fruition of this hope*. It must be swallowed up, absorbed, and lost in perfect and full fruition ; but I cannot now attempt to go into that subject. The last point is that which is so prominent in the text, viz., the fact itself, " Hope maketh not ashamed." Adam was ashamed when he fell, in the garden of Eden. Jesus Christ, however, was not ashamed, though He gave Himself up to shame and ignominy ; and he who hopes in the suffering dying and risen Saviour shall never be ashamed. The believer can never be ashamed of the foundation of his hope, who is Christ ; nor of the object of his hope, who is God ; nor of the company which hope carries him into, which is good company ; nor of the loss which his hope may involve him in.

" For why should I complain  
Of want or distress,  
Temptation or pain,  
He told me no less."

" Blessed are they that are persecuted for My name sake." Paul says, " I am not ashamed of the gospel." Though I am a prisoner, I am not ashamed of this chain, for I wear it for Christ's sake. No, this hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in the soul. And not ashamed of its fruition at last. My brother, the believer's hope is not greater than its object, and hence he will never be ashamed. You and I often hope as creatures for more than we get. Our hope is larger than the object when it is obtained. But our God is the object of this hope, and He infinitely exceeds the hope He gives. Methinks when we get to heaven we shall be constrained to say with the Queen of Sheba : I heard of Thy glory in my own land, and believed it not ; but now I see it all with my own eyes, behold, the half of it was not told me. " Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think." Brethren, we shall be surprised when we get to heaven. We believe a little that heaven is a wonderful world, and that Christ is a wonderful person, and that the pleasures and glories of Jerusalem above are truly great, but when we see heaven, and our Lord and enter into that bliss, perhaps we shall feel, as I said just now, that we did not half-believe it, nor half hope for it, and that the half of what God has provided for us was never told us. The Lord command His blessing, for Christ's sake. Amen.

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# THE CONVERSION OF SINNERS, THE JOY OF THE CHURCH.

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## A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, 6th JULY, 1884.

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*"And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles; and they caused great joy unto all the brethren."*—Acts xv. 3.

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IN connection with the text which I have read this morning, we are informed that Paul and Barnabas were sent to Jerusalem, in consequence of a vexatious question which had arisen in the church in the city of Antioch. The devil is ever busy, and a false Gospel is always introduced wherever God is pleased to send the true Gospel of His grace. If God will have a true church, the devil will have a false one; and if God will have ministers of the truth to preach His word, the devil will sometimes transform himself into an angel of light, and become a preacher too; for the devil can preach, and does so whenever he is permitted. Well, Satan got into the church of Christ at Antioch, through a number of Pharisees who said, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." And this spirit is still in existence, it originated very early, and ever mixes up law and gospel, duty and faith, and works and faith. This occurrence, we are told, caused no small dissension and disputation, and the church "determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain other of them should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question;" and being brought on their way by the church—I suppose the meaning of this is, that the church at Antioch furnished them with means,—they passed through Phenice and Samaria. They had to do so in travelling from Antioch to Jerusalem; but in going through these two places, they would visit the Christian churches which existed in them both. You remember that our Lord preached the word in Samaria, and the woman at the well of Samaria was in all probability at this time a member of the church in this place. A number of men followed the woman at the well, and they believed and said, "Now we believe, not because of thy saying; for we have heard Him ourselves;" and therefore we have reason to suppose that a considerable church had been formed in the city of Samaria. And then with regard to Phenice, history informs us that Christian churches existed in that place until the sixth or seventh century. Well, at this period of time those churches were comparatively pure, and Paul and Barnabas passed through, "declaring the conversion of the Gentiles; and they caused great joy unto all the brethren."

Having thus arrived at the text, let us make some observations on a few important points which appear to me to arise out of it. *In the first place, the conversion of sinners is a matter of joy on Christ's account.* They caused great joy unto all the brethren by declaring the conversion of the Gentiles. And what was it that led them to rejoice in the fact that Gentile sinners had been called by grace and saved with an everlasting salvation? They rejoiced, I say, in the first place, on Christ's account. We must have Christ everywhere in the church, everywhere in the Christian ministry, and in the ordinances of His house; for He is "all and in all." That organization is not a Christian church, if Christ is not there; and that sermon is not a gospel sermon if Jesus is not in it; and that heart is not a Christian heart, whatever its pretensions and profession may be, if Christ has not been formed there, the hope of eternal glory. The disciples at Phenice and Samaria rejoiced at the conversion of the Gentiles, on the Saviour's account. There is something to our minds as Christians and saved sinners exceedingly sweet in the fact that our dear Lord is in heaven; that He is seated as the Lamb in the midst of the throne; that He is at the Father's right hand, at the right hand of majesty and power; and that there are unceasingly flowing from His glorious person and His boundless resources, streams of Divine grace and mercy for poor, lost, and ruined sinners here. Try to realize the fact that there is never a moment but grace is descending from the Lord; for He has thousands of saints down here, as well as millions of happy glorified spirits before His throne; and every glorified mind there would cease to be happy, if influences failed to emanate from their Lord. Every saint down here would cease to be a saint, if grace Divine ceased to flow from our great and glorious Emanuel; and as for the work of conversion, whether it takes place in the Sabbath-school, or in the ordinary congregation, or whilst one is reading the word, or owing to a letter one has received,—the hearts of sinners would never be savingly affected or influenced, if grace did not descend from the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven; and, therefore, when a sinner is smitten, and falls before God beneath the blow—for this is how we must be saved, salvation does not consist in gliding into a public profession of religion,—the church praises God. When the sinner falls beneath the hand, and at the feet of Him that smote him, and this becomes known to ministers and deacons and members of a Christian church, there is joy, and there are expressions of thankfulness to the God of heaven and earth on Christ's own account. The conversion of a sinner is an evidence of the reign of Christ, and of the operations of Jesus; it is an evidence of the indwelling Spirit of God, and of the fact that something out of Christ has fallen upon the heart of that individual who is in the dust of self-abasement before the Lord. Oh I wish prayerfully, deeply, and with all my heart, that this great matter in connection with the religion of heaven, were insisted upon earnestly and strenuously by every man who professes to preach the gospel of God's grace. Religion is something more than notion, something must be known and felt; and as the Lord liveth—and I have said those words with some solemn feeling—you have nothing in your hearts for heaven, or for God, unless Christ, from His own inexhaust-

