

THE GREAT PHYSICIAN.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,
ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, 30th MAY, 1880.

"But when Jesus heard that, He said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick."—MATT. ix. 12.

THE connection in which our text stands commences at the ninth verse of the chapter. In that and the following verses we have a view of a very interesting group of persons. How large the company was we cannot say, but a considerable number of persons were gathered together, and their different characters and dispositions manifested themselves under the silent operations of the omnipotence of Christ. In the ninth verse we are informed that as Jesus passed forth He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the receipt of custom, and He saith unto him, "Follow Me." In the first place, therefore, we have a very interesting character, viz., a new convert, a person that had just been born again, one that had recently been transformed by the quickening grace of God. Matthew was a publican, sitting at the receipt of custom when the Master passed forth and saw him. "Where the word of a king is there is power;" and therefore where the word of God the Almighty is there is omnipotent power. What the thoughts and feelings of Matthew were immediately before he was called by grace we do not know; we may say, however, that he was a publican and a sinner, and a few moments before the Saviour made His appearance he had no idea whatever of a change of heart or a transformation of his mind, and none whatever that he would become a recipient of that holy and heavenly life which constitutes Christianity. The Master, however, passed by, and directed a mighty word to his heart, saying, "Follow Me;" and we are elsewhere informed that Matthew arose, left all, and followed Christ immediately. He did not, however, follow Him very far, for probably his house was somewhat near, and he invited the Lord Jesus into it, and it came to pass as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. I have said that we have here a very interesting group. In the first place we have this new convert; in the second place, we observe the apostles of Jesus Christ; thirdly, there were many publicans and sinners, some of whom, perhaps, were serious, others probably were more or less spiritual, while perhaps others mocked and sneered whilst they sat and listened to the Master. Then we behold, not only publicans and sinners, the newly saved Matthew; the apostles of Jesus Christ, but a considerable number of Pharisees, persons who were righteous in their own conceit, having no idea that they needed the sovereign mercy of God, persons who had quite sufficient moral excellency of their own to carry them safely through this world, calmly through death, and triumphantly, as they believed, into the world to come. And, then, in addition to all these characters, we have before us the Lord of life and glory. Here, then, was a congregation, a mixed gathering; and when the Pharisees, whose hands were so clean, whose

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hearts were so pure, and whose character was so perfect, when they saw that the Master was particularly familiar with the publicans and sinners, they proceeded to find fault with Him, and said to His disciples, "Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?" But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick."

Now, I shall not divide my subject this morning as I sometimes divide my discourses, but gather up a few points which, I think, the words suggest to our minds, and mention them as I proceed.

We may notice, in the first place, the very *apparent fact* mentioned by our Lord, "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." Now, although I do not suppose that the Lord Jesus referred to Himself when He spoke of persons that were whole, yet it may do us no harm if we for a few minutes look at the character of this Great Physician. Our blessed Redeemer is the Physician of souls as well as of bodies, and we are informed again and again concerning Him, "in Him is no sin." A Physician who is himself diseased from head to foot may cure another diseased person. A medical man of great weakness and feebleness, and suffering from a fatal disease may cure hundreds and thousands of his fellow-creatures, but our Great Physician is whole. He is perfectly free from disease. We can communicate disease to one another, but we cannot communicate our health. Our great and glorious Redeemer can do this. He cannot communicate sin, for He is perfectly free from it. He cannot, like Adam, communicate guilt and corruption, or a moral disease to others, for He is holy, but He can and does communicate spiritual health, and has been doing so ever since He was on the earth. And mark, my brethren, the health which He imparts is His own; for He is not producing a spiritual state of things in us different from His own. That life which He imparts is His own life, and that health which He communicates is His own health. If, brethren and sisters, we are Christians, we know something of this Great Physician; and if we are of the family of heaven, we have been made in some measure healthy. Our great and glorious Redeemer is seated on His throne, and showers and streams of Divine influence which create and promote holiness or health are perpetually falling or flowing from His person to diseased creatures; He is distributing blessings among the poor and needy, and this work He will continue to perform until the solemn end of time. Had our Lord been diseased Himself He could not have cured us. Had He been capable of becoming diseased He could not have become the Physician of souls. Had not the Redeemer been perfectly impeccable, or absolutely incapable of sinning, He could not have saved sinners from guilt, and therefore when He says, "The whole need not a physician," it is a most apparent, an obvious fact that He Himself needed no physician. There was nothing wrong in Him to correct. There was no disease in Christ to cure. There was no stain in His character to remove. There was no feebleness in His arm to incapacitate Him for the great work of saving sinners. He was whole in all respects, body and soul; and both being united to Deity, our great Redeemer was absolutely whole. I shall not, however, tarry on that point. I thought an observation or two on the personal perfection of Jesus might be more or less welcome to my friends.

Let us, therefore, in the second place, think of heaven and contemplate the angels of God's power and glory. Well, they are all whole, and need no physician. They never required the interposition of the blood of Jesus between themselves and God. The intervention of the atoning Mediator they never needed. Although poets, who have great license, speak not only of the feathers of angels' wings, but also of angels' tears, yet I believe angels never wept. They are perfect strangers to sorrow, and they never knew a pain. They were created for pleasure, and pleasure filled them the moment they came out of their great Creator's hands. There can be no pain in heaven, and heaven is their home.

There can be no sorrow in the immediate presence of God, and that is where they dwell. There can be no woe in beings that are absolutely free from sin and absolutely perfect, and that is their exalted state and condition. They know millions of diseased beings, but they know not what it is to suffer themselves. They see the disease of sin in its nature, operations, and consequences, but they have no woeful experience themselves, and therefore we sometimes sing—

“ Never did angels taste above,
Redeeming grace and dying love.”

I would not be critical, because I do not think criticisms in the pulpit on ordinary occasions are profitable, yet permit me to say that mercy is a stream that angels never tasted. They taste the river of love and of eternal grace, but mercy is for the miserable, and they were never miserable. The blood of the dear Redeemer flowed, and they saw it, and they see it flowing still ; they see diseased sinners washed therein, but they are never washed in that flowing fountain themselves. The whole need not a physician. Christ, therefore, needed none, and the angels of God's power and glory need none.

Now come down to the garden of Eden, and behold another interesting object. These observations are doctrinal, I know, yet they are true and scriptural. Enter Eden, the garden which was made immediately by God and planted by the great Creator's hand. There was every kind of fruit that man required, and every form no doubt of floral beauty existed there. In the midst thereof was the tree of life, and there was also the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Two pure and happy beings were also there, who were whole, and not diseased, for God did not make man a sinner. God made angels, but the fallen ones made themselves devils, and “ God made man upright, but he has sought out many inventions.” God is not the Author of sin, and He never can be. God cannot be the source of moral evil. That moral disease of which we are speaking is cured by God, but not created, caused, or originated by Him ; and therefore Adam was physically, mentally, and morally whole. His body, I doubt not, was excellent, strong, vigorous, and beautiful, while it was untainted, untouched, and unweakened by sin. His mind was all that the great Creator required it to be—all its essential faculties and powers were healthy or whole. He was morally perfect, for He was made in the image of God Himself, who said, “ Let us make man in our own likeness,” and in the likeness of God made He him ; therefore Adam was whole when he stood in his primeval innocence, and he needed no physician. Had spiritual healing, medicine and balm, been presented to him, he would have been ignorant of their uses, having no pains nor wounds, being perfectly free from evil. He was whole and needed no physician.

Now, let us come to what I consider to be the literal meaning of the text. Jesus needed no physician, angels need none, and Adam before he fell needed not the interposition of a saving Mediator. Pharisees, however, were present on that occasion, and they were whole in their own conceit, and in their own opinion they were full of holiness. We have the character of one of them drawn by Jesus Christ Himself. He is represented as a petitioner, and yet, although he professed to pray, there was not a single petition in his prayer. “ God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are ; I do this, and that, and the other, and I especially thank Thee that I am not like that publican.” Now, that Pharisee was whole, and wanted no mercy. There was a Physician prepared by God, but he, being free from disease in his own estimation, needed or wanted Him not. “ Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners ?” But when Jesus heard that, he said, as it were, Where should the Physician go to but to the hospital ? and whom should He visit but the diseased ? These

publicans and sinners are morally diseased, and I am the Physician ; and, therefore, when He heard that, He said, "They that are whole need not a Physician, but they that are sick." What a mercy it is to be conscious of our sickness !

Distinguish, my friends, between need and want. All need Christ, the Physician ; all, however, do not want Him. Those who want the Saviour feel their need of Him. The Pharisees needed Him, but inasmuch as they were whole in their own conceit, they did not feel what they needed, and therefore we may say they did not want Him. They were independent of Christ, and His blood and His mercy they despised. To wear the robe of another was not to their taste, for they were well dressed, perfectly free from blot and fault, and all that was displeasing to God, and some of them thought that they had performed works of supererogation. They had not only enough of their own to take them to heaven, but somewhat more to please the great Lawgiver, God. Such persons, as a rule, the Saviour turned away from, and the despised publicans and sinners had His merciful attention and regard. Let me speak plainly and say, My dear hearer, you may be too good for God, but too bad they cannot be ; you may be too rich, but too poor you cannot be. You may be too well or too strong, but—and let me go as far as to say—too thoroughly and offensively diseased you never can be. The dear Redeemer is making for Himself, as the great Physician, an everlasting name. The heavens of eternal glory are to be filled and peopled with healthy persons, all of whom were under the shadow and in the region of eternal death.

Having made these few remarks as to the general and apparent fact, let me notice in the next place that the text suggests *Divine anticipation and provision*. We have a God who anticipates us and all our need, and the natural requirements of all His creatures, and therefore He is never nonplussed, and can never be surprised. Our Heavenly Father is always prepared for all that arises in time, and for all that occurs in connection with His government of the universe. Had there not been physical disease in this world, we should never have heard of medical science, and we should never have needed physicians. Disease first came into existence, and that gave rise to the healing art, and suggested the necessity of medical practitioners. Now we must reverse this order of things in the government of God. The Physician was appointed before the patient existed. The medicine was prepared before the sickness commenced. The balm preceded the wound ; for the precious blood of Jesus is said to be the blood of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. I believe these remarks will apply to all the offices and titles of our dear Lord. A person has a flock of sheep before he requires a shepherd, but our great and glorious God prepared or provided the Shepherd first, and then brought the flock into existence for him, or, rather, Christ brings the flock into existence for Himself. Our God anticipated and foresaw the fall and all its woeful, penal, terrible, and offensive consequences, and immediately after the crash, and the world had become a moral wreck, He came forth and said, "I have laid help upon one that is mighty, and I have exalted one chosen out of the people. I have found David, My servant, with My holy oil have I anointed him. With him My hand shall be established ;" so that when the world become universally diseased God was prepared with a Physician ; and when sin spread terribly and offensively, God brought out the grand provisions of His grace in the form of a divine and spiritual remedy, as it is written in Scripture—in the form of healing, fragrant ointment. "Thy name is as ointment poured forth." He revealed His anciently prepared balm. Hence, "Is there no balm in Gilead ? Is there not a Physician there ?" Indeed, in Christ Himself God had deposited all that guilty millions could possibly require ; for "It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell." Here is a healthy Physician for an unhealthy family, or a

Saviour, who cures sinners, who are His patients, in a manner that is peculiar to Himself. Not to anticipate myself, however, for we shall come to that presently ; therefore let us notice here that this disease is a moral one. Had it been merely mental, a schoolmaster or teacher might have healed us. Had it been physical, then ordinary physicians or medical men might have healed us. But the disease is a moral one—it is spiritual ruin—beyond the reach of teachers, beyond the reach of medicine, beyond the reach of philosophy, but not beyond the reach of blood, nor beyond the reach of the hand, the skill, and the wisdom of Christ, the great Physician. And this disease is universal. I do not mean to say that it breaks out alike in all. Every minister must in faithfulness to the Bible declare that all are diseased, and that the disease is universally fatal and absolutely incurable to all save one person, who is the blessed Christ of God. Some diseases are offensive, as well as painful and fatal ; and permit me just to remind you here that sin, that great moral disease, is unspeakably offensive to God. It is that abominable thing which His soul hateth, and the only thing in the world that He abhors ; this accursed evil, however, He loathes intensely and infinitely. He hates sin in all. It is offensive to His nature and perfections. I cannot explain the mystery, yet so it is, that whilst He hates the disease He loves the dying patient or the soul that is guilty and defiled. You have a dear child at home or elsewhere suffering deeply, and you fear the disease will terminate fatally. You loathe the disease, but love the dear little sufferer ; but you are quite helpless, being altogether unable to heal and cure the wasting beloved one. While, however, your God and Father hates the disease from which you are suffering, He has provided a Physician for you, and He comes and does what angels could not do ; he separates guilt from the guilty, sin from the sinner, and death from the dying transgressor, and casts the sin, the disease, behind his back, and puts the sinner into His bosom. “I am the Lord that healeth thee.” “By His stripes we are healed.” Christian brethren, take another thought here. This Physician is making no experiments. I do not know whether medical gentlemen are present or not ; if any should be here, perhaps they would not be offended if I ventured to say I have sometimes thought that medical men make experiments. I think that a great deal in connection with medical matters is but imperfectly understood. But our dear Lord makes no experiment, He never discovers like earthly physicians, that His medicine is a little too strong or too weak, and it must therefore be changed. No ; our great Lord is divinely skilful and infallible. He is responsible for the health of all the family of God. I would not use the word “responsible” in connection with Jesus if the Holy Ghost in the Word had not authorised me so to do. The covenant engagements of Jesus give rise, I think, to responsibility. He did as He pleased about engaging to heal us, but having pledged His word and name to cure us and to give us eternal life, He is bound to fulfil His word. God—whilst the patient is being treated—keeps His eye on the Physician, and resteth in His love ; for He knows there will be no failure under His saving, healing hands. He has never yet failed, though some of the worst cases imaginable, cases indescribably and inconceivably bad, have been beneath His care. The dying thief was healed. Manasseh was cured, saved, and glorified. Mary Magdalene was made quite whole, and is as healthy as Abel, and as Enoch, who on earth walked and talked with God. Oh, this Physician is responsible for the health and for the life of all His patients. This is peculiar to Jesus Christ, who said in the days of His flesh, “I will come and heal him.” Having received a description of the case, an ordinary physician would of course have said, “I will come and see him, or I will come and prescribe for him, and do all I can for him,” but no one ever thought of holding an ordinary physician responsible for the health and life of his patient.

All heaven hold your Lord responsible for your health, your holiness, and

your perfection ; they were guaranteed by the Saviour's solemn word when He became the Mediator of the covenant of eternal grace,

" Infinite years before the day,
And heavens began to roll."

And what of all this ? Why, since God anticipated your disease and made provision for your holiness, since heavenly balm, ointment, and antidotes were prepared for you, the healing is progressing according to the good pleasure of His will, and though half the professors of the day seem to be much alarmed, and fear lest God should not accomplish His purposes, I believe that our salvation is in good, because in Almighty hands ; and therefore the Gospel affirms the fact that

" His eternal thought moves on
His undisturbed affairs."

Sometimes this Physician apparently defers His visit, I know not why, until the eleventh hour. I must not, however, say much on that point ; but if He saves at the eleventh hour, depend upon it the salvation is perfect and complete. He can effect a cure in a few minutes as well as in a few hours. Our God brought all His wisdom to bear upon the great provision He made, and therefore our health and our heaven are sure. There is a better state of things than this. We are not yet quite well, if I may so speak, we are not quite healed, because sin is still in us. The Saviour, however, has engaged to present us before His glory without spot or wrinkle, or blemish, or any such thing. If He took us into heaven uncured, or imperfectly healed—and mark this—we should weep there, having sorrow and pain, but the Holy Ghost in the Revelation, anticipating everything of the kind, has been pleased to say, " There shall be no more pain, nor tears, nor curse, for the former things are passed away." We weep now, for we are occasionally in pain. Now we are burdened and distressed, but the sweet world to which we go is everlasting rest and day. Wonderful, truly wonderful, is the fact that of all the millions there, all are healthy, and all are whole. This was partly illustrated perhaps when Israel came out of Egypt, one of the greatest miracles recorded in the Old Testament, and yet a most important part of that miracle is too much forgotten. Perhaps there were two or three millions of persons—we cannot say how many, but a very large number—left Egypt in one night, they passed through the Red Sea, and entered the wilderness, and it is recorded by the Holy Ghost that there was not a feeble one among them. Think of London, with its millions, and suppose it contained three millions only, and all healthy, not a single diseased one among them ! The Lord said to the people I am the Lord that healeth thee, and will bring none of the diseases of Egypt upon thee. The God of holiness is the God of health, and when He speaks, disease obeys His voice. The Lord heals and helps His people, and though they limp and halt now, and sometimes reel and stagger, like drunken men, being at their wits' end, they shall be perfectly healthy on passing over the threshold of glory, and entering into the world of eternal happiness and rest. But let us proceed.

The text suggests to my mind, in the third place, *the necessity for the Saviour's mediation*. The whole need not a Physician, but they that are sick. Jesus is the Physician, and I have spoken of Him as such ; and now we notice the mediation of our Lord. For illustration's sake, imagine a diseased guilty, filthy, ruined sinner coming into the presence of unmediated Deity, or, to use a phrase which you frequently hear, and which you use yourselves—into the presence of a God out of Christ. What would be the consequence to the sinner ? Torment. No blood, no mediation, no middle Person to stand between Deity and his guilty, filthy soul. Without Christ's mediation the sinner would want God to hide His face, to conceal His glories, or to permit him to leave His

presence and the spot. All offensive and unclean, how tortured, how tormented he would be. No ; there is one God and one Mediator between God and man. He ever liveth to make intercession—and mark the phraseology—he ever liveth to make intercession for all that come unto God *by Him*. We come to Him, to Jesus, first, with all our sins and grief, and filthiness, and wants, and wounds. In due time we are stripped, stripped of all supposed excellency, beauty, and glory, and come to Him just as we are. Think of a sinner coming into the presence of God out of Christ in that state. His mouth would be closed in *hopeless* shame and confusion, and His soul would be tortured and tormented, for the presence of the holy God would be a hell to him. Bless God for the system of mediation and for the Mediator, Jesus, who stands between, and is the Physician of souls. He heals and sweetens, and perfumes our souls, and then presents His patients to His Father and their Father, who accepts and approves them in Christ, and for His sake ; and the glorious Gospel we preach assures us that we are complete in Him.

I pity the person making a profession of religion who ignores the mediation of our Lord. I cannot go into God's presence without Him, and I bless the God of infinite grace and wisdom that Jesus is where I need His presence, and is all I require Him to be for my acceptance. He received us when we came, and in due time He told us that our sins, which were many, were all forgiven.

Let us pass on, and ask, in the next place, *how He heals His people*. What is His method of curing sinners. Well, Himself took our infirmities, which is another wonderful proceeding ; He took our sickness, and bare our sins in His own body on the tree. Other physicians have never done that. Christ cures by taking the guilt of the sinner upon Himself, and by carrying it away into the land of forgetfulness. And what else ? He cures by imparting Himself to the sinner in peculiar conditions and forms. He obeyed the law and made it honourable. And what becomes of His obedience, which is perfect and divine ? He does not need it for Himself, angels want it not. He spent a saving life on earth and under the law, and the obedience He brought in is imputed to His patients, made their own, and by this we are healed. Then there were His wounds, and blood, and what use does He make of them ? We have healing from His balm-giving wounds, and purity from His blood. Indeed the Physician was Himself bruised, when what was in Him flowed forth, and the bruised Physician is laid upon the bruised patient, and by His stripes we are healed. Oh, this is God-like. The Healer comes into vital contact with the patient, and He draws from the patient that which God hates, and communicates to him all that God requires and loves ; and if this is not His method of healing sinners, I am out of the secret.

The *importance* of the health of God's people we infer from the magnitude of the provision made for them. The arrangements God has made, His deep contrivance, and the vast expense He has been at to obtain for them eternal health and life, all proclaim the great importance of their perfection. Every faculty of the soul is to be healed and free from disease. The understanding is to be enlightened ; the judgment is to be divinely corrected ; the will is to be filled with grace and righteousness ; the affections are to be separated from the world and sin, washed in blood and united to Jesus, and raised to heavenly things ; the conscience is to be purged from dead works to serve the living God ; and the memory, an essential part of the mind, which is now both a friend and an enemy, is to be sanctified. We often think of what we wish we could forget, and what we would remember we cannot think of ; and therefore the memory is, in a measure, diseased now. But the memory's operations in heaven will be perfect, complete, satisfactory, and pleasurable for ever and ever. Health is important, else so wonderful a Physician had never been appointed. Our destination demands health. A world of holiness ; and sin being a disease the

slightest remains thereof would be a sore and a blot there. Our associations demand health. We are to associate with angels, and, what is more, with God Himself for ever and ever. Our employment requires health. Here I am indisposed frequently, and wish—and I tell you a secret, and may the Lord forgive me—I sometimes wish, when coming to chapel, that I had not to preach, for, feeling my incompetency and the emptiness of my mind, I occasionally, perhaps frequently, dread the pulpit, and wish I had been called to serve God in some other way. There will be no indisposition of that kind there. The song will be welcome, the worship will be sweet, and we shall never be indisposed in soul. Jesus is the Physician, and the cure He effects is perfect and complete.

Lastly, if Jesus thus heals, and the healing involves all this and infinitely more, what is *the state* of the healed sinner? Well, it is a spiritual one, and let me say he is better in some respects than he was before. Hence Watts beautifully sings—

“He raised me from the depths of death,
The gates of gaping hell,
And made my standing more secure
Than ’twas before I fell.”

Adam was healthy, but his health was moral. The believer is healthy, and his health is spiritual and gracious. Adam had a perfectly holy life, but that life was loseable. “I give unto My sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hands.” The health mentioned in the Word in relation to Christ is not a return of the sinner when cured to his primitive condition; he does not go back to Eden, nor return to his original state. If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, and he stands where Adam did not stand, and feels as Adam did not feel. He is a new creature, for Christ has healed him.

Then, as to the *present position* of these patients, I should say, and I say it without fear, that a person whom Christ has cured is among the best of persons on the earth. Why, if Christ has cured you, you are a better parent, a better child, a better servant, a better master, a better sailor, a better soldier, a better politician, and better in all respects; for Jesus improves all He touches as a Saviour, He improves and elevates and dignifies all He comes into connection with, and when diseased souls come into contact with this great Physician, old things pass away, and all things become new. A celebrated preacher, as you are aware, used to say he would not give a straw, I think it was, for that man’s religion whose cat and dog did not fare the better for it. Oh, Christ does cure effectually, and therefore if an uncured person, or an unregenerate person, is as such a good husband or wife, he or she is better still after grace has regenerated the soul. O may the Lord, the Holy Spirit, take the things of Jesus and show them to our minds, and realise to us the meaning of that quaint old saying of Quarles:

“He lays a wound upon a wound,
And makes the wounded whole.”

A wounded Christ on a wounded heart heals the soul and prepares it for God. May God command His blessing, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

THE RAINBOW ROUND ABOUT THE THRONE.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,
AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,
ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, 19th JUNE, 1887.

“*And there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.*”—Rev. iv. 3.

THE book out of which I have taken my text is filled with Divine mysteries, which I do not profess to be able to explain. I have invariably felt that time is the best interpreter of the unfulfilled word of God. Our God will verify His own word and fulfil every one of His predictions, just as He will fulfil all His promises, in due time. We cannot look into the future; but we know all future events and circumstances are under the management and control of infinite wisdom.

The two chapters now before us, viz., the fourth and fifth, contain certain facts which may in some measure be understood. I take it that notwithstanding the figurative character of my text, it symbolizes and expresses very beautifully and sweetly a great and precious gospel truth.

Let me first say, that I take it that the Being that John saw sitting upon the throne here, was not the Lord Jesus Christ, nor the Holy Spirit, but God the Father; for in the following chapter we are told that there was in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne a book written, and that eventually the Lamb went to Him and took the book out of His right hand, and that He proceeded to open the seals, and to make known its concealed contents, which were the eternal purposes and decrees of God.

Let us limit our attention for a few minutes to the words we have read, and take the text as it stands before us. We have *the throne*, and *the bow*, and *its position*, and *its appearance*; and if we have time we may close with *one or two remarks* upon the subject.

In the first place, let me look for a few minutes at *the throne* indicated in our text. A door was opened in heaven, and a throne was set there, and one sat on the throne. I love the idea of a Divine throne, and I desire to carry that idea with me everywhere. I cannot afford as a poor, trembling, and exposed creature, to lose sight of the fact that my God is on the throne. I was observing that such is our state and condition here, that we cannot afford to lose sight of the fact that our God reigns. He holds the reins Himself, and has held them for 6000 years or thereabouts; and if the world should stand 6000 years longer, He will be found in the same position, reigning over all. Our God is interested in the preservation of the world; and especially so, in the preservation of His church on the earth. He is more deeply interested than I can describe to you, in every event that occurs, and in every circumstance that

attends His people and His creatures generally. God's eye is everywhere ; and so is His power, which is omnipotent ; and we have to do with this great and glorious Being, who is our covenant God, seated upon His own throne, managing the affairs of the universe, and accomplishing the deep-laid purposes of His will.

Observe, in the first place, that *God's reign is absolutely necessary*. Imagine that our God suspended or withheld Divine influences from the world for an hour, or that He withheld the Holy Spirit and the power of His grace from His church on the earth for an hour ! If God absented Himself from His church, would not hell rush into it ; and if He absented Himself from the world, or withdrew His influence and suspended His government of it, would not disorder, confusion, uproar, death and destruction everywhere prevail. If our God simply raises His hand, or gives an enemy a little more rein than usual, what terribly destructive work goes on and prevails ! I cannot describe the nature, properties, and power of sin. It has disorganized and deranged everything, and infused the most diabolical spirit into the human heart ; and if God did not restrain its power and operations, the world would become an aceldama. As it is, there is much confusion and destruction continually raging ; but God keeps His eye upon every movement, and never loses sight of one fiend. " Fiend, sir." Yes, fiends ; call them evil spirits if you will, God never ceases to watch the enemy, nor the motions of enmity in the hearts of creatures, and

" His eternal thought moves on,
His undisturbed affairs."

His moral government is absolutely necessary. God is a moral Governor, and will never cease to be so ; and He is perfect in this respect. Looking at His moral government in connection with the mediation of your dear Lord, we have a very vivid representation of its immutability, spirituality, and infinite depth ; and also of the fact, that God as the Divine Lawgiver cannot change. We live in a very evil day, as to the atonement of Christ. It is ignored, cast down, trampled upon ; and some professors are so profoundly wicked, that they can and do sneer at the idea and fact of an atonement for sin by the shedding of the blood of Immanuel. Our God is a righteous Ruler, and will uphold and honour His moral glory, in spite of all the powers of darkness ; therefore He would not and could not take sinners to heaven apart from the mediation of His Son. If you desire to see the moral grandeur of God, and the extent and power of His law, go to Gethsemane and to Calvary, and read the fact that the justice of God is inflexible and unchangeable in a suffering Christ, in the garden and on the cross. He that sweat great drops of blood was God incarnate ; and what fell upon Him then, you and I shall never fully know, for it can never be measured. It was the wrath of God, and the punishment due to sin inflicted by His insulted justice. The bitter cup that was pressed to His lips was mixed by God, who was angry with sin, but who loved the sinner, and who because He could not otherwise consistently with Himself, save sinners, sent His Son and smote Him. Jesus fell beneath the weight of our guilt, and emptied the cup of wrath Divine. Yes, the moral government of our God is a fact.

Look at God's government in providence, and rejoice in the fact that He reigns everywhere; therefore

"My life's minutest circumstance
Is subject to His eye."

Five sparrows are so insignificant that they are sold for two farthings, yet one of them cannot fall to the ground without our heavenly Father. "Some people," it was said the other day sneeringly, "believe that everything is arranged by God, and falls somewhere under the appointments of Jehovah." I am one of the men who believe in this; our God presides over the whole system of providence, over all risings and fallings, over all that is straight, and all that is crooked; over all that is pleasant, and all that is painful; over all that lasts a few weeks or months, and all that suddenly occurs and rapidly passes away. All is managed and controlled by Him who sits upon the throne, which was and is surrounded by the rainbow. A throne was set in heaven, and one sat upon the throne. Watch the operations of providence, and do not forget that the hand of God is always connected with them all. Chance and fortune have no existence anywhere in Divine providence. Our God's great mind superintends the whole, and His skilfully working hand manages and overrules all from first to last. All would otherwise be disorder and confusion. I repeat what I have often said, there would be no orderly or blessed connection between one day and another, and no consecutive and important connection between one event and another, if God Himself did not preside over the whole system. The great wheel of Divine providence has a ring so high that it is dreadful, and it is full of eyes, for there is no ignorance whatever connected with this work of God, who turns and guides the whole. He never allows another hand to hold the helm, or to direct a single motion. Our God is supreme, and will be everywhere and do what He pleases, and being everywhere and doing what He pleases, He is accomplishing the purposes of His will, and is saving sinners like you and me. God's providential reign is necessary.

But what shall we say about His spiritual reign? What is the character of the throne He sits upon? It is a *throne*, denoting the fact that His authority is supreme, and that He will never surrender it to another; but it is a throne of grace, as well as a throne of government. Let us come boldly to it, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. If God in one respect, sits on that throne, and manages the affairs of all worlds, in another respect, there flows perpetually from His heart a river of water of life which indicates the riches of His saving grace. Bless our God, His throne is approachable. John was not far from it, the twenty-four elders and the four beasts were near to it. By the four-and-twenty elders I understand the heads or representatives of the whole church of God under the Old Testament and the New. They are near the throne, for God is approachable, and the rainbow of the covenant is perpetually visible. They are worshippers, hence they have harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints. Sometimes they pour out their hearts in prayer before God, for their souls swell and contract and they are burdened and distressed;

and sometimes they are greatly favoured, and having harps they sing the worthy praises of God and the Lamb. Thus our life is made up of prayer and praise, sorrow and joy, pain and pleasure, nights and days. Let us pray in the night, and not be cast down; and we will sing in the day when the Sun of Righteousness shines. Let us bless our God for any measure of joy, and when it is His pleasure to bring events to pass so as to fill us with sorrow and pain, may it be ours to look at the covenant bow, and accept His will as Divinely good. A throne is set in heaven, for God's reign is necessary. His reign is also internal and experimental for God dwells in the heart. It is our mercy, my brethren, that He reigns *over* every heart, if He does not reign *in* everyone in an experimental and spiritual manner. There is, therefore, no heart in this world that can do what it would. The heart of the wicked, the heart of Popery, the heart of Mahomedanism, and the hearts of Satan and his angels, are all under the reign of our God, who checks and restrains them as He pleases; but He reigns in a special, saving, and spiritual manner in the hearts of His dear people. And is it not sweet, precious and fertilising to feel the reign of God's grace? Time then glides away very agreeably, and the troubles of life are not then magnified, but they are minified, and become less and less, and we become patient and sing—

“I can do all things, or can bear
All sufferings, if my Lord be there.”

Do not talk about a religion that has little or nothing to do with the heart; do not talk about grace that does not reign in the soul, subduing sin, and that does not sometimes produce a holy state of things within. We are not quite strangers to heaven, nor to the joys of that celestial world. A drop of honey reaches us now and then, or a drop of holy unction falls occasionally upon one's heart. Then all is composed and tranquil, for all becomes calm and serene when God by His grace is felt to reign over all that we are the subjects of. The internal reign of God is necessary.

Notice in the next place, *that God's reign is universal*. “His dominion ruleth over all.” I do not trouble myself now concerning the stars and heavenly bodies as to whether they are worlds or not. I do not know what they are; in the Bible they are called stars, and in one or two places we read of Him that made the worlds: “By whom also He made the worlds.” Well, whether they be worlds or not, they are ruled by God, all being His creatures. And if, as we are told, there are thousands upon thousands of them, then with all my heart, I believe they all belong to God: “He bringeth out their host by number; He calleth them all by their names by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power; not one faileth.” And the reign of God in distant worlds, is as necessary there as here. But we have now to do more especially with three worlds, with earth, hell and heaven. There is a world worse than this, which is hell, and we trust we have been saved for ever from that. There is a better world than this, even heaven, a place prepared for saints, the residence of our dear Lord, and the inheritance of the saints, and we have to do with that world and also with God the King thereof.

We have, however, to do at present with this world, and very much to do with it too. It is not all bad here, and it is not all good. There is here a large measure of that which is evil and hellish ; but there is also, thank God, a measure of that which is heavenly. Sin rages here, and grace prevails here and there. It is a middle world between the other two, managed and controlled by God. It is connected with heaven by Jacob's antitypical ladder ; and it is connected with hell also, alas ! by a broken law and sin. If we are saved, our faces have been turned towards Zion, and we are going to that blessed place. But our Lord reigns over all the nations of the world, which mystery I cannot explain. What darkness, superstition, cruelty, and diabolical evil prevail in many of the nations of the earth ! but we will leave this mystery for the present where it is. There is a throne, and One sits upon it ; and all the nations of the earth are beneath His eye, and under His dominion. God reigns over worlds and nations, over cities and over villages ; and I have known and still know some villages in our favoured land which have been graciously blessed for years. You may go into some provincial towns and not find the gospel of God's free grace, but there are villages here, in which stand sanctuaries, and where the pure gospel of the grace of God is sweetly preached. But

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

Well, His throne is approachable, and His reign is universal.

God's reign *is gracious and everlasting*. His throne will never be empty. Our good Queen has been seated on her throne for fifty years ; but it must be left, for earthly monarchs are mortal, notwithstanding their grandeur, majesty, and glory ; and the throne of England will be empty some day, so far as its present occupant is concerned. "And what are your feelings about it ?" Why, God save the Queen ! I can and do go as far as that, for I am loyal. Well, though the throne of England be empty, yet your royal Father will never die, nor be unseated, nor vacate His high seat of Divine and heavenly honour. "His dominion ruleth over all," and His kingdom shall stand for ever and ever. The purposes and decrees of God are both barriers and outlets. They are barriers, for He says concerning every enemy and every hostile power, Thus far mayest thou come, and no further ; and here shall thy rage and power be stayed. Popery would rule the country, and the world, if it might and could ; but there is a point beyond which its power cannot go. Whatever Mahomedanism may now be, there was a time, many centuries ago, when the false prophet would have prevailed over all the nations of the earth, if he might and could ; but there was a point beyond which he could not go. And there are persons and systems in existence now which would swamp, drown and annihilate the great principles of Divine and eternal truth if they could ; but there is a point beyond which they cannot go. Reading recently a paper concerning the Jubilee, the writer rejoiced in a good many things, regarding the fact that many great and important changes had taken place during the last fifty years ; and one thing in which he rejoiced was the removal of Calvinism from the Church

of England, and in a great measure from the professing church altogether. He was so strangely out of order (not to use a harsher word,) that he said, that by the departure of Calvinism, life has been made sweeter, and the sting of death has been taken away. Only think, that the removal of Calvinism destroys the sting of death! That spirit, my friend, would cover the world, and drown the professing church if it might and could; but the God of truth is on His throne, and nothing can go beyond the barriers of which I am speaking. But if Divine decrees are barriers on the one hand, they are outlets on the other. The waves of opposition dash against the decrees of God, but they go no further. Through these decrees on the other hand, there flows the river of peace and grace, and truth and love, the streams whereof make glad the city of God. I do not wonder at John being in an ecstasy when he saw this. "And I was in the spirit, and heard a voice saying, Come hither, and I will shew thee things which must be done hereafter." That is all I will say on this point. I am afraid I have taken too much time on this branch of our subject this morning.

In the second place, a word on *the bow*. "And there was a rainbow round about the throne." Not a military bow, not a weapon of war, not a bow with an arrow in it, and arrows did not appear lying upon the throne of Him that sat in the midst of the bow; but a rainbow, a sign of peace, a symbol of reconciliation, the covenant of grace was round about the throne. God said to Noah, "Behold, I do set My bow in the cloud." It is God's bow. The natural rainbow is His, and the mystical or spiritual rainbow of the covenant is also His. Just as the creature has not, and never had, the slightest hand in producing the natural rainbow, so neither has the creature the slightest hand in producing, arranging, or securing to himself the blessings of the covenant of grace. The natural rainbow is God's creature, both beautiful and grand, and it indicates the greater grandeur of its Creator. Well, as that is God's own work, and no hands but His made it, so this is God's eternal covenant with His well-beloved Son, concerning the thousands and thousands that shall for ever be before His throne. Not to go into the matter naturally, how is this rainbow formed? We know that the natural rainbow is composed of various colours marvellously blended, and united very beautifully to one another. You cannot tell where one colour ends and another begins. Each colour, however, is visible, and the whole seven are essential to the perfection of the bow. How is the bow of the covenant formed? With all the promises of God, and His great oath running through them all. All the blessings of the covenant, and the grace of all blended in a Divinely beautiful and glorious manner, with all the attributes of God, omnipotence, love, wisdom, grace, mercy, peace, truth, and eternity. All the perfections of God are blended wonderfully and gloriously in the covenant of His grace, by virtue of what our great Head is and has done. As there can be no natural rainbow without the sun and rain, or a watery cloud; so neither can there be any spiritual rainbow without the presence and the glory of the great Sun of Righteousness in heaven. Our dear Lord has done His work, and what work was that? The deluge in Noah's time drowned the world, and the deluge of divine wrath fell

on Christ, and He bore it all, and now God says, sitting on the throne, "For this is as the waters of Noah unto Me; for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with Thee nor rebuke Thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kindness shall not depart from Thee, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on Thee." Hence, there is the bow: the deluge having fallen upon Jesus, and passed away for ever, God sitting on the throne says, Now I do set my bow here, Christ the glorious Sun is risen, the once suffering Son of God is ascended to heaven there to, shine for ever. And this forms the bow of the everlasting covenant, by which God resolves to do you good for ever. There was a rainbow round about the throne: this bow can never be broken.

I like the idea of Dr. Goodwin, for I am a lover of Puritans, notwithstanding all that is said against Calvinism. Goodwin, Owen, and such great and good men I dearly love. Dr. Goodwin says, "You are not to suppose that the bow appeared like a half-moon or semi-circle, like the ordinary rainbow, but that it surrounded and encircled the throne, for it was *round about* it, in sight unto an emerald." Why, that is such a rainbow as never was seen before! It is so, and the covenant of grace is unique; indeed, there is nothing like it, the rainbow of the covenant round about the throne. Will there ever be a storm there? No, God has sworn that he will not be wroth with us, nor rebuke us. No, the rainbow will never be removed, a breakage will never occur in it, and an opening will never happen; it is fixed round about the throne, and the covenant of grace will stand for ever.

Thirdly, *its position* round about the throne. Visible, fixed in its position, and never varying. "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of My mouth." It was visible to all alike. The natural rainbow is so; it is not formed for private individuals, or to be seen privately merely, it is for the world to look at, and millions may and can see it, when it appears in the heavens; and all the church of God are favoured with a sight of this bow. Brother and sister, when you go to the throne to pray, look at the bow, it is always there, it is your privilege that God is a covenant God to you. Do not forget the bow, it is round about the throne, visible to all. Round about, so that in whatever way God comes to you, He comes as your covenant God, whatever He sends to you comes through the covenant bow and is a covenant gift, whether it be divine chastisement, divine direction, or a measure of divine honey. And if you go to God in prayer you are heard, because you are loved with covenant love, and your prayers ascend to heaven and are answered in accordance with the covenant arrangements and promises of God. Round about. On the right hand the bow appears, on the left it is seen, before and behind it is the same; and as to past, present, and future, the bow or covenant of grace surrounds all.

The *appearance of the bow*. "In sight like unto an emerald." Green is the prevailing colour of the natural rainbow, and the emerald is a green precious stone. How shall we spiritualize this? I do not care much for spiritualizing; God's covenant is always fresh, always new, always agree-

able to the eye. Perhaps it appeared like an emerald to indicate the fact that as green is probably the colour which is most suited and agreeable to the human eye, so the covenant of grace is said to be like an emerald, because it is always agreeable, attractive, and acceptable to the true believer. What grandeur and what grace are here ! What majesty appears in the ordinary bow, and what majesty and grandeur shine in God's covenant bow ! What grace as well as grandeur is there, even about the throne ! " I will not be wroth thee," come and " call upon Me in the day of trouble." But I have contracted guilt. " I will not be wroth with thee." I am suffering from the fact that I have fallen into trouble. " I will not be wroth with thee." Come and tell Me all, for I wait to be gracious. " Him that cometh I will in no wise cast out." So that we have the coming of the trembling, burdened, broken-hearted sinner, and God inviting him near. And notwithstanding the fears of that sinner God says, " I am not angry, fury is not in Me : I look at the bow, the promise I have given, and the covenant I have formed with My dear Son on your behalf. Come, therefore, and open your mouth wide, and I will fill it."

As for *the remarks*, I think I must leave them, except that I will just say that clouds and darkness are round about Him. Do you say I had forgotten that text ? No, I have not. " Behold, I do set my bow in the cloud, and I will look upon it ;" therefore, if clouds and darkness are round about Him, the bow of the covenant is there also, and may be seen in the cloud by a living and strong faith. Another thought strikes me. Great troubles were to follow, and did follow, as we read in this book ; but all that followed was preceded by this marvellous arrangement for the comfort of John and of the church. There is the throne, and our God upon it, and the rainbow of the covenant is round about it. There are the elders, and the four beasts before the throne, in peace and safety with God ; so that all that subsequently happened was ordered, arranged, connected together, or permitted by the covenant love and wisdom of our gracious covenant God. And as Kent sings :

" Here, when thy fears begin to rise,
And hope in disappointment dies ;
This cov'nant bow thy fears shall quell,
'Twas made for thee in all things well."

May the Lord add His blessing, for Christ's sake. Amen.

CHRIST'S DEPARTURE TO HEAVEN.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

On LORD'S-DAY EVENING, JULY 26th, 1885.

"But now I go My way to Him that sent Me; and none of you asketh Me, Whither goest Thou?"—John xvi. 5.