ible fulness and resources, has communicated a drop of grace to your minds; for this, and this only, is the religion of heaven. This, and this only, constitutes a meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light. "God be merciful to me a sinner," the penitent who never prayed before, is heard to say. All the saints of God rejoice for Christ's sake: another victory won, another captive rescued, and the prey taken out of the hands of the mighty. The influence of Christ's death is again felt, and owing to the pleading and intercession of the Saviour, the Holy Ghost has fallen from heaven once more, upon another poor, lost and ruined one; so that in that saved sinner we see another added to the family, another gem, another pearl, another jewel for the crown of Him who is King of kings, and Lord of lords. Christ sees, in such a person, of the travail of His soul, and is satisfied. Is it not said in the fifty-third of Isaiah, "He shall His seed"? He sees them before they are made manifest as His seed. He knows them before they know Him; but He shall see them born, He shall see them brought up, He shall see them educated and trained; He shall see them living in His service with pleasure, and satisfaction, and delight. He shall see them persevering in a course of holiness, He shall see them with the world under their feet, He shall see them finally with the devil himself under their feet; for "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." He shall see them conquer death, and pass victoriously through it; and He shall see them all arrive in that glory world, which God has prepared for His dear people. And is not this matter for joy? They declared to the saints at Phenice and Samaria, the conversion of the Gentiles, and they thereby caused great joy to the brethren in those places. Every conversion says, The Saviour lives. Every regeneration that takes place says, The Saviour reigns. Every poor soul that is rescued from the devil by an unseen, mysterious and powerful hand, proclaims the fact that Christ is a conqueror, that His conquests are progressing, and that He did not die in vain. Our dear Lord did not shed His blood fruitlessly, any more than He pleads and prays in heaven in vain. He shall see the purchase of His blood. He has rights which He will claim and maintain, and "He ever liveth to make intercession for all that come unto God by Him." On Christ's account, therefore, the Lord's people rejoice when the cause of God and truth is extended.

And then, in the second place, *they rejoice on account of the converts themselves*. Now let us tarry here. What is it that grace Divine does for the poor soul? It quickens it, and conveys a new life into it. I do not speak without thought, when I say, principles as holy in their nature as God, and as enduring as eternity, become rooted in the heart of the man who becomes a saved sinner. But may not these principles perish? May not the man or the woman who becomes a convert and is brought to the Lord Jesus Christ, sink into hell? If so, my dear friends, I do not think we should rejoice before we get to heaven. But Paul and Barnabas gave an account of the work of God in the conversion of sinners, and the saints in Phenice and Samaria, believing in the final perseverance of the saints, proceeded to rejoice at once. Had there been any uncertainty about their future heaven, their joy would have been premature, and

have ended in nothing. But "He which hath begun the good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ;" and the good people of Samaria and Phenice very confidently believed that these Gentiles that had been approaching the Saviour, would be held fast by Him for ever and ever. Therefore they rejoiced on account of the converts themselves. Grace quickens the heart, and its possessor is a new creature: for "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away, behold all things are become new." And the grace that comes into the heart of a sinner liberates him; and liberty is an unspeakable blessing, whether it be spiritual, political, religious, or social. Every sinner is by nature held fast by a power from which he has no desire and indeed cannot release himself; it is a fact that the world is in the arms of the wicked one, and there is only one Being in existence that can liberate them, or take them out of those arms, and that person is our great Lord. He does it by His Spirit. "Deliver to Me that captive, and let that prisoner go free." Satan is carrying the world down to hell, and the world lies calmly and comfortably in his hands. They love their tyrannical lord, and they love the reign of sin, and will not realize the awful nature of their condition until they reach the place where hope never cometh, unless grace divine should open their eyes, and bring them to see themselves as sinners. The dear Redeemer meets the devil, and He says concerning Saul of Tarsus, "He is Mine, I have redeemed him;" and Paul is as a firebrand plucked from the burning. He says, concerning Magdalene, "She is Mine: I have loved her with an everlasting love, and have engaged to take her to heaven, deliver her up," and Magdalene is snatched from the tyrant's hand. How wonderful was the operation of grace which took place in the heart of the thief! I can imagine that Satan felt sure of him, and also that there was but a step between him and hell, but at the eleventh hour the hand of Christ was stretched out, the thief was snatched as a brand from the burning; and angels rejoiced, and so did the suffering Saviour. A dead sinner made alive, a captive set for ever free. Now, what is to be done with him? Why, the grace that has made him alive and unbound him, exalts and dignifies him. It does not leave him in a state of degradation and disgrace. He is now honoured by being made a child of God openly; he is taken into a state of nearness to his heavenly Father, and he falls before his ransoming and liberating Lord, with—

"Pause, my soul, adore and wonder,  
Ask, oh why such love to me?  
Grace has put me in the number  
Of the Saviour's family."

Surely devils see in that person a new creature, angels see in that character a new creature. A transformation, marvellous and wonderful indeed, has taken place; he has a new heart, he is a new man in a new position, and when these facts are set forth, the people of God rejoice.

Sinners saved by grace are elevated and enriched; and how sweet it is to realize the blessedness of the words, "Things present, or things to come, all are your's; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." The people of God are thus immensely and immeasurably rich. God has

simplified matters wonderfully, having committed all things into the hand of His Son, and then He has given His Son, so that we have all things in Christ, and for Christ's sake. And the grace that fills the soul and liberates and dignifies it, ties it fast. The poet says:—

“Impossible, a humble child,  
That loves Thee with a flame so high,  
Should ever from Thy face exiled,  
Beyond the pity of Thine eye.  
Impossible! for Thine own hands,  
Have tied my heart so fast to Thee,  
And in Thy book the promise stands,  
That where Thou art Thy friends shall be.”

And every such person possesses a meetness for the inheritance of the kingdom of God, and it is no small mercy to have been fitted for heaven, prepared for a better world than this. Why, if I possess the grace of God, I possess a meetness for the inheritance that is up there; and if I should fall down suddenly, and die in the streets, no matter as far as I am concerned. It might shock my family, and friends, for there is something exceedingly solemn in sudden death; but, “absent from the body, present with the Lord.” If I possess God's grace, if Jesus is in my heart, I am in sympathy with heaven, my soul has been tied to the God of heaven, and I should die in the everlasting arms, and be safe, although I fell in the streets, and became immediately surrounded by a crowd, none of whom might know me. Oh how sweet it is to possess a meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light!

I have sometimes thought that God's dear people have the best of it in all respects, and under all circumstances. Why, he that is saved by God, is saved from this present evil world, and it is impossible for me to say how much degradation, disgrace, and misery, physical and social, the grace of God has saved me from. I know of certain individuals who are steeped in sin, taking a delight in it, gradually ruining themselves, blasting their character, and blighting all the pleasures of those that are near and dear to them; and they delight in it, and persist in such a course, rolling sin as a sweet morsel under their tongue. Oh to be brought out of that vile condition, and to hate it! Why, my dear friends, this not only constitutes a meetness for heaven, it gives dignity, a kind of present glory, to the child of God. I see a drunkard staggering in the street, and feel that I have not a stone to throw at him. I might say concerning him, There goes Hazelton, but for the grace of God. I see another individual whose means were ample, and he might have been socially happy and comfortable, but brought through sin into wretchedness, and poverty, and ruin; and I say again, There goes Hazelton, but for the grace of God. Oh, the disciples had abundant cause to be glad, when Paul and Barnabas told them that the Lord had saved Gentile sinners. We owe perhaps our health and strength, to the fact that we are saved. We owe our friends to the fact that we are interested in the Lord. And if we have a coat to wear, and some comforts at home, look at them all in connection with the goodness and the grace of the Lord.