"MANY are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all." It is said that the Lord delivereth *him*. The number of righteous persons on the earth is very considerable, and all of them are at times in trouble and affliction, but it is a fact that they shall be delivered out of them all. But our God has been pleased to express Himself in a peculiar manner, saying, "The Lord delivereth *him* not *them*, out of them all," indicating that every individual saint lives beneath the ever-wakeful and watchful eye of God. Every true believer shall be guarded and protected by Jehovah, and sooner or later the weakest and feeblest one shall emerge from trouble and sorrow, and take his seat in eternal rest. But why are the righteous tried, and why are their trials and afflictions many? God giveth no account of any of His matters; but "He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust." We are in the hands of infinite wisdom, as well as of everlasting love; and God is dealing with His people in a manner which will surely do them good, and promote His own honour and glory. Whilst we see the hand of God at work in connection with mysteries dark and deep, it well becomes us as purblind creatures to be silent in His presence. Many of the people of God,—and I think I may number myself among them,—have resolved to have a smooth path through life; for it is not in human nature to choose trouble nor to love it, on the contrary, the flesh kicks and rebels against it; and, therefore the saints are sometimes looking on the right hand and on the left for a level road. They resolve again and again to make their circumstances, if possible, agreeable; although our great reigning Lord has said, "In *Me* ye shall have peace,"—not in the world, not in your plans, or the manner in which you execute them. "In *Me* ye shall have peace;" "in the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer I have overcome the world." It is said, "In the world ye shall have tribulation;" and I think I have rejoiced in the position in which the Saviour was pleased to place that fact. Observe, it stands between two bright and blessed stars: "First, in *Me* ye shall have peace;" and then, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world;" and between those two lights we have the cloud of trouble,—"*in the world ye shall have tribulation.*" The world, however, is a conquered enemy; and therefore, the believer, is not, strictly, speaking, correct when he says he

is going to heaven through an enemy's country. This world does not belong to the devil. Hell was made for him, and for his slaves and followers; but he is not Lord of all, for our Jesus is upon the throne. Satan is permitted to go up and down in the earth, to tempt and try the people of God; but if our faith is strong, we shall see that the monster is chained, and that the hand of his great Conqueror holds the chain; hence—

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

Nevertheless, in the world the righteous shall have tribulation. Not a few of them are tried and afflicted in relation to their families. I have known during the three-and-thirty years I have been with you, many mothers and fathers with aching heads and broken hearts, in consequence of family disappointments and trials. Not a few of God's servants are in tribulation with regard to their business: but it is not for me in the pulpit to go into these matters; therefore, I will only say, we are in the world, and must have to do with it. Some of you have more to do with it than I have, and I know that some believers are sorely tried and troubled in relation to business matters. Again, some of God's people have been tried with regard to church affairs; and I speak experimentally when I say that church trials are among the bitterest troubles the child of God passes through. Some of us have known what it is to have sleepless nights, and days of restlessness and sorrow, in consequence of the state of things in the church or churches with which we have been connected. We are, however, greatly favoured in this respect in this place; for there has never been any very serious misunderstanding here. The Lord be thanked for His goodness towards us. Let us unitedly put the crown of praise upon the great Head of Zion. But if there are no business trials, and no family trials, and no church trials, there is always enough in the heart of every child of God to try him night and day. “In me,” said Paul, a greater man than any of us now present, “that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing; for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.” Indwelling sin is an enemy that is very near to us,—nearer in fact than our business, and to use a strong expression, nearer to us than our families are. Families dwell within in a certain sense, but our children, our wives and our husbands do not dwell within as sin dwells there; and so long as we are the subjects of indwelling sin, we shall experience affliction and trouble.

But many of the afflictions of the saints have arisen out of persecution. The Saviour in the chapter out of which I have taken my text, gives us several important predictions, and several precious promises, and much rich comfort and consolation. He gave the disciples certain important predictions: “These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. “They shall put you out of the synagogues; yea, the time cometh, when whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.” This was part of the prospect the Saviour opened before His apostles, which was not very attractive or cheering. Nevertheless, He would not deceive them. “I have spoken these things unto you, that you should not be offended. First, they will draw the ecclesiastical sword, and turn

you out of the synagogue, or excommunicate you ; and secondly, they will draw the civil sword and kill you. And this took place in the experience of most of the apostles of Christ, and this has been the experience also of thousands of God's people since their days. Oh the sham religion of persecuting Antichrist ! and I could go a little closer too if I had time. Ecclesiastical judges sat upon certain cases, and condemned professors of religion for holding certain doctrines ; and then handed them over to the civil power. They tried cases religiously, and found thousands guilty of heresy, and then handed them over to the magistrate to be executed. And this was a literal fulfilment of the words, "They shall excommunicate you ; and the time cometh when whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." Thus we are reminded of the fact that there was a measure of conscientiousness connected with all this. Be very careful when you hear people talk about acting up to their consciences, and that their actions should follow its dictates. Conscience may be wrong, and if there is no grace therein, it is not good. If there has been no blood applied, and one is not directed by the Holy Spirit, he will err in following the requirements and demands of his conscience. The persecutors that killed the apostles thought that by doing so they were doing God service. Was their conduct, however, approved by the God of heaven ? "I speak these things unto you now, that when the time comes ye may not be offended." Sin and grace can never coalesce, and the church and the world cannot be united together. The two companies, the two societies, the two seeds are wondrously distinct from each other. The world will hate the people of God, and the saints will not be able to associate with the world. "If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in Him ;" and "whosoever will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." Let us, therefore, shine as believers, and make up our minds to be persecuted if we do so. Thank God they can not draw the civil sword against us now, nor cast us into prison for the sake of Christ and His truth. Nevertheless, the spirit of persecution is still in existence ; and if the restraints were removed from it, it would break forth in forms as cruel, and as bitter, as in days past and gone. Well, the Saviour predicted persecution, and then He gave them great and precious promises to comfort their souls. And now He says, "I go my way to Him that sent me." He had been with them three years, and during that period they had walked up and down the land with Him, and the hand of persecution had scarcely ever fallen upon them, but upon their Leader and Captain. "Now, I am no more with you, I am going my way to Him that sent Me," and it is expedient for you that I should do so.

The subject before us is the departure of our Lord from this world to His Father. I shall make no remarks upon the latter clause of this verse. "Now, I go my way to Him that sent me." The first thought that occurs to my mind, as requiring a like notice is, *when did the Saviour depart to Him that sent Him ?* "But *now* I go my way." Let me here observe in somewhat general forms that our Lord is perfectly punctual, and that Divine punctuality constitutes a branch of our eternal salvation and life. Time is of the utmost importance to God and also.

to His people. In my spirit I wish that God's saints felt more than they appear to feel in regard to this. A year or a month is a very important period, and so is a week or a day. How many minutes are lost ! and yet a minute is important in the government of God. And I go further, for I am warranted to do so, and say that moments which are the smallest points of time are important in the providence and grace of God. "For a small moment have I forsaken thee ; but with great mercies will I gather thee." "A vineyard of red wine : I the Lord do keep it, I will water it *every moment*." This vineyard must be an important one, and a very extraordinary place to require watering every moment. What is the meaning of the phraseology, "I will water it every moment ?" Why, it means this, my friends, that the blessing of God never ceases to fall, that the enriching grace of God never ceases to distil upon the heads and hearts of His people on the earth. Our thoughts are very quick, for they spring up and travel in a moment, like a flash of lightning to the ends of the earth, and in a moment they are in heaven or hell. And how much has arisen from a thought ! One may have given rise to an empire ; for "Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth !" And if thoughts may be the seeds of such great results, they are matters of importance in the government of God, and He might well say, "I will water it every moment." But what has this to do with our text ? My subject just now is Divine punctuality, and the Saviour was Divinely punctual in every branch of His work, and in every step He took as the Saviour of lost and ruined sinners. When the time was come, and He was due in this world, He appeared upon the scene ; for He came in due time. Our gracious God never comes too early, or before He is needed, and, bless His name, He never comes to the help of His people too late. When Jesus Christ was due on earth, He appeared at the very hour, and an angel of God announced His advent, "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour which is Christ the Lord." And then, further, our Lord died at the appointed time. "These words spake Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come." Our Lord referred to a particular hour that was agreed upon between Himself and His Father in the council of peace, before the foundation of the world. How much depended on that hour ! it was the grand central point of time, out of which flowed, and still continues to flow streams of eternal life and salvation. When Jesus was due in Gethsemane, He appeared in the garden ; and when He was due on Calvary, He appeared on the accursed tree. When He was due in heaven as the returning High Priest of our profession, He ascended to His God and our God, and to His Father and our Father. He went His way to Him that sent Him. Was it by chance that our Lord died during the time the Jews celebrated their passover ? No, it was a matter of pre-ordination, and Divine appointment. "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us ;" and it was right and proper that the antitype should answer to the type, and the substance to the shadow, and therefore, our passover was sacrificed for us at a particular time. It was not a matter of chance that our Lord died at three o'clock in the afternoon. You are aware that in the former dispensation there were two daily sacrifices for sin, one called the morning sacrifice at nine o'clock, and the other

the evening sacrifice, at three o'clock in the afternoon. Christ is our morning and our evening Lamb; and at the ninth hour, which was three o'clock in the afternoon, "He cried with a loud voice, and said, It is finished and gave up the ghost." And how striking was the fact that at that hour the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, even at the very moment the priest was standing before it offering the evening incense to the God of Israel. How it must have startled him! Well, all that was divinely arranged, and I put these historical facts before you, for the purpose of encouraging you to hope in the infinite and boundless mercy of that God who times all the operations of His hand and keeps all His appointments with His beloved people. "Jesus said, And now I go my way to Him that sent Me." It appears then that He went to heaven, or returned to His Father, after He had finished His work on the earth; and that He would not, and did not die until He had finished it; for His life was in His own hands: "I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." He came to do a certain work in a certain time, and He went about it and through it like the great God-man and Mediator. He worked every day for three-and-thirty years, and when they were expired He was at the end of His sufferings and His labour, when He lifted up His eyes towards His Father in heaven, and said, "It is finished, and bowed His head, and gave up the ghost." Our Lord's work was completed before He died and went to heaven. How unlike you and me in our performances, even those which give us most pleasure and satisfaction. A finishing stroke or two is wanted here and there, and something extra is required to render it satisfactory. But here we have, or had, the great God man, the grand embodiment of Divine wisdom, love, and omnipotence, saving sinners, who proceeded with His work, sweating blood, and weeping and dying the curse away; and when it was all gone, and the storm was all over, and millions were redeemed and saved, then He said, "Now. I go my way to Him that sent Me." Here, then in, the first place, we have the time when our dear Lord went to heaven.

In the second place, let us look *at the point or the place from which He departed*. "I go my way to Him that sent Me." He was in this world. I do not know whether He has ever been in other worlds as He was in this. He is in other worlds with regard to His omnipresence, for as God He is everywhere; but whether He has visited other worlds as He visited this, I am not required to know. He has been here, and tabernacled on earth; and having saved sinners, and fulfilled His Father's purpose, He said, Now I shall leave the place; and He went from the scene of His labour. Now, I want to remind you of two or three things; first, that the bodily presence of Christ on the earth is *not now needed*; secondly, that it is *not expedient*; and thirdly, that it is *not possible*. In the first place, the bodily presence of Christ in this world is *not now needed*. The saints do not need it. When I say His bodily presence, my hearers understand me. I mean the real visible presence of Jesus Christ, as God-man. He is really and truly God, but He is man as well as God, and therefore, God and man in one great Person. As man He cannot be in two places at the same time, although as God He is everywhere. As

man, however, He must be located somewhere, and the Scriptures represent Him as sitting at the Father's right hand. We need Him there, but we do not need Him here. His bodily presence, since He has saved His people from condemnation is in heaven. If we need it here, it must be to fulfil some purpose. Is it for revelation? Do we need Him here to reveal the things of God unto us? He has done that, and the revelation is written here, and it is sufficiently full and copious. Is it for the application of salvation to the heart? Does that require His presence here? The Holy Ghost does that: "He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you:" And if we have the Holy Ghost to apply salvation in this world, we do not require the presence of Jesus to do it. If Immanuel had not been here and bled, the Spirit would not now be here to apply anything. The Lord Jesus, however, came and bled and died, and then went to Him that sent Him, and now the Holy Ghost takes the blood that was shed, and applies it to the consciences of those whom He saved. We do not require, you see, the bodily presence of Jesus for revelation, nor for application. Neither is it required for consolation. Some of God's people have fancied that it would be very agreeable and pleasant to have Jesus personally here, that they might see Him and talk with Him, and have to do with Him every day. Well, we should want Him in our congregation, and other congregations of saints would like to have Him also. It is best that His bodily presence should be in heaven, and His *spiritual* presence here. "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." "Now, I go My way to Him that sent Me." My bodily presence with you on earth is no longer needful, and I am going to My God and your God, to My Father and your Father.

Again, the bodily presence of Jesus Christ is not *expedient*. "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away the Comforter will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you." His bodily presence is not expedient; for first, we are to live by faith, and not by sight; and if He were on the earth, we should, like His immediate followers and disciples, live by sight and not by faith; and this state of things was gently reprov'd by Christ in Thomas. "Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed. Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." It is blessed to see Christ, and to believe at sight; but it is more blessed to believe without seeing: so said our great and glorious Saviour. We walk by faith, we live by faith, and we stand by faith. The world derides us, because we pray to a God that they and we cannot see, and sing psalms and hymns, and make a joyful noise unto a Being Whom we believe and declare to be in heaven. We do believe He is there; and more than that we believe He is our God, our portion and our all. Therefore,

"Come, let us join our cheerful songs
With angels round the throne;"

For we live by faith of joys to come, and are as confident of the existence of our God as if we had seen Him face to face. Not expedient that Christ should be here, for I do not think we could bear His glory. He would have to veil the splendour of His majesty, if He lived among us.

John saw a measure of His glory in the Isle of Patmos, and what was the effect thereof upon him? "I fell at His feet as dead." Why, surely it is not pleasure, nor joyful communion with Jesus to fall as dead and powerless as in a swoon at His feet. We shall not so fall before Him in heaven. We could not bear the glory here. I am, said the Master, about to be glorified, and "now I go My way to Him that sent Me." Again, ordinances would be superfluous if Jesus were bodily present with us now. Should I require the bread and wine if Jesus were before my eyes; He that shed His blood and saved my soul. What should I want the ordinance of believers' baptism for, if I had before me that dear Saviour, in whom was opened the fountain for sin and for uncleanness?

We said also that His bodily presence here was not *possible*. First, we do not need it, then it is not expedient, and thirdly, it is not possible. That is a great word to use. It is impossible on this ground. Were Jesus bodily present with us in this world, He could not complete our salvation and deliverance. Having made the atonement He was bound to take it into the holiest of all, and present it to His Father there. "If He were on earth, He should not be a priest; seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law. Having magnified the law, and made it for ever honourable, He was bound as our law-fulfiller, to appear in the presence of the great Lawgiver there. We need Him there, and could not do without His presence where He is now, but we now need the Holy Ghost to reveal to us the things of Christ, and this we are favoured with. The Spirit abides with us for ever, but Jesus dwells in heaven, and we are going to Him. He will not now come to us, only in a way of spiritual power; but by and bye when His mediatorial kingdom is completed, "He will come again the second time, without sin unto salvation. He is gone from this world to His Father.

Thirdly, *how did He depart?* "Now, I go My way to Him that sent Me." Did He go alone? No, angels attended Him:—

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

Was that all? I think not, for many bodies of the saints that slept arose, and came out of their graves after His resurrection, and appeared unto many in Jerusalem. Did they die again, and were they again buried? As angels accompanied the great Conqueror to His throne, I apprehend our great Redeemer took those saints to heaven with Him; so that there was a kind of representative gathering composed of angels and risen saints, whom He presented, if I may so express myself, as a pledge and example of what the whole should be at the last great day. Nor did He go empty-handed to His Father. What did He carry with Him? A stainless character, and a great and new name. He took with Him a magnified law, and put it into the ark of the covenant which is the mercy-seat, and covered the whole with His own propitiation. Thus He magnified the law and made it honourable. He carried with Him the price of our redemption, and presented it to His Father, and

Justice said, Loose them all and let them go : I am well pleased for His righteousness' sake. He carried with Him on His breast-plate, as our great High Priest all the names of His beloved people. He went to heaven bodily and officially. Our Surety was released and returned to Him that sent Him. He went as a Conqueror. He left behind Him all the powers of darkness conquered, the world overcome, death unstung, and the grave consecrated and subjected to Himself ; while before Him was the glory in which He now dwells. He is crowned with many crowns, His seat is at the Father's right hand, and He has an everlasting right to present the persons and the offerings of all His ransomed people. My dear friends, our Lord is now just where we require Him to be as a priest a prince, and a Saviour. He is on the other side of death. What should we do, if having passed through death, we met not there our Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ ? Yes, He has passed through death, and waits on the other side to receive our souls when we arrive in that world. He is in heaven, and we on entering shall see Him face to face. People talk about entering heaven, and looking about for brothers and sisters, and deacons and pastors and so on ; but I apprehend that the saint of God on entering his home will look for the Saviour. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and others are there, and we are glad to know it ; but " Whom have I in heaven but Thee ? and there is none upon the earth that I desire beside Thee ! " We require the presence of Christ before God, between Him and our poor souls. When Jesus went to Him that sent Him, there was nothing between Him and His Father ; and we, having reached heaven, my brethren, shall find nothing between us and our Saviour. Sin is put away, guilt has been removed, and the devil is conquered and chained. No, we want no priest between Christ and our souls, and no creature to introduce us to Him. There is an open way for the sinner to the Saviour, as there was an open way for the Saviour to His Father. What is Jesus to you ? The pearl of great price, the chiefest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely. You say I could afford to lose this, and that, and the other friend, and this comfort and the other ; but I could not afford to lose my Lord. Jesus is my all in all, and He is in heaven. Therefore, my heart and my affections are there ; " for where the treasure is, there will the heart be also."

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

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

THE ACT AND TIME OF DIVINE DELIVERANCE FORGOTTEN.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, 1st AUGUST, 1886.

"They remembered not His hand, nor the day when he delivered them from the enemy."—Psa. lxxviii. 42.

OUR Lord said to the children of Israel, through Moses His beloved servant, "Thou shalt remember all the way in which the Lord thy God hath led thee these forty years in the wilderness." Those words are still fresh, and they are still in force. It well becomes the children of God even to-day, to remember the dealings of their Heavenly Father with their souls, and with their bodies also; but like the children of Israel, we are prone to forget our God, and to forget those great and gracious deliverances also, which he has so frequently wrought for us. God complains as it were of this in connection with the nation of Israel, in the psalm out of which we have taken our text to-night, saying, "Ye have turned back, and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel." Have you and I never "limited the Holy One of Israel?" Have not thousands of the members of God's church limited God, the great Head of the church, in every age of time? And is it not the policy of the devil to tempt the people of God to limit the Holy One of Israel? Satan knows well that in proportion as we limit our God our hearts are barren, and a spirit of rebellion prevails within. We are, if one may speak for others, exceedingly prone to limit God with respect to time, for we want to bind Him in relation to this point. We want Him to hear us, and to hear us now. We want certain blessings, and we want them to-day. We desire to see His almighty hand, and we want Him, as it were, to put it out of heaven at the present time. God, however, will not be limited by His creatures as to time. He will, and He must work, for He has bound Himself to do so; but He will work in His own way, and also in His own time. The children of Israel, like God's dear people now, sometimes in impatience and unbelief, limited their covenant God in this respect. Then, again, they frequently limited Him as to the blessings they wanted. They not only desired His blessing, but they complained if this or the other particular blessing was not given.

Notwithstanding that God's hands are full of mercies, they mention particular favours or manifestations of His goodness, which they believe are needful, and they would bind the Almighty God to grant them what they deem indispensable gifts. Thus they limited the Holy One of Israel. Again, they sometimes limited Him with regard to their position, and their path or paths in the wilderness. And have you and I never said, in relation to providential and perhaps, in relation to spiritual matters also, "Lord, not that way, lead us not in that path." We have tried, and have done our very best, or worst, to limit the Almighty One of Israel as to this matter. God, however, has marked out the path in which His people shall walk; for "it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps," therefore, their goings are of the Lord. Our God will do all His will as to the paths in which He leads His people, as to the blessings He confers upon them, and as to the times and periods of appearing unto and for them. But, perhaps, one of the worst features of our experience is, that of limiting the Holy One of Israel as to His work and His power; hence it is said in my text, to-night, "They remembered not His hand, nor the day when He delivered them from the enemy."

Having thus reached the subject, let me offer a few plain and simple remarks upon it. The text divides itself very easily into three parts:—First, *the hand of God*; second, *the day on which that hand appeared*; and third, *the fact asserted*,—Israel did not remember it.

In the first place, let us make a few observations on *the hand of God*. "They remembered not His hand." We are now to lose sight of times and circumstances, at least for a few minutes, and endeavour to meditate upon the glorious hand of our covenant God. Sometimes we try to preach His heart, and at other times we preach His eye, while when so directed we try to set forth His attentive ear which is ever ready to hear prayer, or we dwell upon His bowels of mercies: but to-night for a few minutes we are to direct our attention to His hand.

I notice in the first place, that we, like the children of Israel are sometimes forgetful of *the oath of God*. Do you say, What has that to do with His hand? I will tell you, for perhaps you have forgotten the fact, and we are very prone to forget very much that is of great importance, God's oath is connected with His hand. There are various methods of taking oaths, and different countries take them in different ways. The children of Israel, or the Jewish nation took oaths or swore in the presence of God by lifting up their hands. Hence Abraham said, "I have lifted up mine hand unto the Lord, the Most High God, the possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread even to a shoe-latchet" from the people whom I have succoured and delivered, lest they should charge me with having been selfish and covetous. He deemed it a matter of importance to swear before God that in what he had done he was quite disinterested, and desired no material gain; hence, "I have lifted up my hand unto the Most High God." Well now, our God has in condescension to our weakness and darkness,—and I do beg attention to this,—in order that we may not forget His hand, in condescension to our feebleness, our God has said, "I lift up My hand to heaven and say, I live

for ever, so that we have God's promise and God's oath, and we often forget them both, losing sight of them altogether. "They remembered not His hand," which God lifted up for Abraham their ancestor and swore two things; first, "Abraham, I will be thy God," and I confirm My promise by My oath. I lift up My hand to heaven and say, By My life, and My name, and My honour, I will be Thy God; and secondly, I lift up My hand and swear, that having become your God, I will give you the land of Canaan." And our God has promised that He will be our God; and as an oath for confirmation puts an end to all strife,—God, because He could swear by no greater, swore by Himself, that He would for ever be our God:

"Abram, I'll be Thy God," He said;
And He was Abram's God."