Had it not been for grace, you might have been in degradation and disgrace, a burden to yourself, and to those that love you, a burden to society, and a pest to the world. Oh, how great is the salvation of our God! and so Paul says in his Epistle to Titus, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that.... we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." This present world is an evil one, morally considered; but there is a worse world than this; and the grace that saves from hell, saves from this present evil world, and it gives its possessor a meetness for a better place. Thus thinking of the converts themselves "caused great joy unto all the brethren."

Then in the third place, *they rejoiced on their own account*; and if you and I have proper and scriptural feelings in relation to this matter, we shall rejoice in the salvation of our fellow-men. I know I can do nothing efficiently towards saving sinners. I am like the apostle Paul and his brethren in this respect, I am nothing. And yet, having sown the seed of the kingdom, we should look to see it grow. "First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear;" and there are not many letters I receive more consoling, cheering, and helpful, than those which tell me that I have been made useful to my fellow-creatures. It does my heart good to receive a letter informing me that at such a place, and such a time, having taken such a text, the word of God was divinely blessed, received into the heart, the eyes were opened, and the sensibly guilty sinner felt himself in the presence of his Maker. I do not think a minister of the gospel, who has been called to preach the word, and whose heart is in the right place, will regard this department of his work with indifference. That man would be indeed foolish who never looked for results from his operations. In all common and ordinary matters results are expected, and by God's people they are prayed for: and I am looking for results; and if you are in sympathy with me, and you are, as a church and congregation, well then, I may say, *we* are looking for results; and we have been cheered and helped at our church-meetings, when friends have come forward and told us how God met with them, and saved them, and the workings of their minds passing under the law, and then the workings of their minds under the Gospel, and how God laid His hand upon them and drew them from under the dominion of sin. They felt that sin held fast their minds; how they longed for forgiveness, how they drank in the pardoning love of their God, when the precious blood of Jesus was first applied to their souls! You have looked at one another, and at that brother or sister as the case may be, and rejoiced, and that on your own account, as well as on theirs; for the love you felt was brotherly, and emanated from the love shed abroad in your own hearts. You knew what there was before that friend, because it was a portion of your own experience which was related. The honey which you have tasted, and the liberty you have enjoyed, it gives you pleasure to know that others have partaken of and been introduced into. The religion of heaven is diffusive, the child of God does not care to shut himself up within himself, to draw a circle, to step into it, and to resolve that he will never leave it. Oh no,

going to heaven myself, and occasionally happy on the road, I am so glad when another friend is brought in, and comes to me and asks the way to Zion with his face thitherward. They caused great joy to the brethren when they related what great things the Lord had done for the Gentiles. That good brother, who has just been called by grace, we shall meet in heaven, and the prospect is cheering and does us good. Ah! he does not yet know that he is going to heaven, but you and I know he is. We rejoice in his sorrow, we see him weeping, and he tells us a tale of suffering, and we rejoice. We thank God because his sorrow will lead to joy, and his suffering end in the possession of the peace of God which passeth all understanding.

And fourthly, *they rejoiced on account of the devil*; for is he not a tyrant, and is it not a matter of joy when he is defeated, and his works destroyed? If England were invaded, and an army came into this London of ours, or near to it, and bombarded it, and knocked half of it down, and threatened to destroy the country, would it not be matter of joy and pleasure to hear that some friendly power had appeared upon the scene, and opposed that foe and destroyed it? It would give all London joy, even though half of it had been blown down. It would give all England pleasure, and excite feelings of gratitude in the heart of every Englishman and Englishwoman. Hell is opposed to God and to God's church, and would overturn it if it could; but Zion's bulwarks are divine, and her foundation is a rock. But hell holds fast the souls of all men by nature. Have you heard of young friend So-and-so? Yes. Well, they tell me that he has become converted. He went to such a place, and heard a sermon, the Lord met with him, and applied the word, and he is altogether another creature. I am glad of it, for Christ's sake, for his own sake, for my sake, and for the devil's sake. Jesus has brought to Himself another of His brethren, taken him out of the tyrant's hand, defeated the foe, and destroyed the works of the devil. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil." My time is nearly gone, and therefore I will hasten to the close.

It affords joy *on account of the word of God*. The conversion of sinners is the fulfilment of the word. My word "shall not return unto Me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it:" and as God Himself lives to fulfil His own promise, when you hear a guilty sinner in all sincerity pour out of his heart the prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner," rejoice in that fact as a fulfilment of the word of the eternal God. Now there is a vital power in the word of God, it strikes; a converting power, it changes; a conforming power, it makes the child of God like God Himself, it makes the Christian like Christ Himself. And what a transformation is this, the ungodly converted into a godly being; the vile, black, polluted sinner becomes like the lovely Christ of God, in character, in nature, in holiness, and in purity. Although sin is in his nature, and depravity, there is purity in his heart and he is longing for absolute deliverance from all defilement and sin. The word of God is fulfilled, and we rejoice.

Then in the next place, look at the subject in connection with the



consummation of all things. I rejoice that Christ is at work, that the Holy Ghost is at work, that angels are at work, and that *God's great plan is being carried forward towards the consummation of all things*. The vine is spreading, the family of heaven is increasing, new births are taking place, there is a new-born babe there, a spiritual youth yonder, a young man up there, and a father or a mother in Israel sitting at the threshold of heaven, and whilst the old saint sits there new births take place here, and the intelligence is taken to that old saint near to glory. He says, "Bless God for that; I have prayed for that youth, I believed that the Lord would hear my prayer and save his soul, I feel as if I should die all the happier now I know that friend has been called by grace. Paul and Barnabas caused great joy to the brethren when they narrated the dealings of the Lord with the Gentiles in connection with their labour.

What does all this imply? Father, Son, and Holy Ghost rejoice; Angels rejoice; ministers rejoice, and saints rejoice—we all rejoice together. The Holy Spirit

"takes delight to view  
The holy soul He forms anew."

Jesus is glad when He sees His seed, and the Father rejoices with all His heart to embrace the son. He sees the new-born child, and the Spirit bringing him to Christ: Christ receives him with delight, and brings him to His Father; God the Father receives him into His arms, and puts him into His bosom, and there is joy in the Trinity, there is joy among the angels, and joy down here. Paul and Barnabas who were of those who were said to be turning the world upside down, went to Phenice and Samaria, and declared how wonderfully God was working, and a number of Spirit-taught believers said, God be praised. On what I have said may the Lord command His blessing, for Christ's sake. Amen.

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# THE REIGN OF THE RISEN SAVIOUR.

## A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,  
AT NORTH ROAD CHAPEL, BRENTFORD,  
ON EASTER MONDAY MORNING, 6th APRIL, 1874.

*"For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet."*—1 Cor. xv. 25.

THE doctrine of the resurrection of the body is unspeakably important. I am not sorry that the Corinthian Church disagreed about it, though I am constantly praying that the Lord will heal the breaches of Zion, and give His people one heart and one way in relation to the great gospel of His grace; but I am rather glad that there was a contention about this doctrine; for, humanly speaking, had it not been so, we had never had this fifteenth chapter of the 1st of Corinthians. "Now if Christ be preached that He rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?" Ah! error is old-fashioned, almost as old as truth, but not quite; error did not begin with time, and it shall be annihilated just before the end of time; for truth was first in the field; and will retain the field, and will be last in the field, as the Lord liveth. Are we not thankful for the marvellous revelation which this chapter contains concerning the resurrection of these bodies of ours; is there not something exceedingly cheering in the fact that they are purchased property; that they are the temples of the Holy Ghost, and that the period is coming when they shall be as spiritual as the Spirit of God can cause them to be; and the time is coming when they shall be as thoroughly pervaded by the Spirit of God as our souls will be. We often lose sight of the fact that the Holy Ghost will have much to do in the resurrection of our bodies. "But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." The Holy Ghost will, therefore, enter into the dust of every saint, and fill it in every part with life, and the body will be raised from the grave filled with the Holy Ghost; and the immortal eyes, (for the eyes which are now mortal will be immortal,) will be turned towards the reigning Saviour, the descending Head of the Church, and a transformation will follow; and immortality and spirituality, such as I cannot describe, will be the grand outcome of all. We shall see Him; we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. The Apostle Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, here dwells gloriously and comprehensively upon the resurrection of the body, and reasons in a manner which is almost peculiar to himself—for he was a wonderful logician, and his reasonings in this chapter are very masterly and comprehensive, and such as can never be successfully controverted. "If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen; and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." "And if Christ be not raised,.....ye are yet in your sins." But he says, to sum it all up in a word

or two, "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept: for since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead; for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." How disappointing this must be to hell! The very nature that was ruined is the nature that restores again; the very nature that brought in sin is the very nature that carries it out; and the very nature that brought in death is the nature that shall destroy death: "for since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead." Thus the Apostle proceeded to reason, until He said, "But every man in his own order; Christ the first-fruits, afterward they that are Christ's at His coming: then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power; for He must reign until He hath put all enemies under His feet."

Let us look at the three branches into which our subject naturally divides itself. First, *the nature*; secondly, *the necessity*; and thirdly, *the results of the reign of Jesus Christ our Lord*. He must reign; how will He reign, and what is the nature of His reign? He *must* reign—then it seems that there is a necessity for it. He must reign, and what shall be the *results*? All enemies shall be put under His feet.

First, *the nature of the reign of King Immanuel*, our dear and blest Redeemer. I may say, by way of preface, that Christ's right to reign is a native right, a delegated right, an acquired right, and a universally acknowledged right. First, Christ's right to reign is a native right; for He is essentially over all God blessed for ever. But His right to reign is a delegated right. The Father, addressing His Son as man and mediator, said, "Yet have I set my King upon My holy hill of Zion;" so that the Lord Jesus Christ, in relation to His manhood, and in relation to His mediation, is the appointed and delegated King. A throne was, if I may so speak, erected for Him, and He was appointed by God to occupy it; but that throne, and its occupant relate to the covenant of eternal grace, and the salvation of sinners. Our Lord's right to reign is also an acquired right. If I may so illustrate it, yonder was His throne in the highest heavens, and upon that throne were His royal robes, and crown, and sceptre; down here, under a broken law, was Jesus Christ Himself, bearing the sins of His people in the depths of humiliation, as a sufferer under the curse of a broken law; and His business was to honour the law that He was under, to annihilate the sin that was upon Him; to expiate the guilt that He came to save His people from, and to bring into everlasting harmony all the attributes and perfections of God; and then, having done that, to go to His throne, and put His hand upon it, and say, "I have a right to sit here, and a right to reign over all for ever and ever." There were between Christ and His throne rivers of curses, there was an ocean of damnation, and all the fires of hell due to the Church of God, and Jesus Christ's way to His throne lay straight through all; and He did not in order to avoid the way go by a circuitous route to reach His throne. Had He done so, justice would have barred the gates of heaven against Him, and those royal robes and crown He had never worn on high; but He went straight to His throne, and bled His way thereto, and put out the fires of hell as He travelled on and expiated guilt, and at the very end of a broken

law the cross was set up, and the triumphant Conqueror hung there, till He said, "It is finished!" and died; and thus He acquired a right to sit upon that throne, and be King of kings, and Lord of lords, and the only Ruler of princes. It is a universally acknowledged right. Hell acknowledges it, and gnashes its teeth, whilst it does so, wishing there were something wrong in the reign and sovereignty of Jesus Christ on the throne; but though "clouds and darkness are round about Him, righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne," and angels look with pleasure and delight, and proclaim the sovereignty of our Lord. And we with our poor little powers, pass on through troubles and trials, rejoicing in the fact that the Lord reigneth, and that He has a right to reign over all for ever and ever.

I notice that the reign of the Lord Jesus Christ is a *glorious demonstration of a glorious fact*. The fact which it demonstrates is, that salvation is a finished work. This just suits me. It seems to be the very best thing in connection with the government of God, that having resolved to save sinners, and people the heavens, he has done it effectually and completely, and in a God-like manner. I am so satisfied concerning the perfection of the work of Christ, and the necessity for that perfection, that I am quite prepared to say, that if a single stain of guilt had been left unremoved, or a single spot had been unwashed away, since God requires perfection in all that are saved, that spot would have been the cause of my ruin for ever and ever.

"Could my tears for ever flow,  
 Could my zeal no respite know;  
 All for sin could not atone:  
 Thou must save, and Thou alone."

The reign of Christ is a glorious demonstration of this glorious fact. The question is this: Where is Christ? The answer is: In heaven, on the throne. Then the conclusion that necessarily follows is this:—If Christ, Immanuel, as a Saviour, is in heaven, and on the throne, the great business of salvation is finished, and God is honoured, and the Church is saved; for the enthronement of Immanuel is a conditional matter viewed in certain relations, and justice would not have consented to it, and equity and righteousness would never have put the crown upon His head, if He had not fulfilled the mediatorial conditions which were presented to Him by His Father. And therefore, dear friends, since Jesus Christ is on the throne, the fires of wrath are quenched, its vials are empty; for God poured them all upon the head and heart of His dear Son. The curses of a broken law are all spent, and hell is an impossibility. To send a sinner to hell for a debt which was paid by Jesus Christ, would be ungodlike, and such conduct would undeify Jehovah Himself. No, my friends, Christ is on the throne: the inference is this, —He has a right to be there, and that right is an acquired one. He has paid the debt, and fulfilled His engagements, and the conditions of His enthronement; and in the fulfilment of those conditions there are a ransomed church, a perfected bride, and harmonized perfections on the part of God; and there is a law in the ark of the covenant, and not on Mount Sinai, and covering the law is a lid called the mercy-seat, and on that lid is Jehovah Himself,—the mute and satisfied law constituting a part