And what He said to Abraham in covenant, that He says to every believer in His own great name whether he be great or small. "I will be Thy God;" and, further, having promised and sworn that He would be our God for ever, He has also promised and sworn that He will give us the land of promised rest. Do you always remember this solemn act of Jehovah, these holy promises of your God, and this solemn oath of the great I AM?

"His honour and His name's at stake,
To save me from the burning lake."

To come down as low as I possibly can, I think of Nehemiah's words, "Who *desire* to fear Thy name." There are those in the family of God who cannot speak positively with regard to the nature and character of their fear; but you can speak positively with regard to your desire to fear God's name. That desire must be fulfilled, for God is its Author, and its root is His grace, and you are among those honoured persons for whom God lifted up His hand, and swore by Himself that He would be your God for ever, and take you to dwell for ever with Himself. Now, as our time is limited, our remarks must be brief, and therefore, let that suffice for the first point. They remembered not His uplifted hand when He swore that He would save them.

In the second place, they remembered not *the almightiness of His hand*. They not only forgot how solemn it was, but they remembered not its strength. And if I may speak for you, you are very prone to forget the same fact. Our God, however, has said, "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save, neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear." I would always hear the voice of my covenant God and heavenly Father asking me as it were the question, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" Is there a rocky heart too hard for Me to break? Is there a knotty question too hard for Me to answer? Are there puzzling and perplexing circumstances too tangled for Me to unravel? Will you limit My wisdom? Will you regard Me as having an arm too short to reach you, or too unskilful to manage your affairs? They remembered not the strength of God's arm, and they forgot what He had done. They went back in their hearts, it is said, to Egypt, and remembered not what God

had done for them there,—how He put His strong arm underneath the whole nation, and lifted them all out of the fiery furnace at once ; and they forgot it all. They forgot also how marvellously He made a way for them through the sea and in the wilderness. They saw that great sight, the outstretched hand of God, in the fiery and cloudy pillar, they saw the whole host of Egypt behind them, and the rolling waters and dividing waters before them, and how God with His strong hand went before and opened a way for them all through the Red Sea. Having reached, however, the opposite shore of the sea, and seen all their enemies destroyed, it was not long before they began to talk about stoning Moses. You have brought us out of Egypt to perish here in the desert. Let us not pelt the children of Israel, for we are not better than they. Let us not cast stones at them ; for, like them, we have most ungratefully forgotten the strength of the arm of the Lord our God. He has done much for us, and in some respects more for us, spiritually, than He did for the children of Israel. Theirs was a temporal redemption, ours is a spiritual one. Theirs was a temporal deliverance, ours is a spiritual one ; and the marvellous manner in which the Red Sea was divided, was a manifestation of Divine providence, and providence is in many respects inferior to, at least it is always subordinate to God's grace. They forgot what He had done, and we forget what He is doing now ; whilst His everlasting arms are underneath us, and we are lying in them. Oh what provoking creatures are we ! and what a merciful God is ours ! We lie in His everlasting arms, and murmur and question His right to do what He is doing, or the wisdom of His dealings with us ! “ You may do this, sir, but we do not.” I am glad if you do not ; but my heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. I would have something in the church that I do not see in it, and something in this, that, and the other individual that I do not see in them, and a good deal in the circumstances of my life, that I cannot find in them ; yet the church is not mine, but God's, and all souls are in His hands ; and, therefore, it must be that,

“ My life's minutest circumstance,
Is subject to His eye.”

And yet, whilst everlasting arms are underneath me, and in my judgment and understanding I believe that I should sink into perdition were it not so, I complain of the conduct of My heavenly Father. They remembered not His hand, how strong it was, and how its omnipotence was displayed. Its omnipotence is being displayed now, and we forget what He has done, and also the strength of His arm with regard to the future. What have we to do with the future ? Nothing, or not much at present, except this one important point which should not be lost sight of, “ I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” This is a thousand times better for us, than if we possessed the spirit of prophecy, and could look into the future and see what God's arrangements are. Grasp that promise with all your hearts if you can, and you may leave the future where it is, in the hands of your gracious and covenant God. They remembered not the omnipotence of His arm. They forgot the victories He

had wrought for them, the way He had made for them, and how He had preserved them. The victories He had achieved for them. "His right hand and His holy arm hath gotten Him the victory." That high and strong hand and holy arm hath gotten us the victory until now; and I do not, brethren, go too far, for are you not something more than conquerors and overcomers here to-night. Have you been trampled on and destroyed as a Christian? No, not yet. Then Satan has not finally overcome you, but in fact you are hitherto more than conquerors through the blood, and power, and word of the Lamb. Forget not the victories He has wrought for you.

Again, I sometimes think we are prone to forget another important point in connection with the wonder-working hand of God; and that is, how He preserved us, before we knew His dear name. "Preserved in Christ Jesus, and called." We are ready enough to begin with those matters with which God began with us, or that is how we express ourselves. My brother, God did not begin with you in your regeneration; the new birth was not the commencement of God's power, and favour, and mercy towards you. In point of fact, God's mercy and favour had no beginning. But let me speak of the actual and active manifestations of His power. The moment you came into the world the arms of Divine providence received you, and you were preserved in Christ Jesus before you were called. Many of God's people have had hair-breadth escapes from death, before they were quickened by His grace. The late Mr. Gadsby used to say, as I have been informed, and I think I have read it somewhere, in relation to preservation before calling: "The people of God cannot die, while in a state of nature, for the life of them." Not that they were alive in themselves, but

"He gave us grace in Christ His Son,
Before He spread the starry sky."

Saul of Tarsus could not die a Pharisee. The thief could not die before grace entered his heart, and sweetly forced him to say, "Lord, remember me, when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." The jailor could not die before he was brought to say, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Yes, we forget God's strong arm, which preserved and protected us when we cursed His name, and by which we have been supplied, and preserved, and blessed until now.

Again, they forgot the *skilfulness of His hand*, as well as its strength. A person may have great physical strength, and yet not know how to use it; and if one be strong and ignorant, he may prove a very dangerous person. Our God's arm is an almighty one, and His wisdom is infinite and infallible. His great strength can never be employed against His people. He never guesses at anything, and He never chooses as we express it, the lesser of two evils. He is always right, and He always has been so. However mysterious His conduct may have been, and however deep the wonders of His providence may have proved, the keenest-sighted fiend has never yet detected a fault or a blemish in His character or His government. Hell has watched His hand, and would be glad to find an

error in God's conduct and operations; but He goes on working in a sovereign manner, and almightiness pursues an infinitely wise course. Has it not been so in your experience and mine? As I said last Tuesday, when preaching on an anniversary occasion at Gravesend, had I been permitted to have my way, I should now have been at Meopham, and not have settled in London at all; but my ways are not the ways of the Lord, neither are my thoughts His thoughts. Could I have had my way and have frustrated the purposes of God in that particular, I should have done the people in that place no good, and they would have done me none. Oh! it is best as it is; and, therefore, let us not forget the skilfulness of the hand of the Lord our God. How marvellously He worked when the first rank of the children of Israel were at the edge of the water, at the Red Sea. Perhaps the feet of the foremost were almost in the water, when God said to Moses, "Wherefore criest thou unto Me? speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward;" although at that moment there was no way for them to do so. They were to take God at His word, and as they went forward the waters were divided for them. Almighty power made a path, and infinite wisdom and skill guided the operations of God's hand and the people found a new way, a right way, an unexpected way, a safe way, a marvellous way, because it was made by the wonder-working hand of God: yet they remembered not His hand.

Again, they forgot *the fulness of His hand*. Not only its omnipotence and skilfulness but what was in it? What was in God's hand, then? and what is in it now? A sword was then in it, and a sword is there now. Joshua said, when a mysterious being appeared before Him with a drawn sword in His hand, "Art thou for us, or for our enemies?" and he soon received a satisfactory answer to his question. Your God has a drawn sword, not to smite you with, but your enemies. In another respect He is represented as having a sword girded upon His thigh. He has not done fighting yet, but has other blows to strike, other foes to destroy, other systems to cast down, and other conquering work to do. There is sword in God's hand, which He will bring down upon Idumea, and upon all the enemies of His church and people. Remember that He holds a sword. What else? He has a rod as well as a sword in His hand. "Hear the rod, and who hath appointed it. And who is the rod for? Not for the devil, but for the children of God; for whilst it is His intention to smite His enemies with the sword, it is His purpose to chastise His people with a rod. You do not believe this, perhaps. I have had hearers in this place occasionally, who were not believers in Divine chastisement. This I cannot help; for I do not consider when I enter the pulpit, or am in it, what my hearers believe or what they do not believe. I believe in Divine chastisement, and that God's hand holds a rod as well as a sword. I have some experience in this direction, for I have been chastised again and again, and I hope the Lord will never leave me to myself in this respect. Do not forget, then, the sword; and do not forget the rod. What else is there in His hand? "In the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red, it is full of mixture." How large this cup is I cannot tell; but "He

pouresth out of the same; but the dregs thereof all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them." But remember there was a cup in God's hand when the dear Redeemer was in Gethsemane; and the Saviour emptied it. Remember also the cup of salvation which is in God's hand. What shall I render unto Him? "I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord." Remember His hands are full of blessing, and every morning He comes into our rooms and fills our cups. Day by day, we receive blessings undeserved. Do you always think of this? Israel remembered not that His hands were full of blessings.

Then again His hand is *a bountiful one*. It is ever open. "Thou openest Thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing." As the God of providence, He blesses the earth, and satisfies the desire of every living thing; for who can have temporal good without the goodness of God? and He has a right to supply from nature the ordinary wants of His people and others. And then, He supplies His people from that mediatorial fulness which it hath pleased Him should dwell in His beloved Son. From that immeasurably deep fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. Do not be afraid, for, Paul says, "My God shall supply all your need, according to His riches in glory, by Christ Jesus." Thus we have God's upraised hand denoting His promise and His oath, the almightiness of His hand, the skilfulness of His hand, the fulness of His hand, and His perpetual bounty.

"Thus far we've proved the promise good,
Which Jesus ratified with blood."

Now, a word, and only a word, on *the day indicated in the text*. "They remembered not His hand, nor the day when He delivered them from the enemy." I have selected this text because I trust it was applied to my mind by the Spirit; but when it came to me these two points especially impressed my heart,—*the hand, and the day*. Both were forgotten by the children of Israel, and both are forgotten in a measure by the Lord's people now. The day they remembered not. Well, what is there in a day? Very much, for first, it was the *appointed day*, and they forgot that; you have not forgotten the portion I read at the commencement of the service to-night, Genesis xv., "Thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not their's, and they shall afflict them four hundred years." A date was given, given by God, whose strong hand was forgotten. "They shall afflict them four hundred years; and I will judge that nation, and then bring out thy seed with great substance." Then mark in the 12th of Exodus what the Holy Ghost says, "And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred years, even on the *self-same day* it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out of the land of Egypt." They forgot that day, and the hand that brought them out; and that very day, according to God's word, He delivered them. The deep affliction of Israel did not induce God to go there before He was due; and the hostility and opposition of Pharaoh did not prevent Him from going when He was due. When, therefore, the hands of the clock, as it were, pointed at the very

time God had indicated, He was there, with His high hand and out-stretched arm, and delivered His people. Our deliverances are appointed and God will come at the self-same time. Let us never forget what a hand we have to work for us, and that the operations of God's hand are all timed. Again, that day was *their birthday*, as a nation. "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months, it shall be the first month of the year to you." Their deliverance from Egypt changed the beginning of their year. They did not live until God brought them out of Egypt. Their national life then commenced. And you and I did not live before we were born again, and when the new birth took place we commenced to live for God, and to live for ever. Let us not forget that day, nor the hand that regenerated us, and the fact that when we were born again, we came forth as God's children and as new creatures, to live a new life for ever and ever. We then commenced our journey to Canaan, so did they. This was the morning of our spiritual life ; and we sometimes sing,

" Thus far on our way to Zion,
We through grace divine are come ;
And the God whom we rely on,
Soon will bid us welcome home."

Do not forget the time when you started for heaven, though like many of God's dear people, you may not be able to indicate the exact period when the work of grace was commenced ; and do not forget the strong almighty hand which was then raised for your defence.

And lastly, this was *the day of Divine appropriation* ; for God said, The people in that iron furnace of Egypt are Mine, and I will go and deliver them, because they Mine. Relationship precedes deliverance, and deliverance proves our covenant relation to God.

Time will not admit of our entering upon the third point, *the fact asserted*, They remembered not the great deliverance the Lord wrought for them ; and although we also are prone to forget, can we not say and sing ;

" O bless the Lord, my soul ;
Nor let His mercies lie
Forgotten in unthankfulness,
And without praises die.

His wondrous works and ways,
He made by Moses known ;
But sent the world His truth and grace,
By His beloved Son."

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

GOD PRAISED FOR HIS WORKS AND WAYS.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, 7th NOVEMBER, 1886.

“And the heavens shall praise Thy wonders, O Lord; Thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints.” Psalm lxxxix. 5.

THE love of God was shed abroad in the heart of the Psalmist, when he penned this comprehensive and precious portion of the Divine Word. His spirit was warmed and fertilised with grace Divine, his faith in his covenant God was strong, and his hope was fixed upon the mercy of the Lord. Contemplating himself as a sinner saved by grace, and considering also the greatness of the salvation in which he was interested, he expressed this resolution, “I will sing of the mercies of the Lord (or Jehovah) for ever, with my mouth will I make known Thy faithfulness to all generations.” The Psalmist was experimentally acquainted with the triune God; when, therefore, he mentioned the great and glorious name of Jehovah, he had reference to the mercies of the Father, of the Son, and of the Spirit. “I will sing of His mercies for ever.” This implies that he believed the mercies of the Lord would never cease; for “the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting unto them that fear Him.” Mercy assumes many forms, and flows in numerous channels, and goodness and mercy are following us from day to day, even all the days of our life. We sing of the great Three entering into covenant engagements for the certain salvation of all the objects of God's love. We sing of mercy as it flows through the wounds of the Saviour, in streams of powerful, fragrant, and precious blood; and we sing of the mercy of the Spirit, which has opened our blind eyes, unstopped our deaf ears, and opened our hearts to receive the greatest boon that God can give,—the Divine nature, a new life, and the root of the matter. This also was implied on the part of the writer, that he verily believed he should live for ever and not finally fall from grace. But shall we not grow weary, and want some other subject to sing about in the presence of God? No, the mercies of God are ever full, and ever fresh and sweet, and their innumerable forms and expressions will engage the enraptured attention of all the countless millions of the redeemed and glorified for ever and ever. Heaven is a wondrous world, and our experience there will be marvellous, as I believe, and our song will ever flow from the sweetest joy that God can give. The pleasure will never become shallow or less than full and perfect. The Psalmist had referred more especially to the mercies of God, which are discovered and displayed in the

covenant of grace. "I have made," says God, "a covenant with My chosen," I have ratified that covenant with an oath, for I have sworn unto David My servant. David was a type only, Christ is the Antitype. God made a covenant with David concerning his royal house, and He made a covenant with David's great Lord concerning all His own royal sons and daughters. "Thy seed will I establish for ever." If we only believe this, under the hallowing and helping influences of the Spirit of God, we shall pursue our pilgrimage with cheerfulness and delight. "Thy seed will I establish for ever." Do we belong to that seed? Are we among the purchase of the Saviour's blood? Have we been born again? Are our names registered in heaven? Are we among that large and mighty number concerning whom it is said, "He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hands?" Then let us take the comfort presented to us in these words, "Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up Thy throne to all generations." And what then? "And the heavens shall praise Thy wonders, O Lord; thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints."

Now having thus reached the text, I will endeavour, by the help of the Spirit, to make some observations upon it by gathering up a few points which it embodies. First, let us look at *some of the Divine wonders indicated in the text*: "The heavens shall praise *Thy wonders*, O Lord. Our God is a wonder-working God, and has been so ever since He commenced working, and He will never cease to work wonders. Having begun to work, He will continue His wondrous operations for ever. "I will work," whoever is idle, whoever opposes, whoever resists, and "who shall let it?" And what will He do? "I will do all My pleasure." Nothing can be plainer, nothing can be more absolute than this, "I will do all My pleasure." We contemplate the powers of darkness, for there are such powers in existence and operation; and we are thankful that they are chained and restrained, and that there is not a fiend in existence who can say, I will do what I please, or I can do all my pleasure. We contemplate ministers of the gospel, and deacons of Christian Churches, and persons of influence, and we are thankful that none of them can say, I will do all my pleasure. We meditate for a minute or two upon God's angels in heaven, and although they are like their Maker, and are in perpetual sympathy with the Holy God, these words never fell from their lips; Gabriel has never said, "I will do all my pleasure." It becomes us therefore, on hearing these words from God Himself, to study the character of the Being who says He will do just as He pleases in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. You know there is a saying which embodies a very great truth, although it does not occur in the Bible, "God is too wise to err, and too good to be unkind." He cannot change, He cannot deny Himself, He cannot lie, He cannot do wrong. Injustice and iniquity can never be charged upon our God, He works mysteriously, but He works in holiness; He works in the dark, but He is never wrong, and we sometimes look on with wonder and consternation, but He is never capable of making a mistake while doing all His pleasure. Seated on His throne, and surrounded by saints and angels, He is doing all His pleasure, and He will do all His pleasure on the

earth. Our God would be unhappy if He were not able to do all He wills to do. His arm is strong enough to do all He pleases, and long enough to reach the most distant friend, and the most distant enemy in existence. His ear is not heavy, that he cannot hear the voice of His people, the groaning of the prisoner, and the unuttered, and unexpressed desires of them that put their trust in Him. His eye, unlike yours and mine, never becomes dim ; for He is the same, and of His years there is no end. He is not affected by time nor by eternal ages, and the fact that He has existed from all eternity has never changed Him. He is ever omnipotent, and ever great and glorious. Therefore let us sit down at His feet, and watch His hand ; for He has formed a great plan which He is executing, and His operations are ever worthy of Himself. He has a right to do as He pleases in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. Yes, God is a wonder-working God, and " the heavens shall praise Thy wonders, O Lord." Now, if I were able I might try to go into the wonders of God in creation, in providence, and into His deeper and richer wonders expressed and revealed in His covenant of grace and mercy. I have neither time nor ability to set forth the wondrous works of God in creation ; but I frequently think of one or two expressions in the fortieth chapter of Isaiah and elsewhere, " Who stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in." I always regard these words as most grand and sublime. The heavens over our head are stretched out by God's hand, not like an arch of granite, but like a curtain, and the hand that so stretched them out will roll them up and change them one day, as a garment that is worn-out to be laid aside. " And stretched them out as a tent to dwell in." Spread them out as a tent. And are the mighty visible heavens a tent only ? Why are they said to be a tent ? A tent is not a permanent building, but one set up with a view of being removed at some future time. The purpose to be fulfilled by the setting up of a tent is a temporary purpose, and when it is fulfilled the tent is removed. What a wonderful tabernacle is this ! Who dwells in it ? for He spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in. Worlds dwell there ; whether they are inhabited or not, I cannot say ; and it is not for me to dwell upon such a subject in a sermon. This world is peopled, and we, its numerous inhabitants are dwelling in this great tent. There is, however, a more wonderful world than this, and a state of things far more substantial and glorious than the visible heavens. " In my Father's house are many mansions," —not tents. In my Father's house are many mansions, and they are all to be inhabited. I tell you the truth ; " if it were not so, I would have told you." I am going out of and beyond this tent, to prepare a place for you ; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again into this tent, and take it down, and fold up the curtain, and swear that time shall be no more ; and then, I will receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also. " The heavens shall praise Thy wonders, O Lord." In Thy works, Thy word, and Thy ways. The works of God are

" Immensely great ! Immensely small !
Yet one strange work exceeds them all."

The wonders of God appear in a blade of grass, and in a common daisy ; in mountains, and in grains of sand ; in the hugest creature, and in the tiniest being. I pity the person who fails to see the name of God upon every creature ; for He has left it indelibly impressed upon all the works of His hand. I am not, however, to go into these matters or the wonders of God in creation.

Since my text refers to the covenant of grace, and to David's great and glorious and reigning Son, let us limit our attention for a few minutes to the wonders of God in His grace and salvation. Can anything be more wonderful than the incarnation of the Son of God ? Oh that my heart felt it more deeply, and my lips spoke it more freely ! Can anything be more astonishing than the fact that the mighty God became a babe, that the infinite One appeared in a human form a few spans long ? "The heavens shall praise thy wonders, O Lord." I am lost in this mystery, and can only mention it. I introduce it at this time to bring it before you as well as I can. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given ; and the government shall be upon His shoulders, and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end." Of whom speaks the prophet this ? Of the Babe in Bethlehem, concerning whom the angels praised God in the visible heavens, and said to the shepherds, "Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour which is Christ the Lord." The infinite God appears in the form of a babe. The immeasurable, the unsearchable Jehovah, assumed a limited form, in a limited locality, for suffering and saving purposes. I am not speaking of God's essential greatness, but of what He was sovereignly pleased to become and do ; He became flesh, and dwelt among us, limited as to locality and form. That apparently helpless little one, whom Mary and Joseph looked at with wonder and astonishment, was the God that made the world, and upholds it by the word of His power.

"His shoulders held up heaven and earth,
While Mary held up Him."