of the very throne upon which He sits. Since Christ is on His throne, there is at Golgotha, once the place of a skull, where death and damnation raged and prevailed, a fountain opened, and that fountain diffuses a fragrance everywhere, penetrating heaven itself; and the sweet sacrifice of Jesus Christ has created a new atmosphere for heaven, and for God, and the sinner; not such an atmosphere as God and Adam met in, and conversed in, or as God and angels live in; but an atmosphere whose qualities are such as are required by a pardoning God, and sinners that deserve to go to hell, but are saved sovereignly with an everlasting salvation. O brethren, it will take us a whole eternity to explore or to contemplate these great mysteries! He is on His throne, and He wears the brightest crown, and not a crown is too bright for Him. If I had a hundred hearts, He should have them, if He would, and wash and save them all; and if my fears were ten thousand fold more numerous than they are, so deeply indebted to Him am I that every one of those fears should crown Him Lord of all. And therefore you see, in the coronation and enthronement of our dear Lord, that there is a fountain for sin, or He would not be on His throne; you see that there is a wardrobe full of the garments of salvation; were it not so, He would not be on His throne. The wardrobe is not empty, the robes are there, and they are made to fit sinners such as Magdalene and Saul, and you and me, and all the ransomed throng. Christ having done all that justice, and equity, and truth required Him to do.

“ They brought His chariot from above,  
To bear Him to His throne;  
Spread their triumphant wings, and cried,  
The glorious work is done !”

And He is there, and must reign, “ until He hath put all enemies under His feet.”

Notice next, that the reign of Jesus Christ is *an all-comprehending reign*. What is there in heaven that lies beyond the reach of His regal power, His royal and His reigning authority? There is not an angel there but whom He governs, and there is not a thought there but what He directs. There is not a thought here on the earth, but what he understands and over-rules; and bless His name! there are millions of thinkers, and millions of thoughts here, which are directed by Jesus Christ; but it would not be right to say, that there is not a thought on earth but what is directed by Him, for some of my thoughts are directed by sin and the devil; but in that world up there, where our Lord is enthroned in glory, every thought is directed by King Jesus. And what thinkers there are there! I love thought, especially when my mind is a little free, and when my thoughts fly out a little; and I love thinking, and I have sometimes peculiar ideas of the happiness of heaven, in relation to the activities of the mind. Heaven is a world of thought, a world of thinking minds, and every mind is baptized, immersed in divine light, and there is not a streak of error in the light of that glorious world. Above all those thinkers, above all those minds, there is another mind, and above all those shining crowns there is a brighter crown than all, and that is the mind of Christ, the thought of Christ, and the crown of the dear Redeemer. Oh, He governs every angel's thought, and the thought of every spirit that

is made perfect there, and every feeling and every motive in that glory world serves King Immanuel; and then He reigns in heaven over all the grace that is laid up for sinners on the earth. No parcel, if I may so speak, leaves heaven without the permission and knowledge of King Jesus; and we have grace in parts, a little yesterday, a little to-day, and a little to-morrow; a sermon here, and a sermon there—and all this grace comes from heaven—not a single stream but what proceeds from His throne, and not a single parcel but what comes by His authority; and if you could only look,—but we seize it as soon as it comes, and take time no to reflect: if you could only look at the comfort that Jesus sends you, you would see that it is stamped with His dear name, and has the authority of Heaven upon it. Angels stand before Him, and are ready to fulfil in the twinkling of an eye—Oh how they love Him!—His high commands. They fly at His nod; the look of His eye directs them; and whilst they are before the throne, His charms and beauties evermore allure them, and the angel that is sent to attend a crossing-sweeper all the day long, is as happy in his work as that one who stands before Immanuel's throne. They find their heaven in obeying the behests of King Jesus there. And then what shall we say about the Gospel? Where is it? Between the two covers of this book. Jesus Christ's name, influence, power, and authority, appear everywhere. Take the promise that was very sweet to your hearts twenty years ago, and come to it to-day, and read it, and analyze it, and try to apply it. Perhaps it yields no comfort now; and yet you say it was so applied to me twenty years ago, that I remember it well even now. I was so carried away that I thought of Paul's words, "Whether in the body I cannot tell, or whether out of the body, I cannot tell;" but now these words yield no comfort. What is the reason? Jesus reigns, and He must reign; and He reigns in, and by, and over the Word, and over every minister of the Word. I wish He reigned more experimentally in this poor heart of mine. A brother said to me last Friday, "You are not your own master, John." If I were, it would be such a fertile mind, and be so full of thought, and never be otherwise than at liberty in the pulpit. I would never be shut up, I would preach, oh yes I would! but the fact is, I am not a good judge of what is best for the people. If I had the reins for a quarter of an hour, I should do more mischief than a little. You are driving a trap through Fleet-street, and beside you sits your little son, and it requires all your attention to guide the horse amidst the hundreds of vehicles, and the child wants the reins—he could manage the matter, to be sure he could: but you know better than to put them into his hands, although you love him, and because you love him, you deny his request. No, Jesus reigns, and He says, No, my child, I will hold the reins, and the whip too. I will guide you with my counsel, and afterwards receive you to My glory. You are passing through ten thousand dangers to glory, and if you had the reins, you would run into the first one that comes. And what is it in connection with providence that He does not preside over? Oh bless His name, His Almighty arm is long enough to reach the circumference of Divine providence; His throne is its centre, and as he sits upon it, His omnipotence reaches the utmost limits of the circle, and

"All shall come, and last, and end,  
As shall please our heavenly Friend."

With regard to Zion, He reigns there ; and with regard to hell, yes, He has His bits in the jaws of the devil himself. I thank Him for revealing that fact. The devil is chained. "I will put My hook in thy nose, and My bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest." King Jesus thus holds Satan with bit and bridle. I was thinking the other day in relation to the power of Satan, and the superior power of the Saviour, that without the reign of the Saviour we could not lie in our beds at night, and without the providential reign of Christ we could not walk with safety in the streets, nor in the beautiful country lanes here. There are latent forces enough in the world to burn it up in a few hours, but there is a very strong hand upon them, and that is the hand of Him about whose reign we are trying to speak this morning.

His reign is also *an all-fulfilling reign*. What is He fulfilling by His operations on the throne ? "I wept much," said John, (Rev. v.) "because no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not, behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof." And I beheld, and lo, instead of seeing a lion, I saw a lamb—for Jesus is a lion as to His reign over His enemies, and a lamb as to His sacrifice for the sins of His people. John says, "There stood a lamb as it had been slain, and he came and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne, and proceeded to open the seals thereof." Christ has that book of divine purposes and decrees before Him, and King Jesus on the throne opens its seals, and

"Here He exalts neglected worms,  
To sceptres and a crown ;  
And there the following page He turns,  
And treads a monarch down."