Can you understand it ? My text does not say, The heavens shall comprehend Thy wonders, or fathom them, or reach their bottom ; for they are incomprehensible, unfathomable, and bottomless ; but "The heavens shall *praise* Thy wonders, O Lord ; Thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints." But that is not all. That Babe became a Man of sorrows, and yet He did not cease to be God. No, all the Godhead was in Him when He worked at the trade of a carpenter, when He was baptized of John in Jordan, and when He stood unmoved and opened not His mouth while they spat upon Him. "Oh," said the infidel, "if Jesus were God, He would have struck the wretch dead in a moment that spat in His face." Devils might have done that, but it required the mighty God to bear it all calmly and patiently. Angels looked on and wondered where the scene would end ; when their Maker was thus insulted and degraded. "The heavens shall praise Thy wonders, O Lord." The Man of sorrows born to enter into sorrow, to extract all the

penal bitterness from it, to sanctify it, to preside over it, and to convert it into a blessing to His people. Yes, He was a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Not only did the infinite One become a babe and a Man of sorrows, which was marvellous; He was made a curse for us. God made Him who knew no sin, to be—not sinful—but sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. Our Lord was nailed to the cross, and all the terrible curses that were due to sin fell upon Him, and had He not been the mighty God as well as a suffering and sorrowing man, they would have withered and destroyed Him. He was strong enough, however, to bear it all, and to exhaust the wrath incurred by guilty men, and the heavens are still praising these wonders of our God. What followed? He became our salvation and our life. Oh that I might sit until I die, under the cross of this mighty and wondrous Sufferer, and experience the working of that wonderful power by which sin is pardoned, mortified and removed. I need not seclude myself in a monastery, or isolate myself from society in order to mortify sin. Under the shadow of the solemn cross of Jesus, and realizing my interest in this wondrous act of the Lord my God, my eyes fill with tears, my heart expands and melts, and my feelings become spiritual and holy. Brethren and sisters, we need more of that power which comes from God through the wounds, and sorrows, and sufferings of His dear Son. Well, the heavens shall praise Thy mediatorial wonders, O Lord.

What shall I say about heaven itself? I have not been there otherwise than I trust I have been at the gate of heaven by a living faith in the Lord my God. I think I know what heavenly joy and pleasure are, and what it is to be so near to heaven as to look down upon this vain world through which we are passing, without the slightest wish to live in it for ever. To look down upon its pomp, and show, and toys, and all its empty bubbles, with that gracious and spiritual contempt which is felt by one who almost joins in the songs of heaven, knowing that he is an heir of the kingdom, and longs to be there. But what shall we say about the wonders of God in heaven? "The heavens shall declare Thy wonders, O Lord." You that are parents are, I imagine, doing the very best you can for your children, for it is natural so to do. And God has done the best He could do for His children, wherefore He is not ashamed to be called their God. Whose child is that? It is the child of So-and-so, and he has done for him all he intends to do. He should be ashamed; for he might have done much more for him, without injuring himself or others of the family. The character of that saint or that pilgrim is marvellous. Who formed it? God. In what relation does God stand to that character? A Father. What provision has He made for that child? All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come—all are yours, even all that God can give. "The heavens shall praise Thy wonders, O Lord." The best world in the universe is our home; it was built by God, and fitted up and furnished by Him for His family, and all is ready for every child. It is a wonderful home, and the way to it is as wonderful as heaven itself. "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." We are going to heaven by faith in a bleeding Christ. All other ways

lead to darkness, death, and destruction. He that is a simple believer in the dear Redeemer is in the way to heaven. "The redeemed shall walk there, and the wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein." A wonderful way to a wonderful home, and God's dear people are gradually and perpetually arriving. Three of our dear friends went a few days ago, and were received, I have no doubt, into everlasting mansions.

"Ten thousand to their endless home
This solemn moment fly;
And we are to the margin come,
And soon expect to die."

What wonders! a world of light, a path of blood unto it; redeemed and sanctified ones walking in that path, and gradually arriving there, and as they enter into bliss they are welcomed with an abundant entrance into the kingdom and glory of God. Hallelujah! "The heavens shall praise Thy wonders, O Lord." I might go further into this part of the subject if I had time and ability, but the time is nearly gone.

Now, secondly, the text indicates *the character of this wonder-working God*. "The heavens shall praise Thy wonders, O Lord; *Thy faithfulness* also in the congregation of the saints." I take it that the faithfulness of God, my dear friends, preserves His glory and reveals Him as a worthy object of trust. Our God cannot be unfaithful, the thing is simply impossible. He is not faithful because He wills to be so, His faithfulness is not the result of His sovereignty; He is essentially so, and He must be faithful, since He is the glorious Jehovah. Well, His faithfulness guards His honour, and He is the only object of hope and trust. If He were not faithful, or if we or angels had a doubt concerning it, that very doubt would leave all the holy joy and happiness of all angels and men impossible. But whatever change or changes may take place, He remains the ever-faithful God. It is the Rock on which His church is built, and without it there would be nothing firm underneath your heart and mine, and no safe foundation for His church and kingdom. But there is His covenant of grace, and also His beloved Son; God is ever faithful to His covenant; and to show that it is His fixed and unalterable intention to fulfil His promises, He has ratified His covenant with an oath. "Once have I sworn by My holiness, that I will not lie unto David." "On this Rock I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. His faithfulness sustains His word; for without this fact the gospel would not be glad tidings of great joy, since it would be based upon nothing trustworthy. The Bible, however, and every gracious promise, are sustained by the unchanging faithfulness of God. This is the resting-place of the saints, "Come, My people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast." Into what chambers are we to enter but His attributes and perfections? and faithfulness is one of them. If I am blessed with a promise in the hand of my faith, and am permitted and enabled to enter as a poor pursued soul into the faithfulness of God, I can sit down and sing,

"My steady soul shall fear no more,
Than solid rocks when billows roar."

"Thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints." God is faithful in His love. I have been loved, I think, by some few persons who have ceased to love me ; I have not much to complain of in that respect however, for I have been highly favoured ; yet we have been loved by persons whose love has ceased, for creatures are fickle. That was perhaps our own fault, but we have a Divine Friend, and our faults before God are more numerous than they have been before our fellow men ; yet He has not changed, though creatures have. He is faithful in His love, and faithful to His Son ; He said He would send Him, and He did so. He said He would smite Him, and His faithfulness to Himself and to His church required Him to do so, and He smote the Substitute of sinners. He spared not His own Son, because He was and is the ever faithful God. He laid upon Him the iniquities of us all, and then poured the curse upon Him, because He was faithful ; and Christ having finished His work presented it to His Father, who faithfully accepted it. Christ rose from the dead as the Head and Representative of ransomed millions and entered into the presence of His Father with, "Here am I and the children who are interested in my mediation." And the Father was faithful to accept the whole. Then Christ the Redeemer is first, and all Christians behind Him. The little ones, feeble ones, faint ones, and fearing ones, are all accepted by the ever-faithful God. And what will be the result of all this ? Christ, who is gone to heaven as our Forerunner has left

"A way so broad, so unconfined,
That all His church may march behind."

Thirdly, we have *the praising observers of all this*. "The heavens shall praise Thy wonders, O Lord, Thy faithfulness in the congregation of the saints." By heavens, understand not the visible heavens, the sun, moon, and stars. They can never praise God for His works of grace. By heavens, therefore, understand the inhabitants of that upper world ; as when we say London has done so and so, we do not mean the material city, but its inhabitants, so all the inhabitants of heaven shall praise Thy wonders, O Lord. The angels of God are students of His greatest work. They desire to look into the deep mysteries of redemption ; "which things the angels desire to look into." Saints and angels constitute one vast congregation. There are two orders of beings, one of which is far more deeply interested in these wonders of God than the other ; both orders, however, praise the great God for the wonders He has wrought. Angels will help us to sing the song of redemption up to a certain point, but they will be unable to go all the way through it : "Unto Him that hath loved us, and washed us from our sins," and so on. Angels will be with us and hear our enraptured souls pour forth our spiritual, grateful praises before our wonder-working God and then they will join with us, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." "The heavens shall praise Thy wonders, O Lord ; Thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints."

Fourthly, *the fact asserted*. They will praise them, but not as we said a few minutes ago, comprehend them, not dive down to their bottom, for

these works of our God are perpetual wonders and will never cease to be so. This great miracle, or combination of miracles, will never lose its freshness or its power. Praise is due to God. "Give unto Him the glory that is due unto His name." Who can do that? How can we pay the debt we owe, or angels either. Angels do their best, and their best perhaps is great; but when all God's angels and all His saints united, have brought their all and their best, God will be exalted above all blessing and praise. How sweet, how blessed is the thought, that you and I are destined to unite with countless thousands of angels in blessing and praising our wonder-working God. I almost wonder how it is we are so prone to cleave to this world, and to cling to our present life, when there is a better world than this which is our home and our heaven, and

"Where we shall sing more sweet, more loud,
And Christ shall be our song."

But Watts has put it in the correct form when he says—

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

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

Fifthly, there will be *perfect unanimity in heaven*. Saints and angels united in Christ, and united for ever in ascribing all majesty and glory to our wonder-working God. Brother, there will be no complaints, no doubts, and no fears there. We shall leave them all behind, with all trouble, turmoil, and care, and we shall be glad to leave them altogether with all our sins and imperfections and enter into that wondrous world which our God has prepared for us. We shall be at home in a moment there, and the spirit of eternal praise will instantaneously pervade us, and we shall unite with saints and angels in heaven at once, and with as much readiness as if we had been singing God's praises thousands of years. The Lord command His blessing for Christ's sake. Amen.

CHRIST IN THE HEART.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, 26th SEPTEMBER, 1880.

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith."—Eph. iii. 17.

THE connection in which our text stands commences at the 14th verse:—"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." For what cause? For an answer to this we must return to the 1st verse of the chapter; for the apostle now resumes the connection interrupted there. The prayer which he there commenced here begins anew. "For this cause" is repeated from the 1st verse, and therefore the connection is the same here as there. You Ephesians are partakers of grace, and therefore "ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone, in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." It is for this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the first place, you are loved with an eternal love; secondly, you have been bought with the precious blood of Jesus; thirdly, you have been quickened into life by the Holy Ghost; and fourthly, you have been united together as the stones of a building; and therefore I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. And having spoken of the household of God, let me say, "of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." I pray that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.

I will endeavour, in the first place, to *illustrate* this subject, and in the second place to *offer a few reflections upon it*. In the first place, let us *illustrate the subject*—Christ dwelling by faith in the hearts of His people. Coming at one to this interesting and important fact, let us notice the *residence* of the great Redeemer. I cannot tell you how Christ dwells in the heart otherwise than by quoting the word, and presenting to you definitions and descriptions given by God the eternal Spirit. We are informed in the text that Christ dwells in the heart by faith, and some or all true believers have something like correct views of this indwelling of the Lord, though this branch of Christian experience is mysterious and almost inexplicable. This is one of those ways of the eternal God which are at present past finding out. It is better felt than described, and hence sometimes we sing:—

"Oh the happiness arising
From the life of grace within,
While the soul is realizing
Conquers over hell and sin!"

We are assured that Christ dwells in the heart by His Spirit ; but do we know what that means ? We are informed that He dwells in the saints by faith, and by His word ; but who can fully describe this mystery ? It is, however, a fact, that there is no vital godliness in our breasts unless Jesus dwells there ; for “ If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His : and if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin ; but the spirit is life because of righteousness.” The Lord Jesus Christ is represented as having three or four residences, for while, in one respect, He is everywhere at all times, He is not present everywhere in a spiritual way and manner. In the first place, He dwells in the world of eternal glory, “ the high and holy place.” He is on the highest throne in heaven, and he wears the brightest crown there. Round about Him are gathered millions of angels, and of the spirits of just men made perfect. Our Lord deserves the seat He occupies, the crown He wears, and all the praises he receives from the hosts of heaven. But His dwelling there is personal and invisible to us, and hence Peter says, “ Whom having not seen ye love ; and in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” Christ’s personal presence is there ; but although He does not dwell in the hearts of saints as He dwells in heaven, yet He that dwells in ineffable glory on high, dwells also in the hearts of His people by faith. The very Christ that sits on the throne of heaven is enthroned in the heart of every saint ; and this is one of the deep and sacred mysteries of godliness. Then, again, we read that the heavens have been stretched out as a curtain, and spread out as a tent to dwell in. That language is sublime, and the thought it expresses most lofty and glorious. Can anything in the world be more grand than this, that the visible heavens are as a curtain, made by God and drawn by His hand,—that they are as a tent to dwell in ? In this tent creatures and their Maker dwell together, and here the great and glorious Redeemer resides as the mighty God. But He dwells not here as He dwells in the hearts of saved sinners. We have, therefore, now to consider Him as dwelling by faith in the heart.

I cannot help speaking just now of the words which the magicians addressed to Nebuchadnezzar in days of old. You remember the King of Babylon had a dream which he forgot, and that he called the magicians, astrologers and wise men together, and required them to tell him what it was. They were unable to do so, and he threatened them with destruction. They intimated to their royal master that his request was unreasonable, saying that no being but the gods can tell the king his dream, and their dwelling is not with flesh. That was their idea of the nature and character of the gods they worshipped and adored. They did not dwell with men or with flesh ; and so wonderful was this thought to Solomon, that when he stood before the altar at the dedication of the temple, filled with adoring gratitude and praise, he said, “ Will God in very deed dwell on the earth with man, seeing the heaven, even the heaven of heavens, cannot contain Him, how much less this house which I have builded ?” Yet, thus saith the High and Lofty One, “ I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit.” Jesus, therefore, who is the everlasting God, dwells with men on the earth, even in the heart of every saint, and His indwelling constitutes the individual a Christian and a true believer. But let us notice the Saviour’s right to dwell in the

hearts of fallen creatures. You are ready to say, You need not dwell upon that, for our minds are sufficiently instructed and informed on that point. We know that Jesus has a perfect right to occupy the human heart, and to dwell by faith in His redeemed people. Well, I do not know that I ever advance anything new, for the Gospel I preach is the old-fashioned one, and it is my official and ministerial work to bring the grand old truths of the glorious Gospel of the blessed God before my hearers from time to time. I do rejoice in the pleasing fact that our Lord has a right to dwell in our hearts. I trust He is dwelling in mine; and I shall have a word or two to say on temptation presently. He is dwelling in your hearts by faith, and I rejoice that He has a right to be there, and that the devil, who once held your souls, had no right to you. I rejoice in that fact, because, when sin reigned, the unclean spirit which occupied the house, was an usurper; but now the dear Redeemer having entered your hearts, and taken possession of your affections, He lives therein as their Divine proprietor. He has a right, in every respect, to occupy your hearts, to claim your affections, to consecrate your thoughts and to save your souls. His right is founded on creation, for He that made the heart has a right to occupy it; on redemption; for He that redeemed you from all evil has a right to claim your souls as His dwelling; and on conquest; for Jesus sought us when we were strangers wandering from His fold, and by His grace and Spirit stopped us when we were going down to hell. Jesus killed our enmity, and threw the tyrant sin from the throne. The first blow of grace overcame you, cast sin out of its dominion, and laid you at the feet of Jesus, who, having thus conquered you, had a right to enter your hearts, and to ascend the throne and reign as Lord of all. Moreover, the heart thus conquered by Divine grace, freely and voluntarily surrendered itself to the Lord. There is now a popular phraseology which I do not care for in the mouths of many professors of religion. Much is said about the sinner's giving his heart to the Lord, and hence we hear persons say, "We are not what we were, for we have given our hearts to the Lord." Well, I have no objection to that phraseology in certain connections; but before any sinner truly gives his heart to the Lord, the Lord takes it to himself. God always first conquers the heart and subjects the will to Himself before the individual becomes a saint. I am not surprised that he whose conscience is oppressed with guilt should fall at the feet of his conquering Lord with the prayer, "Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation." We sometimes sing with holy pleasure:—

"Here's my heart, Lord, take and seal it—
Seal it from Thy courts above."

I wish I could produce a deep impression upon your minds respecting the glorious event which occurred when Jesus entered your hearts. There was a time when you were Godless and Christless; when no power but that of sin and Satan reigned within; and there was also a period when the devil's government was destroyed, and when, in your history and experience, the reign of sin for ever terminated. When grace commenced its work, a state of the deepest and most wonderful disorder and confusion prevailed in your poor minds; for sin had lost the throne—the sceptre had fallen from its hands, and you knew not what or where you were. A revolution had taken place within, things having been turned

upside down. This was the commencement of the reign of grace in your hearts. The rightful owner of the heart had entered, and found everything within sinful, and revolted ; and putting His hand upon all the powers of the soul, He said,—They are Mine, for I have redeemed them, and therefore I claim the whole for Myself. In due time the Spirit reduced the confusion to something like order and harmony ; and light entered your minds, which revealed salvation, and directed you to the mercy of God. Yes ; there was mercy in the midst of the misery : and God heard your confession and your prayer,—“God be merciful to us sinners.” By-and-bye, Jesus having sensibly entered your souls, and the Holy Ghost having sprinkled the blood upon your consciences, a holy peace prevailed, and a heavenly satisfaction reigned, such as the world can neither give nor take away. He is in your hearts by faith, and there He reigns as the rightful Monarch of your souls. Paul prayed that His reign might become more and more powerful, and that His grace might go deeper and deeper into the hearts of His people, in order that they might be rooted and grounded in love eternal and divine. We sometimes sing Dr. Watts’ beautiful paraphrase,—

“Enter with all Thy glorious train,
Thy Spirit and Thy Word ;
All that the ark did once contain
Could no such grace afford.”

When Christ entered your hearts, heaven was moved and angels sung ; hell was moved and the devil raged. And then that confusion occurred to which I have just referred ; but it was preliminary to a state of peace, satisfaction, and delight. He enters hearts as a Conqueror, as the King of grace, and as a God. As a Conqueror, He overcomes sin, asserts His right, and plucks the mind away from the devil. As a King, He ascends the throne, and rules within as Lord of all. As God, He depends not for admission to His own upon the free will of the sinner ;—for this is not like our Almighty God. The sinner did not ask Jesus to come down and redeem him, and he has no hand in his entrance into the heart. No ; the Lord openeth, and none can shut ; He shutteth, and none can open. He opens the heart, and brings into it a train of graces, and heaven, earth, and hell are affected by the change.

Although Jesus is in the heart, and intends to dwell there for ever, yet the old resident still remains therein. Let not my young friends—my tempted brethren and sisters—forget this. Christ dethrones and restrains the power of sin, but He does not at once destroy it. “The Canaanite is still in the land.” Satan still comes upon the premises—corruption is still inherent in our nature ; and hence the conflict. But “the elder shall serve the younger ;” and Jesus, being an infinite Ruler and the eternal God, shall prevail. Nevertheless, there is a conflict, and it rages during the whole of the life of God’s dear people here. There is no such thing as perfection in the flesh. There are persons who believe that they are perfect, and without sin ; but if they are correct, there is no conflict in their breasts. They tell us it is our duty to be holy and perfect in every thought, motive, and feeling ; at least, if anything like an unholy or irregular thought should enter the mind, it may be brushed away with all the ease imaginable. I know nothing about such a state of things ; and why the Lord has so arranged the experience of His

people it might be difficult to determine. He might have made us perfect when He first saved us, and at once have crushed all corruption and depravity, for He can and will do this by-and-bye. But this was not His will and pleasure, and He is wise and good. He enters hearts that are vile, prepares them for His own abode, brings with Him all the graces of salvation, and as their Monarch, fits them for Himself; but he permits the enemy to lurk therein for a time. Hence the tempter finds sympathetic evil in the saints, the creeping serpent stings and poisons, and "sin is mixed with all we do." "I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. Oh wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Such was Paul's conflict, and such is the conflict of God's dear people now.

"Water and fire maintain the fight,
Until the weaker dies."

Christ having begun to save you, will carry on His work, and finally perfect it, and you shall reach heaven without a stain or a trace of sin. In yourselves you shall be as pure and spotless as you now are, as seen in the person of the Saviour.

Jesus loves His dwelling. I wish I could impress this upon your minds. He loves His own divine abode. It is said, concerning Zion, "The Lord loveth the gates of Zion;" and "Here will I dwell, for I have desired it." You complain of the state of things within; nevertheless, Christ loves His house so well that He will occupy it for ever. Although the heart is sometimes contracted, and darkness prevails, and there is a painfully deep sense of unworthiness, yet Jesus loves his residence, and will never quit his own abode in His church and people. "Christ abideth for ever." It is said that one may lose his religion. Then one may lose his indwelling Christ; for if one's real religion is lost, Jesus has ceased to occupy the heart. It appears to me that the state of things which must follow the removal of Jesus from the soul is worse than that which preceded His entrance into it. It really must be very terrible to feel that we were once saved—that Jesus once dwelt within—that at one time we were going to heaven, and were God's children, having been born again. Surely it must be unspeakably tormenting to be filled with reflections such as these. No; Jesus so loves His dwelling that He will abide with us for ever. "He has said, I will never leave thee." God's Spirit will not let us go, for He holds the hearts of the saints for the Saviour; and He claims the whole, and, in a certain sense, He dwells in the whole heart. He holds the will, and it is His servant. He holds the affections, having detached them from sin, separated them from the world, and raised them from corruption to Himself; and hence the best affections of the heart are centred in Jesus Christ. "He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God and God in him." Christ is in the understanding. It was once dark as night, but now it is light in the Lord; for Christ, who dwells in him, fills the understanding with holy light and unction. The Lord is in the conscience, which at first was filled with dead works, and afterwards pricked with guilt,—that conscience, which has been made soft, and sensitive, and tender. It is true there may be more light in the understanding than warmth in the affections, but, at other times, our feelings prevail over our faith. The understanding is not dark-

ness now. The will is Christ's obedient subject. The affections are rooted in him. The conscience has been purged from dead works to serve the living and true God.

Now, secondly, let me inquire *how He dwells in the heart*. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts *by faith*." Christ is not naturally in the sinner's heart. The principle of grace proceeds from God, and is produced in the soul by the blessed Spirit. There was a time when we were "without God and without hope in the world;" and had we been left to ourselves, instead of being seated in God's courts this morning, we should have been making haste to the world of eternal darkness and death. But here we are, in consequence of the fact that Christ dwells in our hearts by faith. How by faith? Faith receives Him, and realises Him to the soul. Faith has its seat in the heart, and Christ is its object; and since the grace of faith is united to Christ in heaven and to hearts on earth, He dwells in them by faith. We believe with all our hearts in the Christ that is in heaven, and we believe in Him for ourselves. Faith gives Jesus a spiritual—a realised existence in the heart, which had been previously filled with sin and unbelief. Now, since Christ dwells by faith in the heart, it is not surprising that faith should be tried. Faith is tried, because it is by that grace that Christ dwells within. Hence we are sometimes tried concerning the fact itself. Does He dwell within? When our faith is thus tried, we let go our hold on Him, or we hold Him feebly, and should lose our hold altogether did He let go His hold of us. We are *safe*, for He holds us fast; We are *happy* when we hold Him fast. But safety does not depend upon our grasp of Him, but upon His grasp of us. Hence the importance of faith, which is tried as to the fact of Christ's indwelling. And since Jesus Christ is all to believers, faith is frequently tried concerning the person and word of the Lord. I do not desire to dip into the mire, nor to sally forth into the darkness. A word to the wise is enough. Has the thought ever entered your mind, and rushed through it,—Is the Bible true? or, Is there a God? and, if so, is He what the Bible represents Him to be? If the thought had *remained* in the mind we should have been left infidels or unbelievers. Such thoughts are the fiery darts of the wicked one, which pierce, wound, and poison when they enter the heart. God only can extract these arrows; and then, uncleanness being left behind, a fresh application of the Saviour's blood, by another operation of the Spirit, is necessary to remove the evil. Why are saints tempted in this way? Because it is by faith that Christ dwells within. Further, Jesus Christ dwells sensibly and experimentally in our hearts only as we believe, or according to our faith. The sinner believes with all his heart that Jesus saves from sin; so that, as the sinner's Saviour, He dwells by faith in the heart. He does not doubt that Jesus put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and that it was absolutely necessary He should do so; and holding that fast, so far Christ dwells in him. Now, if I say, my brother, come a step further with me. Let us both say, He loved us, and gave Himself for us. He replies, No; I cannot go so far. He loved His people, and gave Himself for them; and I would give a world, if I had one, to say He loved me, and gave Himself for me. His faith, you perceive, does not go far enough; and, since faith is the gift of God, I have no rod for such feeble ones in God's family. I will pray for them, and preach to them, and hope the time may not be distant

“ When they shall clearly see,
Not only that Christ shed His blood,
But each shall say, for me.”

Again, although the saint at times calmly believes that Jesus loved him, and gave Himself for him, yet he cannot trust Him for to-morrow. He has committed his immortal soul into His hands for death and for heaven ; but just now he is in trouble respecting his daily bread. Unbelief and a tempting devil suggest that there is nothing but poverty or the workhouse before him. Notwithstanding that Jesus has saved him from penal death and ruin, he cannot always trust Him for daily supplies. You see Christ dwells *experimentally* in the heart as we are helped to believe in Him. When we can by faith embrace the whole person, character, grace, atonement and reign of Jesus, and cast ourselves wholly and entirely upon Him, then He is sweetly in our hearts; and we have no fear or doubt whatever concerning either His grace or providence.

Lastly, this *explains the work that is ascribed to faith*. Some of my younger hearers may be disposed to look a little into this point. It used rather to puzzle me that a great and wonderful work is sometimes ascribed to faith. Hence it is said, “ Thy faith hath made thee whole,” “ Thy faith hath saved thee,” “ Purifying their hearts by faith.” We live and walk and stand by faith. These are some of the wonderful works that are ascribed to faith. But my text explains it all. How doth faith make us whole? By embracing the Healer. How does faith save? By embracing the Saviour. How does faith purify? By embracing the Lamb and His blood. Thus faith lives, and stands, and walks in and by Christ. Faith performs wondrous things by having to do with its object. Faith without the blood of Christ would be as a sponge without water in washing the flesh. Faith is the hand that holds the truth of God concerning the precious blood of Jesus, and thus the soul is purified and the conscience is cleansed. It follows, then, that there was much significance in the Saviour’s words to Peter, “ I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not.” Had Peter’s faith failed—utterly and entirely, and been destroyed—there would have been an end of Christ’s indwelling in his heart, but that did not happen. It has sometimes been hard work to hold fast the name of Jesus, and cling to the blessed Christ of God. There have been heartquakes in your breasts which have shaken your faith amazingly, and you will be glad to find yourselves in heaven. We do not want to go before our Father’s time, for we sometimes think of death with very peculiar feelings ; but if we were in the presence of our dear Redeemer, we should not wish to come down here again—not even for the sake of preaching His gospel. The present life is one of conflict, but, blessed be God, it is a life of daily victories. Some persons want us to put off the conquest till death. We want the victory every day. Now in all these things we are more than conquerors through Christ that hath loved us.

Then, thirdly, *the results of this indwelling*, I have spoken of the residence itself. I have tried to show how Christ dwells in the heart, and now, thirdly, on its results. What are they? You derive your designation from the fact that Jesus dwells within. You have much unbelief, but you are not an unbeliever. You have much carnality within, but you are not a carnal person. You are sometimes worldly, but you are not a worldling. You are tempted of the devil, but you are not his servant.

You are corrupt and sinful, but you are not dead in sin. And why? Christ dwells in your heart, and you are called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord has named. You are not a wilderness, but a garden, notwithstanding the many weeds therein. The weeds destroy not the garden, and we do not cease to call it a garden because they are there. Yonder is a field sown with wheat, and there are many weeds in it; but we do not call it a weed field, but a wheat field. So here Christ is in the heart, and the individual is a Christian, because Christ is formed in him the hope of glory. Then, in the next place, the Christian is through the indwelling of Christ a spiritual palace, a divine temple. A king dwells in a palace, and King Jesus dwells in your heart, and "God is known in her palaces as a refuge." As kings dwell in palaces, so God dwells in a temple, and Jesus in the heart by faith constitutes the saints the temples of the living God. As God dwelt in the temple at Jerusalem, so Jesus dwells in His spiritual temples now. Christ having been formed in the soul, the hope of glory, as we have said before, constitutes the favoured person a Christian, a believer, a manifested child of God. The consequence is, my dear friends, we are in a good state, and are infinitely rich in faith, for Christ has taken possession of His own property, and will occupy it for ever. He will wash it thoroughly, and cleanse and sweeten it for himself and for heaven; and having turned every evil and every foe for ever out, He will present His living residences "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." And I am sure I can speak for one and for all that know the Lord, and, permit me to be plain, we have proved Jesus to be a good tenant and proprietor. Oh! He is a good occupier—He pays well for His residence. Speaking of temporal things, you might not have had decent clothes to wear had not Christ been in your hearts. You might have been amongst the wretched, the low and the vile. Perhaps some of us had been in the deepest degradation to day had it not been for an indwelling Christ. People sometimes complain of the expensiveness of attending God's house, but it does not cost us much to serve the dear Redeemer. Our reputation, our character, our position, our hopes for heaven, and all that distinguishes us from the devil and from the lost in hell, we owe to the fact that Jesus dwells in our hearts by faith having been formed there the hope of eternal glory. Having exhausted the time with our remarks upon the saving relation of Christ to His people, we must conclude. May the Lord command His blessing for Christ's sake. Amen.

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HEAVENLY FEAR : ITS OBJECT AND PERPETUITY.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,
ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, 17th DECEMBER, 1882.

"They shall fear Thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations."—Psalm lxxii. 5.

THE good old saint David, about seventy years of age, perhaps on his dying bed, said, "Give the king Thy judgments, O Lord, and Thy righteousness unto the king's son." In the first place, this prayer had reference to Solomon; but in the second place, it had reference to the great antitype of Solomon, the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of grace and of saints. "He shall judge Thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment." Solomon for a time judged the people righteously, and his character was sustained, and his throne stood morally and politically high; but subsequently he became, so to speak, a fool, and departed from the living God, and ceased to judge Israel righteously: but the throne of the great King Jesus shall never be lower, and His crown shall never be less bright than it is now. His character and fame are eternal and unchangeable, and therefore He continues to judge the people righteously, and the poor with judgment. "The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills by righteousness." By "mountains" understand the higher courts of justice, and by "little hills," here understand the lower ones. Good kings, good judges, and good laws, and justice universally reigning in connection with mercy, all tend to produce a happy state of things; and this was the case with the children of Israel, during the former period of the reign of Solomon. "He shall judge the poor of the people, and shall save the children of the needy, and break in pieces the oppressor." Part of this applies to Solomon, and the whole of it applies to our Lord. He judges the poor of His people, and saves the needy; for Christ is the poor man's Saviour, and the friend of the needy and the destitute. He is perfectly adapted to their case, and sinners cannot be too black, too poor, too empty, or too miserable for our great and glorious Redeemer. "He shall save the children of the needy, and break in pieces the oppressor." Solomon was a man of peace, and peace prevailed during his reign. Jesus is the Prince of peace. He made war and is still fighting against His enemies; and the promise stands, "He shall break in pieces the oppressor." Are persecutors oppressors? He shall break them in pieces. Is antichrist an oppressor? This is still its propensity and spirit, and it will manifest itself again by and bye. Here, however, stands the promise: "He shall break in pieces the oppressor." Is the devil an oppressor? the accuser of the brethren, our adversary, a tempter, a liar, and a murderer? and can no saint, however strong he may be, or however great his grace may be, stand against this mighty foe? King Jesus is omnipotent in His love, in His power, and in His knowledge; therefore this promise shall be fulfilled, "He

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shall break in pieces the oppressor;" and the consequence of all this shall be, "They shall fear Thee as long as the sun and moon endure." No syllable here I think will apply to Solomon, who was a mortal, a dying man, and he died and went the way of all the earth; but our antitypical Solomon is immortal, even the everlasting God. And "they shall fear Him as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations."

Let me direct your attention as well as I may be able, to a few observations on this portion of the Word. I shall look at the text in several relations; and, first, in relation to Jesus Christ, the text indicates *His eternal and unchangeable greatness and glory*. "They shall fear Thee as long as the sun and moon endure." What multitudes of changes have taken place under the sun and the moon, and are still occurring, and will continue to occur in this world of sin and sorrow! All creatures here are changing, and new events and circumstances are perpetually coming into existence. There is, however, one Being that never changes, and He is intimately related to us; and if one portion of the writings of Paul be more precious than others, I apprehend it is this: "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to day, and for ever." Jesus will never lose the place He occupies in His Father's mind, nor in the minds of angels, nor in the minds of glorified spirits, and He will never cease to be loved, feared, trusted, and adored by all that know His name on the earth. I appeal to those of you who are living Christians and believers, and can say, "Jesus is precious to our hearts," do you want another Jesus, another Saviour? Are you willing to leave Him and adopt some other system than that of Christianity, and to trust in some other being than the blessed Christ of God? To know Him truly is to love Him; and to increase in a knowledge of His person, is to increase in confidence in Him. As our heads become grey or bald, and we get nearer and nearer towards the grave and eternity, having some knowledge of the blessed Christ, we hold Him fast in the arms of faith, and try to cleave to Him with full purpose of heart, saying every day, and in all the circumstances of life, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon the earth that I desire beside Thee!" As most of you are aware, the afflicting hand of God has recently been laid upon me, and it was thought, I imagine, though no person told me so, (for I fancy friends did not express all they thought,) that at one particular time, I was in a somewhat critical condition. Serious, very serious and solemn thoughts and apprehensions then possessed my soul, but on the whole I felt that Christ was mine, and that I was His, and that having a love in my soul towards the name of Jesus, He would neither smite me, nor turn away His face from me, nor leave me at last to perish. Jesus is precious to His people; and though His preciousness cannot increase in itself, any more a sovereign can be worth more or less than twenty shillings in itself, yet a sense of His preciousness is a growing fact in the experience, the faith, and the apprehensions of His saints. I do not know how it might be and I have no right to speculate here, and perhaps if I did so, I should not profit you,—but if an angel rendered himself visible, and walked about with us from place to place, and from day to day, in all probability we might in the course of time become somewhat weary of him, and want the company of another being: but Jesus is increasingly dear to all that

know His name, increasingly important to all that fear Him. They shall fear Thee as long as the sun and moon endure. Oh what a mercy that there is one Being in the universe that is entirely suited to our case, who can never, never change. If He was worthy to be feared in the days of Adam and Abel, He is equally worthy to be feared to day, and Jehovah on His throne says,—“See yonder sun and moon, which rule days and nights, and all the revolutions of time: the moon waxes and wanes, the sun rises and sets; but on the throne of the Mediator is seated a glorious Being, your loving Brother, and your worthy Lord, whom men shall fear as long as the sun and moon endure. “Unto you which believe, He is precious.”

Consider this text also as indicating the Father's promise to His Son. If we regard the words as having been spoken by David, or by the church of God, they are nevertheless to be considered as the word of God; and therefore we do no violence to the text by ascribing these words to the Father. The Father addresses the Son, saying, “They shall fear Thee as long as the sun and moon endure.” Elsewhere it is said, “Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession.” Jesus is represented as interceding with His Father, and asking for the heathen and the uttermost parts of the earth; and the Father's reply appears in my text this morning: “They shall fear Thee as long as the sun and moon endure.”

Jesus, therefore, is the great object of godly fear,—not abstract Deity, not the unmediated Jehovah, not the Almighty abstractedly considered; but God in Christ is represented as the great object of godly fear. It is the Mediator that we desire to see, and to have to do with; from Him our salvation proceeds; on Him we build our hopes, and through Him, and in Him, we converse with God.

“Till God in human flesh I see,
My thoughts no comfort find;
The holy just, and sacred Three,
Are terrors to my mind.”

He who is the object of godly fear wears not the nature of angels, but our nature. He took not hold of angels, when they fell; He did not interpose Himself between them and hell: they sinned, and they fell, unsaved and unhelped, into deserved punishment. But when men fell He interposed Himself, and took hold of the seed of Abraham, and prevented them from sinking into eternal destruction. He put on their nature, wore and still wears it, and will continue to wear it for ever; and in that nature God dwells, shines, and save sinners, and is thus the object of godly fear. He to whom has been committed the management of worlds and who wears many crowns,—He in whose hands has been placed the sceptre and the reins of universal empire,—He in whom it hath pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell, shall be feared as long as the sun and moon endure. But Jesus is to be regarded here in connection with His royalty, and reigning character and glory. Our Lord is not only the one Mediator between God and man to pacify and propitiate Deity, and to purify and pacify sinful man; this He has done, and the offended justice of God has been satisfied, and His broken law has been honoured and covered by the obedience of the God-man, and guilty men have been

saved legally, and honourably, and eternally; and because He has done all this, God has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every other name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and every tongue confess. Therefore our Christ here appears in His kingly character. There is His cross, and He was once upon it; but He has now left it and is seated on the throne, and out of all nations and all generations under the sun by day, and the moon by night, thousands and millions shall be brought to bow at His footstool in fulfilment of the Father's promise,—“They shall fear Thee as long as the sun and moon endure.” I take fear here to indicate not only the principle or grace of godly fear, but the whole worship and service of God. This is how the word fear is frequently to be taken in the word of God. They shall fear Thee, worship Thee, surround Thy throne and adore Thee “as long as the sun and moon endure.” Well, now let me say before I dismiss this point that, the fulfilment of this promise is essential, (and I am speaking, I think, thoughtfully), to the happiness and satisfaction of Christ Himself. He put on our nature that He might be able to suffer and to die, and thus to bleed away the curse and condemnation. In that nature He appeared here, and died; and before He died, looking upwards and downwards, on the right hand, and on the left, before and behind Him, and seeing that the storm was over, and that there was not one more curse remaining in the cup, nor another spark of wrath to quench, that the devil has been defeated and his works destroyed, He said, “It is finished,” and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost. Now the fulfilment of this promise is essential to His satisfaction. The blood of Christ, though it is precious and powerful, is not of itself, apart from other facts, sufficient to take us to heaven. The love of God, without the blood, could not have taken us to heaven: hence we have both love and blood, but both these without the power and sanctifying graces of the Spirit, are not sufficient to fulfil this promise. Therefore Jesus, having been seated at the right hand of God the Father, says, “He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand.” All whose names are on Christ's breast shall come and fear Him; all for whose sins He atoned, shall come to Him, and all that are represented by Him, and for whom He intercedes shall fear Him “as long as the sun and moon endure.” Our Lord sits on His throne, crowned with honour and glory, and looks on with satisfaction and pleasure; whilst the Spirit fulfils this gracious promise.

Brethren, there is no uncertainty in the salvation of the redeemed church of God. The power of God follows the blood of Christ; the Holy Spirit follows the Mediator; and all that have been redeemed by blood, and delivered from the curse, shall come and fear their Lord “as long as the sun and moon endure.” Depend upon it is so. Do not call us names but, like the noble Bereans, search the scriptures, and learn for yourselves whether these things are so or not. Is the cross, or are the sorrows and sufferings of incarnate God to have no result? Or are the results matters of uncertainty? Are they contingent upon the human will, or upon something possessed by the sinner, or that may or may not be done by him? The blood of Jesus speaks in heaven, and the Lord will claim every one that He redeemed from death. Where are you, and where am

I? Are we under the shadow of that tree whereon He died, or have we come from Calvary's cross into the presence of our reigning Lord? If so, see how you are interested in the agonies of incarnate God; and go beyond the cross and time, and see how you are interested in the love of the eternal God, who arranged your salvation before the world began. Looking at the text, first of all, therefore, in its relation to Christ, we say, it indicates the unchangeable majesty, and attractions and glories of the Redeemer. There will never be another Christ, nor any room for another. He occupies all the ground, and there will never arise any necessity for another Saviour. All that know Him shall be satisfied, as it is written, "My people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the Lord."

Let us in the second place, look at our subject *in its relation to the grace of God*. The grace of God is efficacious and is represented as a reigning and prevailing power. What are your ideas of grace? Is it a fickle, feeble, and uncertain power? Is not grace that peculiar manifestation of Jehovah by which he absolutely and satisfactorily saves sinners? Is not the grace that saves sinners as powerful and as successful in its operations, as was the power of God when He made the world? God experienced no difficulty when He brought matter out of nothing and gave it form, shape, and life. He was in no difficulty on any occasion during the six days of creation; and His new creation's work is not less wonderful and important than that. If therefore God's power easily and satisfactorily fulfilled His will, when He made the world—His grace, which is another display of power, will as easily and satisfactorily fulfil His will in relation to His dear people. Grace must either reign, or not exist at all; for you cannot separate reigning power from it. It is not a divine experiment and it never leaves it to the sinner, as to whether He will be saved or not. Grace arrests the mind, and takes hold of the heart; and the soul so arrested feels that it is held by a power from which it cannot release, or extricate itself. Having been in the ministry and in the church of God a great many years, it has been my lot to hear a large number of the people of God relate their Christian experience, and many of them in doing so have told me, and the church, also, how strange and mysterious was their experience, when they first realised the fact that they were sinners in the sight of God. Some persons resolve to drown their convictions in drink, and others rush into the pleasures and entertainments of the world for the purpose of losing their miseries and apprehensions, but when grace gets hold of a sinner, the Almighty power of God has taken hold of the mind, and the person may struggle and plunge like a sheep on the shoulders of the shepherd, God will hold him fast, and fulfil the text—"They shall fear Thee as long as the sun and moon endure." Yes, the grace of God is reigning, conquering, subduing, overcoming, and saving grace. Thus God is gradually accomplishing His purpose, and as we have it in the Church prayer-book, if I mistake not in the burial service, where mourners are represented as praying that God would shortly accomplish the number of His elect, and hasten His kingdom. The word "elect" is now a very offensive word in certain directions; but it represents a divine fact, and therefore we have it in God's word, and also in the writings of those holy men who took the whole

gospel for the rule of their faith. God is accomplishing the number of His elect, and some precious blood-washed souls are doubtless at this moment entering heaven—

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

Recently, some very young friends came into the church ; and yonder, perhaps, unseen by human eyes, are troubled spirits coming up out of the horrible pit and miry clay, saying, “God be merciful to us, for we are sinners.” Some are entering heaven, others are on the banks of Jordan, saying, “What wait we for ? We have lived long and our powers are gone, and the young and strong are going; what wait we for ? Our hope is in Thee. And others are coming out of the world and from the dominion of sin. Yes, they shall come, and they shall fear Thee as long as the sun and the moon endure. The glorious grace of our God,—this almighty power fulfils the promise which the Father has given to His Son, and makes it all good. What beautiful order prevails in the reign and government of God’s grace ! There is no confusion there, and God forbid that we should ever think that our Lord on the throne is dissatisfied, or discontented, or that He woos or wants to save people that will not come and permit Him to bless them. Grace for ever reigns, and will surely secure the fulfilment of this promise : “*They shall fear Thee.*”

Thirdly, look at the subject *in relation to the people themselves*. “*They shall fear Thee* in each and every generation, as long as the sun and moon endure,” or, as the text says, “throughout all generations.” At that period of time, which historians have called the middle ages, when darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people, even then there were saints on the earth. I do not think, having the Word of God before me, that there has ever been a generation out of which God took no one to heaven. “Throughout all generations,” not all the men of all generations, but some “throughout all generations.” Well, beloved friends, if you and I have been led to the Saviour’s feet to make a practical or experimental remark, and enabled to say with good Watts—

“A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
On Thy kind arms I fall;
Be Thou my strength and righteousness,
My Jesus, and my all.”