All that, my dear friends, is the result of the fact that Jesus holds the reins, and as He moves a particular rein, an empire falls or rises, an emperor falls from his throne, or a beggar is raised from the dunghill. Then again, by His reign, He fulfils the demands of His own blood, for our Lord listens to Himself. The blood of Christ speaketh better things than that of Abel. And the blood of Christ demands at least two things ; first, everlasting honours to Him that shed it ; and secondly, eternal honours and everlasting crowns for you and me, and Jesus sits upon the throne to fulfil the demands of His own blood. But then again, our Lord has the Bible before Him, and I mean by that, that He keeps in view all the great facts of the Gospel, and all the precious promises of God ; and as He reigns, He is fulfilling the Bible, and making good the Word that He and His Father have spoken. God is not a man that He should lie, said the wizard Balaam. "Hath He said, and shall He not do it ? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good ?" How does He make it good ? The Word that fell from His lips as a promise shall be made good by the operations of His hands, for what the rails are to the locomotive, that the purposes of God are to the operations of His power. The Lord's purposes are laid down right through eternity, and King Jesus is travelling on them. "He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet." This is an object of the most unbounded

faith on the part of His people. He will be trusted, not traced; for He giveth no account of any of His doings. Lord, what will happen to-morrow? What is that to thee? follow thou Me. Lord, what shall this man do? What is that to thee? leave it to Me; I am on the throne; I am too wise to err, and too good to be unkind.

“O that I had a stronger faith,  
To look within the veil;  
To credit what my Maker saith,  
Whose word can never fail.”

A few remarks on the remainder of the subject,—*the necessity for the reign of Christ*. “He must reign.” In the very nature of things, the providence and the grace of God must have a head, and the universe must have a head. God did not make the world, and leave it in a state of anarchy. The world is governed by natural laws. Who presides over them? and who made them? and what is behind the laws of nature? We are bound to declare that there is a vast amount of infidelity in connection with much of the teachings of natural science in these days. No God presiding over the world, or no God presiding over the laws that govern the world! A world without a God, a ship like this without a captain or a pilot, a work like this without an author! Supreme, prodigious infidelity! He must reign, to say nothing for a moment about His mediation, He must reign to govern the universe. He must reign to perpetuate His cause. If He vacated the throne, or left the operations of His omnipotent grace for an hour, the church of God would collapse and sink into ruin, for we are not self-supplying or self-sufficient, or self-supporting. Look at the cause of Christ, and see the necessity for His reign. Consider its weight. Who but an omnipotent being could sustain the weight of an interest like that of Christianity. The weight of popery is mighty; but it rests upon its own basis, and will crush its own foundation by-and-bye, and sink into everlasting ruin. Lord, hasten it in Thy time. But we have in relation to Christianity this fact, “On this Rock will I build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Look at the weight, then, of the interest of Christ; it requires an omnipotent King to sustain it. Look at the worth of it. Who can preserve so valuable an interest but an omnipotent reigning Monarch? Look at the connections in which it stands, and at its destination. The church is destined for the highest honours. She must, she will attain that position, and wear those honours as the grand result of the fact that Jesus reigns. He must reign and complete His own mediation. He died to save, and lives in heaven to convey the benefits of His own death. He died to pay the debts of His people, and lives in heaven to receive all whose debts He paid; and hence, if we were saved by His death, we shall be much more saved by His life. O my dear brethren, we have salvation from both the crowns of Jesus; salvation from the thorny crown, and salvation from the golden one. Yes, we have our hope of heaven from the fact that He was crowned with thorns, and we shall have the heaven we hope for from the fact that He is crowned with glory; salvation comes from the cross and throne.

Let us notice very briefly *the results of His reign*: “till He hath put all enemies under His feet.” Every saved sinner is in a certain sense brought



to His feet, but not put beneath them. They lie at His feet in the dust of self-abasement for pardon and forgiveness, and when they are pardoned and forgiven, they are put into His bosom ; for this is how He deals with His people ; He takes their sins in one hand, and their persons in the other, for He can separate the sinner from his sins, and casts the sin behind His back, and puts the sinner into His bosom. This is how He saves His people. But the enemies put beneath His feet, who are they ? The time is coming when popery shall be there. Made by hell, Rome shall be taken and destroyed. The nations of the Continent are shaking off its yoke to a considerable extent, but the monster of iniquity seems to be finding a refuge and a home in this beautiful and blessed country of ours. O that the Lord would open our rulers' eyes, and the eyes of the nation generally ! The locust army of Jesuits are finding an asylum and home here. Blessed be God, the system is doomed, and Antichrist shall be destroyed, and heaven and earth shall say, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen !" Where is she ? Underneath the feet of King Jesus. He must reign, till philosophy, mere intellectuality—so far as it opposes His truth—and everything that is worldly and sinful, are put beneath His feet.

Finally, there is death itself, and that was perhaps the leading idea of the Apostle ; the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. Now, when our dear Lord put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, He did not annihilate death, but spoiled it and its power, and changed its nature, and altered its position ; He took the sting from it, and so changed it, that it is now the believer's road to heaven. King Jesus will demand all death's prey ; and then He will take possession of all the territories of death ; and when death has disgorged its prey, and its territories are in the hands of Jesus, then Christ will smite death, and hurl it beneath His feet, and the last enemy shall be destroyed ; and then shall come the end. And when worlds thus surround the throne of Jesus, and death and hell are overcome, and ransomed millions are entering everlasting perfection and glory, may you and I be there ; for

"How can we bear that piercing thought,  
What if our names should be left out,  
When Thou for them shalt call !"

May the Lord command a blessing on what we have said, for His own name's sake. Amen.

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# THE CITY OF GOD: ITS PEACE AND PROSPERITY.

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## A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, 20th NOVEMBER, 1887.

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*"Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces."—Ps. cxxii. 7.*

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THE God of heaven and earth has been sovereignly pleased to become a gracious and merciful God. As God, He is the only proper object of the worship of His creatures, and as a gracious and saving God, He is the only object of the spiritual worship of spiritual men and women. God, however, will be worshipped in His own way. He was worshipped so under the patriarchal dispensation, and under the ceremonial dispensation, and He is being worshipped in His own way by spiritual men and women under the Gospel dispensation. As for the future, we desire to leave that in the hands of our gracious God, who will be worshipped in heaven for ever by all His ransomed people in His own way, and according to the good pleasure of His will. Our views of heaven are necessarily imperfect, and in some respects unsatisfactory. We do not quite know how the saints in glory worship their glorious God, but we are taught to believe that the eyes of their souls are steadily and perpetually fixed upon the great object of spiritual worship, and that all the glorified before the throne are engaged in singing the praises of God. We have some faint idea of what it is for souls to sing, but of course there can be no vocal music before the throne of God, when souls, and souls, only are worshippers there. I do not know whether there will be vocal music or not when our bodies are raised, and we are seated before God and the Lamb; perhaps these tongues of ours will for ever sing: but before the resurrection takes place our souls will be found in the presence of God, and we shall be there as worshippers. Our worship will be spiritual and heavenly, whatever its forms may be.