Grace, which shall reign, has conquered us, and dwells within, and has fulfilled this promise in our experience. We are among those who, in the present generation, fear His name; and all such persons are saved, and shall arrive in heaven. Such characters are safe on the earth ; for there are not degrees of safety and divine love. God’s power being as great here as it is in heaven. Your apprehensions as to your safety may be very terrible, but circumstances are not facts, and facts are not circumstances. You are under the shadow of the rock, yea, you are in the rock of ages, and within the limits of interest, and the lines of a Saviour’s blood, even where there is no condemnation, and the curse can never fall. They, the eternally beloved, the eternally redeemed and blood-bought people of the Saviour,—they shall come, and “shall fear Thee as long as the sun and moon endure.”

Fourthly, look at the subject *in relation to the act itself*. "They shall fear Thee." The fear here indicated is a blessing. I may have something to say in the evening about another kind of fear; but this fear is a direct blessing to him that possesses it, and an indirect blessing to the world. It is a blessing to all its possessors,—a gracious, spiritual and new covenant blessing; and hence the Lord says, "I will put My fear into their hearts, and they shall not depart from Me." Believe what you will. I believe this word. But suppose they will not open their hearts? Oh, we have not learned to talk in that manner about the omnipotent mercy of God. It is a childish method of representing or misrepresenting the everlasting Jehovah. The fear of the Lord is His treasure, and He says, "I will put it into their hearts;" and under its influence they shall be brought to Jesus, and they shall not depart from Him. Godly fear is tenacious—it embraces Christ, and Christ embraces that: it is held by Christ, and it holds Him. Salvation is not the result of our hold of Christ, but of Christ's hold of us. And it is a blessing to the world. I apprehend that the greatest blessings the world possesses are the persons and characters whom it most despises. "Marvel not if the world hate you. Ye know that it hated Me before it hated you." The world hates its best friends, even those that fear God. While the fear of God remains, and God-fearing people remain in the world "the sun and moon will endure." It would appear from this, that "the sun and moon," and generations will cease when the heavens are filled with all that fear God; for "they shall fear Thee as long as the sun and moon endure." The fear of God I need not say is not a servile principle, nor a legal power. The child of God does not run to heaven in alarm and dread, as if he were driven by law and terror. No, the fear of God is a principle that involves and embodies all the other graces, and it is so represented in various parts of the Word of God. We are told that Abraham exercised a marvellous faith when he took the knife to slay his son, Isaac. Now just observe how fear embodies the other graces. Abraham took the knife to slay his son, and that act is said to have been an act of faith; but it is also said to have been an act of godly fear. "Abraham, Abraham," said the angel of the Lord, out of heaven, "lay not thine hand upon the lad. Now, I know that thou fearest God seeing thou has not withheld thy son, thine only son from me." So that what in one place is called Abraham's faith is in another place called Abraham's fear of God. Again, the fear of God is represented as embodying love. "Thou shalt," said Moses, in Deuteronomy, addressing the children of Israel, just before he died, "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God," and then he immediately adds, that fearing God is to love Him with all one's heart, and soul, and might. Oh, the fear of God embodies all that is good! He that fears God loves Him, and fears Him because He loves Him; he that fears God hopes in His mercy; and he that fears God is sometimes filled with holy joy. Fear is a comprehensive work, and it embodies all the gracious experience of saints. They shall fear Thee, that is there shall be Christians possessing Christianity, and their hearts shall be as gardens filled with all the graces of the Spirit, as long "as the sun and moon endure."

Look at it in the next place, *in relation to the perpetuity of the church of God*. "As long as the sun and moon endure." Shall we never have another religion? Will all professors down to the end of time be charac-

terised by godly fear? Is this fear to be possessed and exercised down to the very end? Yes, "as long as the sun and moon endure." Grace changes everything, but nothing changes grace. God, as our saving God, transforms sinners into saints, but nothing can transform Him into any other character than that which He now sustains. The church is one, and when we get to heaven we shall be one with Abel, the first saved one that entered there; and could we now converse with him as to spiritual and heavenly experience, we should find that we were one. Abel feared the Lord that we fear. Abraham desired to see the day of Christ, and he saw it, and was glad. Down to the end of time this religion of heaven will prevail. "But the times are advancing." They are. "And education is making wonderful strides." It is. "And the progress of the present day is very wonderful." Yes, surely it is. "And the changes and improvements which are taking place are not to be ignored." We do not ignore them. "It is your duty as a minister, and the duty of professors of religion to keep pace with the times." Ah! keep pace with the times indeed; we are already ahead of them: for the fear of God is the best reality under heaven. God is infinitely greater than His works, researches into which constitute what is commonly called science; and God is ours, and he will be feared "throughout all generations." God is infinitely greater than the creature, and whatever may happen in the world, God's moral kingdom will always be what it is, and always was. There are two classes of men, and no others will appear "as long as the sun and moon endure." The sinner, lost and ruined, and, needing our one Saviour, and the church of God saved by one Christ, with an everlasting salvation, and these shall last "as long as the sun and moon endure."

I thought I would have looked at the subject in the next place *in relation to the world and generations*. The sun which rules the day, and the moon which rules the night, and all generations spread over all time. As long as there are days and nights, and generations departing and arriving, so long shall there be fearers of the eternal God. The world shall stand till God has done His work. It is the platform on which He is saving sinners, making good the Bible, fulfilling His purposes, and training men for heaven. Whilst the world is God's place of work, time is His working day, and it will be found long enough for Him. He will work until the end; and when the clock of time, so to speak, shall stop, God will have done His work, and all His people will have been saved.

Lastly, look at it *in relation to ministers*. "They shall fear Thee." What shall we preach? This great Object of fear. This is simple enough. Christ crucified and risen. And what may I expect if I preach this great Object? This—that God will gather sinners round about Him to fear His name for ever, for "they shall fear Thee as long as the sun and the moon endure, throughout all generations." May the Lord command His blessing for Christ's sake. Amen.

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DIVINE VISITS AND THEIR EFFECTS.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, 24th APRIL, 1887.

"For the Lord of Hosts hath visited His flock, the house of Judah, and hath made them as His goodly horse in the battle."—Zech. x. 3.

It is a fact both interesting and grand, that the blessings of our God are continuously falling from His hand into every part of the universe, and upon every creature therein; and hence it is said, "In Him we live, and move, and have our being." And as it is in nature, so it is in grace. Spiritual life is almost infinitely superior to natural life, but both are the same in their great Author. Natural life and all its blessings come from God's hand; but spiritual life and blessings from His heart. The blessings of our God take many forms, and they come to us on different occasions, and for various purposes. God is bound to bless His people, having pledged Himself to do so by His promise and His oath; and therefore the church has said again and again, "Our God will bless us." The Lord is now granting His people spiritual blessings, one of which is a visit from Himself now and then on the earth. Hence my text says, "For the Lord of Hosts hath visited His flock, the house of Judah, and hath made them as His goodly horse in the battle."

Let us tarry here. I shall go round this interesting portion of the Word, and endeavour to dip into it here and there if possible. "The Lord of hosts hath visited His flock, the house of Judah, and hath made them as His goodly horse in the battle." I shall not burden your mind or memory with a multitude of divisions and sub-divisions. The text, easily and naturally divides itself into two branches namely, *Divine visits*, and *the effect which they produce*. Divine visits: "The Lord hath visited His people, His flock the house of Judah." The effect produced thereby: it makes them as His goodly horse in the battle.

Now, in the first place, (and here I shall be experimental,) let us look at the first branch of the subject, viz., *the fact that the Lord visits His flock*. Here there are three things, and I will name them at once; *the majesty of the Visitor*, "*the Lord of hosts*;" *the nature of His visit*; "*He hath visited His people*;" *the limit mentioned here as to His visits*, "*He hath visited His flock the house of Judah*." I will not say that we shall exhaust the text if we go over this ground; but I think it will appear that these three points cover most of the surface of it. Let us look *at the majesty of the Visitor*. "The Lord of hosts hath visited His flock." I should like if I had time and ability to take twenty minutes or half-an-hour upon this peculiar and wonderful character of our God, "the

Lord of hosts." I do not know a sweeter title, nor anything more grand or glorious, in connection with our great and gracious covenant God, than the fact that He is Lord of all. Since He is Lord of all, He is Lord of hosts; and there is not a host of beings or of things anywhere in existence but what is presided over and managed by our great Lord. There are the hosts of angels, and He presides over them all, being Lord of all. There are hosts of glorified ones in heaven; Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Enoch and Methuselah, Noah and a host of others. Heaven, perhaps, is not half-full. This, however, I do not know; but it is a prepared place for a prepared people, and the people of God, the flock of Jesus Christ, are wending their way towards heaven; and

"Ten thousand to their endless home
This solemn moment fly;
And we are to the margin come,
And soon expect to die."

Yes, there is a host of glorified ones in heaven, and our Jesus is Lord of them all; He presides over all their fulness, all their actions, all their joys, all their emotions, and all their pleasures. "He is Lord of all." They are not there as they were when here. Here they had two natures,—there they have only one. Here they lived a life of conflict,—there a life of victory, triumph and joy. While they were here, He was their Ruler; and now they are there, He is their great and glorious and loving Lord.

There are hosts of devils; we know not whether they are as numerous as God's angels. Some writers of considerable repute, and said to be famous for deep thinking, have an idea that as many, or almost as many angels fell as remained in heaven. That is speculative, and I am getting almost past that; but I just mention it. Some of my young friends might like to think the subject over. I no not know how many fell, but the powers of darkness are very numerous, and the devil and his angels are a host; but Satan himself is not the Lord of them all, or at least, he is not their first and supreme Lord, for our great and glorious Saviour is Lord of all the hosts of fallen spirits, and He will preside over them for ever and ever in spite of all their powers. What hosts of human creatures there are in this world! What vast hosts there are in the visible heavens—the sun, moon, and stars—"He bringeth out their host by number; for that He is great in power: not one of them faileth." If those mighty and glorious stars are many of them suns, as we are told, and I do not much mind whether it be so or not; but if many of them are suns and centres of other systems, how marvellous is the fact that He who died on the tree of Calvary, and was in the garden of Gethsemane is Lord of all! Not one of them could exist a minute without Him. All would fall into disorder and confusion, were it not for His almighty power; for all the hosts of stars, of angels, of men, and devils, together with all the circumstances and events of time, are managed by His hand and controlled by His will. One great will presides over all; one great mind is Lord of all, and therefore

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

I say, I should like to dwell upon this theme ; but we cannot take up every point, not even every point in our text this evening. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord of hosts. If God is our God, let us sing and triumph, and rejoice in the fact that He is Lord of all. If there were one creature He could not reach He would not be happy; and we should have to say of the world, for ought I know, that it was not safe. If there were only one combination of events and circumstances that He did not manege and control, we should have a measure of doubt, anxiety, and fear. There is, however, no circumstance, no event, no combination of circumstances and events, but what are managed and controlled by the dear and precious Saviour whose character is portrayed in my text. "The Lord of hosts hath visited His people, the house of Judah."

But let us turn our attention to another aspect of the subject. Is He Lord of hosts, and does *He visit us*? Then take this thought, (I dare say it has occurred to your minds already,) that our God is infinitely condescending to visit poor creatures like you and me. You cannot dwell too frequently, or think too deeply or prayerfully, upon the greatness of Divine condescension. Try to get that idea into your minds, my dear hearers: "He humbleth Himself to behold the things that are in heaven and in the earth;" so the Word informs us. "*He humbleth Himself.*" He is so high, so great, so majestic, and His grandeur and splendour are so dazzling, and his self-sufficiency and power are so marvellous that He necessarily sits upon the highest seat, and is exalted above all blessing and praise; and when He notices anything out of Himself He must necessarily stoop, humble Himself, or bow down. To notice anything out of Himself is an act of condescension on the part of God. He cannot make His own equal, and a being equal to Him can never come into existence. He views Himself with pleasure and delight, loves Himself with all His powers, and that necessarily and righteously so. He views the operations of His hand with satisfaction; but when He looks at other things, he sees them down there—not on a level with Himself, and he humbles himself and stoops to behold what is said and done in heaven. Well, if He stoops to behold what is done in heaven, how marvellously condescending must He be to visit poor creatures like you and the preacher. "The Lord hath visited His flock, the house of Judah." I have sometimes heard the word condescension applied to the creature, but I have not always cared much for it. Sometimes we are informed that Her Majesty takes a drive, and now and then calls at the house of some comparatively poor person, and this is represented as an act of condescension. So it is, and it makes and leaves a deep impression upon the hearts of the persons visited. If it is condescension on the part of earthly royalty to enter a cottage, and to pay a visit to a cottager, oh what shall we say concerning the visits of the great Monarch of the Universe! for He condescends to enter cottages, aye, to enter some exceedingly strange places, and to bless poor sinners by remaining with them five or ten minutes, or a quarter of an hour, or half-a-day. I am not quite sure, and will not speak positively but very reverentially, and before

God,—I am not quite sure that He has not been with me for a week,—not of late ; but when I first knew Him, I thought my joys would never end and my pleasures would never cease. I thought I should leap and sing all the way to heaven. The presence of God was there, and that for a considerable time. Oh, how condescending on the part of the great Majesty of Heaven to pay such poor creatures, such sinful creatures as you and me a visit now and then ! “The Lord hath visited His flock.” How condescending and how kind ! But notice that although He is so great, and His majesty and splendour are infinite, He never visits as a stranger. We never have to ask Him who He is, nor what is His name. We know Him as soon as He comes, He brings such blessings with Him, and leaves such impressions behind Him, that we are always quite satisfied as to the character of the Visitor. A stranger calls, and one says, “Some one wants you, sir.” Who is it ? “I don’t know, he is a stranger.” We go and meet the stranger, and assure him that we have no knowledge of him. This never occurs when an interview between God and His dear people takes place. God is not a stranger. Are you familiar with Him ? I wish I were more so. People have told me that I ought not to speak in so familiar a manner about the God of heaven. O my dear friends, if the Lord of hosts has been pleased to become my God and Father, I am quite sure that I may speak to Him as my God, and I am also sure that I may with filial confidence and comfort appear in His presence. I will speak in a familiar manner of the Lord of hosts ; for although He is so far off, and so great as to His essential majesty and glory, no being is so near to me, perhaps one might say, so dear, as is the Lord of life and glory. And if the Lord of hosts is my Father in one respect, or my Elder Brother in another, I will draw near, if I am permitted and helped, as a child to my Father’s throne, and converse with Him, draw near as a brother to my great Elder Brother, the High Priest of my profession, to commit my cause into His hands ; for though He is great, He is infinitely good and gracious, and not a stranger to His people. And does He not find them sometimes in strange places ? He visits His people where they can hardly visit one another. I remember many years ago, perhaps as many as thirty—a generation has almost passed away since that time—I was invited and pressed to visit an old lady, who was a good woman, an excellent saint, and a rich believer, but I was told that I must expect to see a good deal in the surrounding circumstances which would be very unpleasant and disagreeable. You are ready to say, How could a good woman live in such a condition ? She was an invalid, and could only move as she was helped by others. Unhappily, those she was surrounded by did not care for her religion, and I do not think they cared much for her. She held fellowship and communion with God, however ; and although when I went I hardly liked to sit down in the room, yet it was a treat to pass a quarter of an hour with her. The Lord of hosts used to visit her, and the Majesty of Heaven used to enter that room and visit her, which made her like His goodly horse in the battle. She was no ordinary believer. The Lord in visiting His people goes where they can hardly go. Sanitary precautions

and laws were not, thirty years ago, what they are now. The dirty little street which stood in Shoreditch, like a great many others, has been taken down, and new buildings of a superior character erected in their place. I mention this to show that all places are alike to the Lord of hosts, though they are not so to you and me. It is pleasant, if we visit the sick, especially God's dear people, to find them amid comparatively pleasant surroundings, though poor; but the Lord will visit His people whether they be in the lions' den, or in the fish's belly; whether they be shut up in prison, as Paul and Silas, or banished to the ends of the earth. The Lord will visit His people, and make them like His goodly horse in the battle.

Lest we tarry too long in a place, let us dismiss that point, and look secondly, at *the nature of the visit*. "He hath visited His flock." Now His visits are always to be taken as evidences—but of what? As evidences of friendship. Visits paid by man to man are not always evidences of friendship. If the Lord however is pleased to visit a poor soul in a gracious and merciful way, His visit may always be taken as proof of His love and friendship. It is the visit of a Friend, not of a stranger, nor of an uninterested being. God is interested in you, and you are interested in Him. The interest is mutual, for He is yours, and you are His. We cannot get up to His high throne, nor appear before Him when we please, therefore we should be comparative strangers to Him, if He did not give us a revelation, a manifestation now and then, or pay us a visit occasionally. His visits transform our souls, and reduce the confusion that prevails within to order and peace in a moment. Our passions are calmed, our murmurings cease, our lusts subside, our sins hang their heads, and I had almost said disappear; for

"In darkest shades if he appear,
My dawning is begun;
He is my souls sweet Morning Star,
And He my rising Sun."

Has He ever paid you a visit? Then He is your friend, and like Abraham, you are the "friend of God." But that is not all. His visits are occasional, and that idea is almost inseparable from a visit. He does not dwell with us in the sense in which He dwells in heaven. He never leaves His people providentially or powerfully, or as to His saving presence—but they are not always sensible of His presence: He walks beside them, and takes care of them, without speaking. He may not speak for a day or two, or three; and we then say, Speak Lord, for Thy servants wait to hear; be not silent unto me, lest if Thou be silent to me, I be like unto them that go down into the pit. Well, whether He speaks or not, He walks with His people; and hence "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." His visits, however, are most sweet and illuminating, but they are only occasional. In heaven God will not visit us, nor shall we visit Him; for heaven is our home. He is with us now spiritually: He will then be with us personally, and we shall be personally with Him. Oh! His presence makes heaven, and one cannot be otherwise than heavenly, whilst God is near. If the sun has risen, darkness cannot prevail. It

cannot be night as well as day; and if God visits His people, the soul must necessarily be cheerful, possess pleasure, and be filled with a peace such as the world can neither give nor take away. Well, His presence, His visits are occasional; He comes now and then, and we wish they were more frequent, or that they lasted longer. Let us bless His name for the privilege of any interviews with the Lord of hosts. "The Lord hath visited His flock." The Lord's visits are not only occasional, they are sometimes unexpected. He comes suddenly, when we are not looking for Him. Has He never visited you in the street? I think many a saint of God, as well as good John Newton in the days of old, has been suddenly blest in noisy Cheapside, or in other crowded parts of London. When the multitude seemed to be thinking of nothing but the world, and business, and all seemed to be disorder and confusion, then one individual in the middle of the pavement has been wending his way leaning upon the arm of his beloved Lord, thinking nothing of the crowd, nor the hum and noise prevailing, nor the glitter and brilliancy roundabout. Oh! Christ was with him; the light of His countenance upon His heart. The Lord was visiting Him. Our God is an almighty Visitor: He can turn night into day, disorder into order, and confusion into serenity, and bring us into a state of heavenly solitude, in the midst of a multitude; for one may find himself, as it were, alone with God, whilst he is surrounded by thousands of persons. Oh the influence of these visits upon the mind is truly wonderful. I know it is so; it has been so sometimes with me in this pulpit, and many times in the old one which was removed a few years ago. A verse of a hymn, a portion of the Word, or a thought suddenly sprung up in the mind. "That was accidental, sir." No. "You forced your mind?" No, I did not; I forced nothing. But all at once the thought, the feeling sprang up, and my mind was cast all at once into a peculiar frame, so that instead of finding myself in darkness, I was surrounded by light; instead of being fettered and chained, I was at liberty, walking in such freedom as nothing but the visits of the Lord can lead one into. "The Lord hath visited His flock, the house of Judah." His visits are occasional; they are sometimes sudden and unexpected, and they are all of them foretastes of the joys of heaven. I love the words of the poet—

"Where He has spoke a promise once,
The eternal grace is sure."

And again,

"Did Jesus once upon me shine,
Then Jesus is for ever mine."

Ah! but we change. Yes; but He never changes. If He has visited you once, and assured you that you are His, you will be His for ever; or Christ will have to unsay what He has said, or alter the thing gone out of His mouth. Surely it will never be said of Christ, that He once told such a person that He had saved him, and that He loved him, but that now His love had ceased, and though He was once saved, the whole affair was reversed. No, no; all is settled, and is sure, if we have received a visit from the Lord. Look back; remember the way in which the Lord

has led you. Have you received a visit from Him? If so, heaven is yours, and you know in some small degree what its joys and pleasures are.

I will leave you to meditate upon *the limit*.—"The Lord hath visited His flock, the house of Judah."