Under the ceremonial dispensation the worship of God was sometimes very peculiar as to its rules and forms. The males of the children of Israel were required to appear three times a year, before the Lord in Jerusalem, and never to come before Him empty. It must have been a wonderful sight; those that lived on the borders of the land started first, and they sang as they travelled; as they passed through villages and towns, their praise increased and multiplied; and onward they went, going

"from strength to strength, until every one of them in Zion appeared before God." This was the case from the north, and south, and east, and west, and from every point between those four quarters; the whole country was astir, the women and children were left at home, and God had undertaken to preserve and protect them, and also the land, during the absence of the men. Thus, as they travelled towards Jerusalem they sang, and some of their psalms are recorded in the Word, and are called "Songs of Degrees," and one of them opens thus, "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord." They entered a village and enquired of the men, Are you ready? We are on the way to Jerusalem, "Let us go into the house of the Lord;" and the inhabitants severally responded. "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord." They were waiting for the company, and when the first ranks of the travellers appeared, the people in the place which they were about to pass through were glad to join them on their pilgrim way. "Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem. Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together, whither the tribes go up;" that is, the tribes of Israel. One company united in Jerusalem or the temple. So the church of God is one church, one family, one vast body, one great and glorious army; but that body is in some respects exceedingly diversified. There are some that are tried, others that are tempted, others that have never been led into liberty, others that are rejoicing in God their Saviour; there are some who are young in years, others who are more advanced in life and experience; then there are old believers. "Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to give thanks unto the name of the Lord." Taking this view of the Psalm, and also of the other Psalms connected with it, we have a very interesting illustration of the manner in which God was worshipped under the ceremonial dispensation; and among other words on behalf of Jerusalem, the place and city of worship, was this, "Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces."

Now, if the Lord be pleased to give me strength for a few minutes, I will do the best I can in directing your attention to some matters suggested by this interesting portion of the Word. In the first place, I should like to say a few words upon *the city itself*—Jerusalem. I suppose our brother who gives out the hymns, thought that I was about to preach on the church of God; for he gave out, immediately after I had read and prayed, that very beautiful and comprehensive hymn upon this subject. By the city here, literally, understand Jerusalem; but mystically and spiritually understand the church of God as described in the chapter I read at the commencement of the service. (Isaiah xxvi.) "In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah: We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks." While I was trying to meditate upon this portion of the word, I had some pleasing thoughts upon the condition of the church of God in this world. A city, divine and heavenly; a city of peace, and a city more or less prosperous in this

stormy world. And only one city, and that the city of God ; and concerning its condition your prayer and mine is, "Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces." Now we are told that the whole world lieth in wickedness, and in the midst of this wicked world, so to speak, there stands this glorious city, which will ever remain unlike the world. The world cannot change its own character, and the church cannot change its character, and there will be an everlasting difference between the two. There is nothing like this city of God in the world, and its contents, or its privileges and blessings are peculiar to itself. All round the city, hence the walls, are wickedness and slavery, misery and uncleanness, war and woe, devils and various forms of death and danger. Think for just a moment,—forgive me for adverting to it,—of what is about to take place in the course of this day; of the disorder and confusion in our streets. How strange are the motives and tastes of the people ! and yet in the midst of all that commotion there is a city, the church of the living God, a body of men and women that belong to heaven; they are interested in the Saviour, and by the will of God there is a measure of peace and prosperity there. The waves of persecution and hatred roll against the walls, and the devil is looking on and attempting to enter. Within are hundreds and thousands of saints; men and women who have been born again, and separated from the world, breathing this petition before the God of heaven and earth, "Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces."

Now the people of God are social creatures, and the grace of God was never intended to destroy the social feeling in our nature; and therefore when a company of people have been called by grace divine they seek each other's society, they love one another for the Lord's sake, and are banded together upon the principles of eternal truth; and as they travel on towards heaven, others, and yet others say, "We will go with you; for we have heard that God is with you." The people of God, though living in the world are not of it; they are finding their way though the storms and vicissitudes, trials and troubles of life. Our God has made a beautiful and very important provision for His people. There is a city of peace in this world of war; there is a city of purity in this world of sin; there is a home here for the dear people of God, and hence we sometimes sing with holy feeling:

"Jesus, away from earth I fly,  
And with Thy church unite;  
Thy saints shall be my company,  
Thy presence my delight."

When grace enters the heart of a sinner it renews his mind, changes his tastes, and awakens a thousand new desires in his soul, and he wants kindred minds. How odious in the estimation of a grace-saved child of God are the ways and customs of the world ! Oh my friend, you could not very well have a deeper or darker hell, than that of being bound hand and foot, the whole of your persons, all the days of your life with

the ungodly and the abominable. Grace saves the soul from this present evil world, and brings the saved mind into connection with kindred spirits, and such are found only in the city of the living God.

“Saviour, if of Zion’s city  
I through grace a member am,  
Let the world deride or pity,  
I will glory in Thy name.”

It is a mercy to belong to the church. I do not mean, to have our names enrolled in the church-book merely, that too is a favour, but that is not all. I mean it is a mercy to be one with God’s people; to be one with them as God’s people; to see as they see; to feel as they feel; to walk where they walk; to work as they work; to lean upon that upon which they are leaning; to live upon that upon which they are living; to drink of the stream which they drink of from day by day; and to be able to say, “Thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.”

This city is *walled*, and is thus a well protected city: “Peace be within thy walls.” Now with what are the churches walled? Let me give you a few views of the walls. In the first place, God says, “For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her, a wall of fire round about her, and will be the glory in the midst of her.” We know what a brick wall, a garden wall, and other kinds of walls are, but we do not know anything, literally or naturally so, about a wall of fire. Here, however, round about the church of God we have a fiery wall. And what is it? It is God Himself with the fire of His grace, of His holiness, of His mercy, and His power, and that must be a daring foe who would attempt to place a ladder against this wall which is round about the church, separating it from the world; and yet we are told in the day in which we live, that there ought to be no separating wall between the two, that there ought to be no fences around the church of God. No, without are enemies, and within are the citizens of Zion, the children of the living God. God is a wall of fire round about His people, to consume the enemy, to burn up all their plans; to visit them, year by year, and day by day, with bitter disappointment, and a fire to warm and purify the city itself. And our God is not ashamed of His city on the earth; for a city generally speaking is more or less visible from a distance; but if a city could be supposed to exist having a wall of fire, it would be a most conspicuous object, and be visible for miles, and more conspicuous, if possible, in the night than in the day. Jehovah Himself is, as to His perfections and attributes, a wall of fire round about the city of Jerusalem. And again, “we have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.” Not Acts of Parliament, nor military power; for the city of God requires no such protection as the material sword and worldly policy. Let the church of God stand where God has placed her. Let her be what God has made her: let her ever be satisfied with the protection which God has established for her. Let her not cringe beneath any earthly or temporal power; for “salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.” And the foundation of these

walls is deep, and the superstructure is exceedingly high, for it is God's salvation. And powerful enemies can never enter, though they come against the walls to beat them down. All hell has been aiming at them and beating against them ever since they were erected, but the walls still stand. The bulwarks are where and what they were.

"O let my soul in Zion dwell;  
Nor fear the wrath of Rome or hell."

And then again, the perfections of our God, together with His providence, protect His Zion, the city of Jehovah. How sweet is the thought that all God's attributes, and all God's providence, even a special providence, are round about the church. Brethren, we have indeed a strong city. Let me just ask the question here, On which side of the walls are we? Are we inside or outside? Are we where all the peace is, or are we where there is no peace at all? For depend upon it, it is a truth, whether it be believed in or not, that there is peace nowhere but in the church of God. Sometimes the peace of churches is broken; but whether that be so or not, there is no peace to the wicked. There is no peace in the world. Go to the theatre. Peace is not to be found there. Pleasure for a few hours is perhaps enjoyed, as people express themselves; but no solid peace can ever be found there, for it exists not outside the walls that surround the city of the living God. "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee." Thus Zion is a walled city, and its walls are the perfections of God, His Divine providence, His precious promises, and the perpetual operations of His hand.

Now let me pass away from this, to notice in the second place, *the privileges mentioned*: peace and prosperity. These are two great blessings, and every spiritual member of the church of God, is praying, I am sure, for these favours. Now I am not to preach at this time, peace by the cross of Jesus Christ, or not that exclusively. I want just to remind you of the several things that are essential to peace. In the first place, there must be righteousness: "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness, and assurance for ever." "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." Nations sometimes come to an agreement between themselves, in connection with which peace is made, and apparently established; but often-times peace between nations is made upon false principles, or upon no principles at all. And if national and political righteousness are ignored, there cannot be security against war, or satisfactory assurance that it will not break out. Righteousness is the only foundation upon which peace can rest; the only root out of which it can grow. Let a church that has been divided come to an agreement, one yielding a little here, and another a little there; one giving up a doctrine here, and another giving up one there: soon such a peace will be disturbed and destroyed—a patched up peace is never lasting.

Now the peace of Jerusalem for which we pray, is founded on eternal

righteousness. That is not however, the principal idea ; and therefore notice, secondly, that liberty is essential to peace. The city of Jerusalem might be paved with gold, its gates might be pearl, and its walls jasper, and the city wondrously rich, and its beauty and glory great ; but if the inhabitants be slaves, the excellence and value of the city itself can never give peace to their hearts. *Freedom* is dear to men ; and if there were not liberty in the city of Jerusalem, there would be no peace. God would be terrible ; His worship under such circumstances would be bondage, and spiritual things would yield no pleasure. But to know not only that I am in Jerusalem, a citizen, but to know that I am free, that there is no legal bar between myself and God ; that I am free to go up into the palace, and to kneel, and even sit before the mighty Monarch, free to open my lips before Him ; free to ask Him for a loaf of bread for to-day, and for the pardon of all my sins at the same time, is a privilege indeed.

But that is not all, for *safety* is also essential to peace. There may be righteousness and liberty, but the person that is free may not be in safety. Many who are free, are in an insecure position, and although their cause is a righteous one, they have not peace, because everything shakes round about them. But it is not so here. The people are a righteous people, and a liberated people, for God has set them free. "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." And they are also safe ; for "as the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people from henceforth, even for ever."

But that is not all. These excellencies are not sufficient to constitute a perfect peace. There must also be *plenty* ; for there may be safety, and yet want may exist. The free may not have bread enough to eat, or water, to drink, or raiment to wear ; and if that be so, there can be no peace. But the people of God are blessed with an everlasting plenty. All the fulness of God is theirs. "For all things are your's ; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

*Health*, too, is necessary to peace. Those who are free and safe may be sick. The child of God, therefore, is blessed with that description of health that is peculiar to himself. "And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick ; the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity."

That is not all. In order to obtain blessed heavenly peace, there must be the *communion of saints*. The city may be full of citizens, all of them free, every one of them rich, all of them healthy and strong ; and yet they may be comparative strangers to one another,—no communion between saint and saint, between one believer and another. Oh how sweet to meet together as saints, and unitedly and unanimously to take our seats at our heavenly Father's table in the royal palace, and to look upon all that is upon it, and to say to one another, It is all ours, it is provided for us. The poor man and the rich man are one here, all the fulness of grace is in Zion, and the poor come with the rich and commune together, in all the fulness of the grace of God.

That is not all ; another excellency must be added, in order to the perfection of this peace; and that is, *a cloudless prospect*. The idea of losing it all by and bye, the possibility of it would disturb our hearts, and render peace impossible ; but our prospect is blessed. " Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Thus the peace is a heavenly and brotherly one; not a political peace, not an earthly peace, not the peace of servants, but the peace which prevails in a family, between brethren and sisters in the Lord."

The second excellency is, "prosperity within thy palaces:" prosperity of soul; prosperity as to numbers; prosperity as to the preaching and progress of the Word. There may be large numbers in a church, the congregation may be great, and yet there may not be any soul prosperity. What I want now more than ever, if possible, is soul prosperity. What I am looking and praying for is that my soul may prosper, and if I have little or no knowledge in that direction, I cannot set forth soul prosperity before you. Well I think of the Psalmist's words elsewhere, "Whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." What am I doing? Sometimes I pray—do I prosper in prayer? Sometimes I am cold, and my prayers are so—at other times my heart is warm—my soul is all alive: I soar; I mount on high, and I enter into the sweet meaning of the very wonderful words, "Concerning My sons, and concerning the work of My hands, command ye Me." I cannot use that word command in connection with prayer very frequently; but God says, "Command ye Me." Sometimes, therefore, I can say with Jacob, "and Thou saidst, I will surely do thee good." Have we prospered in prayer? Have we ever received anything from our heavenly Father in answer thereto? If we have ever received an answer from heaven, we know something of soul prosperity.

Let me say a word more upon prosperity as to the exercise of our graces. May the Lord be pleased to bless you with a growing faith; for your hearts will not prosper unless your faith is vigorous and strong. I would say a word to the young. Do not defile your minds with much of the general literature of the day. There is so much evil printed and published, that the young are ensnared everywhere. Many publications seem to take a pleasure in introducing matters which are exceedingly doubtful, and in connection with things which are free from mystery it is their desire to mystify them, so as to bring doubt into the minds of their readers. Come to the Bible; read the word upon the knee of prayer, if you would have your souls prosper with regard to faith; and my prayer is, as we have it in the text, "Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces." And then there is rising hope, which goes beyond the clouds, enters into a better world, and expects the crown that God has promised. Then there is love in the soul; the heart is warm therewith. Sometimes it breaks forth into a beautiful and glorious flame. There is a noise outside the walls, and we do not hear it; war and confusion outside, but we are not affected by them. The heart is warm, and filled with love, earnestness, and zeal.



Self-conquest is connected with soul prosperity. Oh, one says in the church, "I will, aye! that I will!" and the "I" there is a very tall one, and "I will" is spoken in a very forcible manner. Now in soul-prosperity self is conquered. It is not, I will this, and I will that, and I will the other; self is lost before Christ, and in nearness to Him, and in sweet fellowship and communion with Him. Lord, I am willing to be anything or nothing; I am willing to do what Thou willest. O for grace to enable all the members of the church, and of the churches, to overcome themselves! I must leave the subject, although I had other points to mention, but time forbids. May the Lord command, His blessing for Christ's sake. Amen.