Secondly, *the effects of these visits*. "And hath made them as His goodly horse in the battle." This visit causes this effect. There is a considerable difference between a sheep and a war horse. Yes; the presence of the Lord with His people has a wonderful influence upon them. But let us try to gather up the points: "As His goodly horse in the battle" or a war horse. A war horse is *royal property*, and does not belong to any private individual. Horses in the army belong to the monarch; at least, the matter is thus expressed, Her Majesty's army, or Her Majesty's cavalry. Persons thus visited and blest by the God of heaven, are thereby declared to be His royal servants, and the property of Jehovah Himself, the Lord of hosts. He bought them everyone: He has marked them everyone—He claims them everyone—He employs them everyone—everyone is set apart not for ordinary purposes, or to be as draught horses, employed in common work, but for military purposes; to enter the field, and to fight the battles of the Lord; and by way of preparing them for their life-long conflict; He visits them—He strengthens them, and as it were, transforms them, so that the minister says,—

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

The child of God, blest with a visit from the Lord, regards himself as His property, and as having received an infinite honour from heaven, and he is not afraid of the field of battle, nor ashamed to enter it, and fight in connection with the cause of his God as a royal servant.

Secondly, "His goodly horse in battle" is *trained in a special manner*. The goodly war horse is trained for military work and service. "All Thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the strength and peace of Thy children." "He teacheth my hands to war, so that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms." The Lord's people are in a militant condition here, and they have a military training for it, and in due time they are led into the battle, trained by God's grace, and Spirit, and Word, to fight all the days of their life. "The Lord hath visited His flock, and has made them like His goodly horse in the battle."

Thirdly, *they are obedient*. This royal and divine war horse being trained by God for holy service, becomes obedient to the Lord of hosts. Love follows love, and it will do so unless some external force be employed to prevent it. But here the love of God shed abroad in the heart will evermore bind the mind to follow its loving God. Now if the Lord has visited me; if He has saved me with an everlasting salvation, and assured me of the fact, I say with Saul, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Where wilt Thou have me to go? I surrender my will to Him—He has

conquered and overcome me, and become my Lord and Saviour. I surrender myself to Him, and follow Him whithersoever He goes. And then follows, *swiftness*; for He "makes them like His goodly horse in the battle," which is not lame, nor stiff, nor past work, but in good order. I have compared thee to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariot: perhaps in the war chariot. At all events love Divine sweetly constrains to obey swiftly.

" 'Tis love that makes our cheerful feet,
In swift obedience move."

"Matthew," said the Lord, "Follow Me!" And he rose up, left his desk, his books, and the money, and followed Him. Saul was called by grace, and visited by the Lord, and like a goodly war horse, he ran swiftly almost all over the world, preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ. Three thousand were pricked in the heart on the day of Pentecost, and they made haste, and very quickly obeyed, and were all baptized in one day.

Fifthly and lastly, *courageous and bold*, "like His goodly horse in the battle." Evil report. Paul says, "I have gone through it." When I heard it, I did not stop. The evil reported of me was great, cutting, and severe; but I did not stop, and they did not retract it. It continued. I met it—went into it, and went through it—through evil report and good report. Which is the more dangerous of the two? I think a good report is more likely to engage our attention, and induce us to hesitate and stop; for it is so agreeable. A good report is perhaps the more dangerous of the two, but like a "goodly horse in the battle," He went through both. Both were enemies, or might become so; but Paul went on his way through all. That was like him, and also like all whom the Lord has graciously blessed and visited.

"Through floods and flames, if Jesus leads,
I'll follow where He goes."

The Lord visits His people, and that makes them strong, bold, and courageous. May the Lord be pleased to visit you and me more frequently, if consistent with His sovereign and gracious will, and He shall have eternal praise, for Christ's sake. Amen.

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THE MEEK EXALTED.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,
AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,
ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, 13th JUNE, 1880.

"The Lord lifteth up the meek : He casteth the wicked down to the ground."—
Psa. cxlvii. 6.

ONE of the most important truths that God has revealed to us in His Word is stated in the verse which precedes our text this morning,—“Great is our Lord, and of great power : His understanding is infinite.” The child of God sometimes contemplates with peculiar and heavenly pleasure the infinite and enduring greatness of his God ; having at all times adoring views and apprehensions of His grandeur and glory. The Father is infinitely great, the Son is no less so, and the Spirit is equal with the Father and the Son ; and this three-one God is the God of Israel, the covenant God of salvation, and the great object of faith, and hope, and spiritual worship. It is probable, however, that the Psalmist refers in the 5th verse to the Lord Jesus Christ, who is infinitely great ; and as He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, He was great yesterday in the past, He is great to-day in the present, and He will be great to-morrow in the everlasting future. He was great in the estimation of Abel, the first saint that went to heaven ; He was great in the faith of Enoch, who walked and talked with God ; and He was great in the experience of that strong believer, Abraham, who is the father of the faithful ; and if our hearts have been divinely enlightened, and the Holy Spirit dwells and works therein, the Lord Jesus is unspeakably great in our estimation and experience. He is essentially great ; for whatever may be said of His humanity, He is the everlasting God ; and therefore in the days of His flesh on the earth, He laid His hand, as it were, upon His Father's throne, and said, “I and My Father are one.” He claimed divine equality with His Father, and standing on a level with His throne ; and within His hearing He declared that all-important fact. And Christ is great personally ; and when I say He is personally great, I refer to His complexity, for He is both God and man ; and this Mediator is infinitely great in His adorable person. His personal greatness can never be fully understood. The excellencies of His person are so exalted and glorious that it will be our everlasting employ to trace and adore them with our glorified powers in a better world for ever. We shall never want another sight, we shall never need another object. Our thoughts will always find their rest and home in Him. Our feelings and our motives will always find their all in the glorious Redeemer. However high the throne of Gabriel may be, that of the great Son of God is higher ; and however glorious angels are, Immanuel's glory surpasses all, for He is exalted above all principality and power. Our Lord is officially great. Is He a priest ?—He is our great High Priest. Is He a prophet ?—He is the great Prophet of the Church. Is He a king ?—He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords. By Him kings reign and princes decree justice, even all the judges of the earth. A great monarch on the earth, one that presides over other kings and rulers, is an extraordinary object, and occupies

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a high place in the thoughts and estimation of the world ; but our great Lord has the highest throne in the universe, and He rules over all. Around Him stand ten thousand times ten thousand other thrones, upon which are seated minds made by power, and minds redeemed, and washed, and saved by blood ; while in the distance are the worlds which compose the universe, of which ours is a member ; and therefore He presides over all, ruling and governing as He pleases. "Great is the Lord, and of great power : His understanding is infinite." The infinite mind of our adorable Lord goes round the universe, and comprehends everything from the dawn of time to the last moment thereof. Jesus, our Lord, comprehends eternity and all that it shall contain. Every song that shall be addressed to Him, every heart that shall be before Him, and all the wondrous experience of the millions that shall occupy heaven for ever—all are perfectly understood and thoroughly comprehended by the infinite mind of our great Lord. New ideas can never occur, and new thoughts can never be suggested to Him. We are continually learning as time flows on, as events occur, and as circumstances arise ; but Jesus is before all time, and in advance of all circumstances, and—

"His eternal thought moves on
His undisturbed affairs."

Although He requires His people to pray, it is not for His information, for we can give Him none when we call upon His name. Prayer is a divine ordinance appointed for our benefit exclusively, and though we sometimes observe it with cheerfulness and pleasure, the Lord learns nothing from us. Oh the blessedness of being interested in a God so great, in a Friend so high, in a Being who can comprehend us, when we cannot, with our stammering tongues explain our feelings before Him.

In consequence of this greatness of the Lord the Psalmist says, "Hallelujah !" for this is a hallelujah psalm, of which there are several, and hence it begins with, "Praise ye the Lord." What are we to praise Him for? First, because He builds up Jerusalem. He gathers the materials, and cements them together with the love of His heart and the blood of His person : thus he builds up Jerusalem collectively and individually. He gathereth together the outcasts of Israel, and these are the materials of which Jerusalem is composed. Some are outcasts in their own estimation and experience. They have a measure of grace in their hearts, and the world has cast them out, and having only a measure of life, they fear they belong not to the church, and therefore they stand, as it were, between God's people and His enemies. They cannot unite with the latter, and they are afraid to join the former. They occupy a kind of middle position. Looking at God's enemies, they feel that they are not of them ; and looking at the saints, they venture to sing—

"With them numbered may we be,
Now and through eternity."

Let us not, however, forget that lepers were always outcasts. When the leprosy broke out in a person, he left his house and the city he lived in, if it was a walled one, and was obliged to reside in some retired spot or village. He was compelled by the law of Moses to put a piece of cloth upon his lip, and when he walked abroad if he met a person he was bound to cry, "Unclean ! Unclean !" Now the Lord, in building up Jerusalem, gathers together these outcasts of Israel, and says to them, "I will, be thou clean." He washes them, and makes them white, and brings them into living connection with Himself, and into affectionate union with His people ; and thus the Lord doth build up Jerusalem. "Hallelujah ! Praise ye the Lord."

Then, in the next place, "Praise Him because He healeth the broken in heart." A broken heart is a wonderful reality. Naturally it results in death ;

and hence we occasionally learn that such a person died of a broken heart. No earthly physician can heal a heart that is naturally broken, and no physician save Christ can heal one that is spiritually broken. When a heart is broken on account of sin, by the saving hand of divine grace the streams of godly sorrow flow therefrom, and the grace that made the wound is required to heal it. Well, He healeth the broken in heart. How? "He bindeth up their wounds." Without being fanciful, may I not say that He takes His precious promises, together with His precious balmy blood, and applies them to the wounded mind, and that thus the broken heart is made whole. "Hallelujah! Praise ye the Lord, for He is great and His understanding is infinite." We have not time to go further into these matters; but "He telleth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names." Not only those stars which are visible in the heavens, but He holdeth the stars, or his ministers, in his right hand. He telleth their number; He knows how many there are, and how many he requires, and where they are to shine, and who shall see their light and rejoice in their ministrations. "He telleth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names. Hallelujah!" And then, "The Lord lifteth up the meek; but He casteth the wicked down to the ground."

In offering a few thoughts this morning on this portion of the Word, I shall name three points: first, *the character*: secondly, *the privilege*; and thirdly, *a few reflections upon the subject*. I may not tarry long upon the first two points, —the character—the meek; His privilege—"The Lord lifteth him up,—as I want to reach as quickly as possible the third point, viz., a few reflections on the subject, and I will endeavour to do so.

Let us, in the first place, make a few observations on the interesting *character indicated*. The meek. Some time ago I tried to preach a sermon on the grace of patience, and I said, by way of introduction, that it was a subject I scarcely knew how to handle, since I had not very much patience when I was tried and troubled. Patience is a grace and an operation of the mind upon which but few can preach experimentally. We may show the necessity for patience, and the importance of its exercise, but when we are in circumstances to require that grace, and to need that excellent power, we have too frequently found ourselves rebelling against God, rather than being passive in His hands. These observations may apply with equal force to our subject this morning. The meek. "The Lord lifteth up the meek, but he casteth the wicked down to the ground." I do wish most prayerfully, earnestly, and spiritually, that I had more meekness; and that in this respect I were more like Moses, the meekest of men; or, better still, more like our dear Lord, who was and is the perfection of meekness. "Come unto me," said this meek and lowly Lord, "and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls." What is meekness? Naturally and morally considered, it is easiness of mind, or a state of mind in which one is not easily provoked to resentment. This is a literal definition of meekness. Hence the mind that is really meek accommodates itself to every occurrence; and therefore you perceive how difficult it is to be experimental rather than theoretical. O for such a mind as accommodates itself to every occurrence, every circumstance, and every event! When the wind blows roughly, meekness accommodates itself to the storm; and in a calm, it adapts itself to the stillness and tranquility. If a meek one is smitten, he does not return blow for blow, nor one hard word or sharp and angry look for another. Real meekness so suits itself to all things that its possessor is easy to himself and easy to other persons. Anger may arise in the mind of the lowly; but it is the prerogative or office of meekness to restrain it. I do not think that anger is, under all circumstances, sinful. "Be ye angry, and sin not." "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." And Jesus, in the days of His flesh, looked round about the congregation before Him with anger. When, however, anger

rises within, it is the business of meekness to restrain it; and when others are angry, and manifest and express their anger, meekness will hold us in, and hold us down, and prevent resentment. Now apply this to the child of God. I do not know much about natural meekness, and perhaps it is not my business to preach that which is merely moral; but that meekness which is spiritual, being one of the graces of God the Holy Ghost. Job said, "Why do ye persecute me? seeing the root of the matter is found in me." "The root of the matter" I understand to be the principle of divine grace, inserted by the Holy Ghost in a sinner's heart; and, as it is a vital root, it grows, and one of the branches springing from it is meekness. It may be a small and feeble branch; it may come up late, and grow very slowly; but it is there. Faith is one of its branches, and hope is another; love and gentleness spring therefrom, while temperance and meekness arise from the same principle. When meekness pervades the mind, and sheds its own proper influence upon all one's feelings and thoughts, what a blessed state of things exists within, for one then finds himself in a holy and childlike frame of mind. He is not childish, for there is a difference between childishness and childlikeness; and it does not follow that because a person is meek therefore he is childish, and has no mind, no soul, no power, and has lost his self-respect. Meekness is perfectly consistent with firmness; but with regard to his God and eternal things, and their claims upon him, he feels the importance of the grace of meekness, and of its peculiar influence upon his mind. We cannot produce meekness in our own breasts, but we can be angry in a moment. In that point of time we can feel, and have felt, the rising of wrath within; but when that passion has arisen, and anger has pervaded our minds, we find a storm raging within, which all our powers have failed to calm. We cannot calm such a storm, nor call into existence the excellency of meekness; or, if it is there, we cannot call it into vigorous act and exercise. Meekness is the offspring of God's grace, one of the darling creatures of His new-creating hand, and it is produced in the heart by God the Holy Spirit, and its great Author must promote its growth, and cause it to shed its own restraining, beautifying and adorning influence upon all the faculties and powers of the mind. Where does this grace of meekness flourish? Some persons will tell you that the more you know of sin the meeker you will become, the more you know of guilt, the humbler you will be. I say, apply this to the devil. He is a very great and monstrous sinner, and he knows it; but there is no being in the universe more proud than Satan, there is no being that possesses less meekness than he. No, my brother, we are not indebted to sin, nor to the corruption of our nature, nor in any way to ourselves for meekness, but to God only, for the slightest measure of this grace. And where does it show itself? Where does it best grow? Where is it most sweetly developed? Let my heart be conveyed to Calvary, let me sit under the shadow of the cross, let me be surrounded by the powerful blood of the Lamb, let me feel and know for myself that Jesus loved me and gave Himself for me, and I am then meek and lowly in heart; then I am childlike, and little, and humble in my own estimation, and shall surely feel that the brother that sits against me is better, and higher, and worthier than I; and if he mourns as I mourn, I shall feel that he never sinned so deeply as I did, but that I am the chiefest of sinners, and less than the least of all saints. "The Lord lifteth up the meek, but he casteth the wicked down to the ground." If we go into the house of God, leaning upon the Mediator and His work—if we fall upon the knee of devotion and prayer before the throne—if we have heartfelt fellowship with God—if we have real communion of soul with our heavenly Father—we welcome all God's sovereign will, feeling that all that will is love. Then a brother might smite us, we should not return the blow; or if a person cursed us, we should not be angry in return. If, however, one is not near to God, and the grace of meekness is not strong in its

influence, we may return anger for anger, and one hard word for another. Meekness thrives under the cross, and also before God's throne. Let us meditate upon the greatness and grandeur of our God, and let our souls enter believingly somewhat into the splendour, and grandeur, and majesty of Jehovah, and we cannot then be proud, nor feel that we are beings of any importance. Then all self-conceit and consequence leave us when we are immersed in the light of God's countenance, and surrounded by His splendour in Christ.

"The more Thy glories strike my eye,
The humbler I shall lie."

That godly man, Isaiah, was not a gross sinner, for he had been saved and pardoned, and yet all at once he says, "Woe is me !" What is the matter with him ? "I am a man of unclean lips." Well, how did he know that ? "Mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts," and I never before saw such a contrast as there is between the Lord of Hosts and myself, a poor sinful creature. "Woe is me." O let us meditate upon God, enter into his glory, be surrounded by the splendour of his excellencies, and we are humble, and little, and meek. Having made a promise to go quickly through the first part of the subject, that is all I will say on the character.

Now, in the second place, His *privilege and dignity*. "The Lord lifteth up the meek ;" that is, He elevates his mind, his soul, his heart. Now experience comes into the subject here. One cannot speak upon this subject without being more or less experimental. Dejection—you know what that is. Depression of mind—you know what that is. Yes ; but one may be dejected and depressed, and yet be proud, and inflated with a measure of consequence at the same time. Oh how important it is that we should be, when depressed and dejected, meek and humble, and feel as willing to remain in circumstantial darkness, if it be God's will, as we are to be raised out of it. "Not my will, but Thine be done," should it be best for me, Father, to remain in this condition. Amen—so be it. Yet permit me to breathe this petition at Thy throne ; send me help from the sanctuary, and deliver me in Thy good time. Here is depression, and dejection, and meekness,—and He raiseth or lifteth up the meek. How does He do it ? Well, we read of the shedding abroad of His love in the heart by the Holy Ghost who is given unto us, of an application of atoning blood, of the fulfilment of the promise or of the promises, of that mental state of things which sneerers at divine things call enthusiasm, of an exalted state of mind, and of elevated hopes and feelings. Oh when omnipotent mercy comes down underneath the depressed mind and the dejected heart, when the omnipotent and soft mercy of God comes thus underneath the mind, it bears it up beyond dejection and depression, and above the influence of circumstances. "He raised me out of the horrible pit, and out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings, and put a new song in my mouth." Oh the blessedness of being lifted up by God's hand ! No angel can lift up a saint that is depressed, dejected and afflicted. The presence of all the angels of God would leave the tried believer in darkness and distress of mind, but—

"In darkest shades, if He appear,
My dawning is begun ;
He is my soul's sweet morning Star,
And He's my rising Sun."

Must we be meek in order to be so dealt with by God ? We cannot be too low for God, but we may be too high. When we are very low, and helpless, and hopeless as to ourselves, then we are in a position to be lifted up by God, who "lifteth up the meek, but casteth the wicked down to the ground." We read, too, with regard to this lifting up, that the Lord raiseth the poor from the dust and the beggar from the dunghill, and that He "setteth him among princes, even

among the princes of his people? Who are the princes of his people? What do you think of Abel and Enoch, and Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? What do you think of those good men as princes? and what do you think of being seated with them? Why, we are seated with them in the kingdom, and the meek are with them in the Bible. Here we have their character drawn, their portraits given. God the Holy Ghost has photographed them for us, if I may so speak. The Lord lifteth the poor from the dust and the beggar from the dunghill, and takes them into affectionate association with these princes of the people. And he makes the meek to inherit the throne of glory; for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and he hath set the world upon them. By-and-bye, my dear brother, we shall leave the world and mortality, and these changing scenes, and pass away into those regions and realms, of which, while here, we form but a very faint and feeble conception. That will be a lifting up. Oh that will be a rising above the clouds for ever—above the storm and tempest for ever—above the possibility of weeping, and above all sorrow and all sin. I cannot tell what it is to be there, but our beloved friends who have recently passed away from us into those regions of unclouded day and unsullied glory, they know what it is to be both meek and elevated. They never were so meek on earth as they are now, and they never could have been so elevated, so exalted, as they are now. By-and-bye the clock of time will stop, and the mystery of God will be perfected and finished, and then our great High Priest will leave the holiest of all, draw aside the veil, come in all His official glory, with the trump of God and the voice of the archangel, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. Then the meek shall be lifted up from the dust literally and eternally, and the wicked shall be cast down to the ground.

Let us offer, in the third place, *a few reflections* upon the subject. First of all, I notice that the text suggests or indicates *the rule of God's conduct*. "The Lord lifteth up the meek," and "casteth the wicked down to the ground." Here we have one of the rules by which God works. Now the peculiar nature of God requires this; for if He exalts anyone it must be the meek. It would be altogether inconsistent with the majesty of heaven to exalt the proud, or to sympathize with malice and anger: that would be unlike our God. His sympathies are necessarily with the meek. Anger, wrath, malice, He rejects, but He lifts up the meek, the humble and the lowly. The minister may be too high for the elevating hand of God, but too low he cannot be. Too high you may sit in your own estimation, but too low in the dust and in meekness for your God you cannot be. Rivers and streams always flow in valleys, and, as a rule, not upon hills or mountains; they seek the lowest levels, and there they flow; and the grace of God seeks the lowest levels, and there it flows most deeply and most copiously. The proud believer has a little grace, or he would not be a believer at all; but since he is governed by pride in a great measure, grace in his heart is shallow, weak, and feeble. The meek believer has great grace, for the Lord giveth it to the humble and the meek, whilst He casteth the wicked and the proud down to the ground. Here is the rule of God's conduct. Look at Nebuchadnezzar. We fancy we see him—his heart overflowing with pride and consequence, looking at Babylon, with its hanging gardens and wondrous walls, and all its pomp and riches and splendour. "Is not this great Babylon, which I have built for the glory of my majesty?" And God cast him down. Adam fell, for sin and pride swelled in his heart, and he was cast down to the ground. Angels fell, and it is said their sin was pride—and God instantaneously cast them down. Let us tell the truth:—The Christian is occasionally proud, self-conceited, and important; and does not a haughty spirit go before a fall? "Though all men deny Thee, yet will not I. I am ready to go to prison and to judgment with Thee." Have a care, Peter. Satan has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat. Such a spirit is the precursor of a fall. Pride is deeply hated

by God ; it is essentially offensive to the great Majesty of heaven. He casteth the wicked and wickedness down to the ground, whilst He lifteth up the meek. I do not know what induces me to go in this direction this morning. Most of my hearers are aware that I am a little out of my usual course ; but then I am not my own as a man, not my own as a saved sinner, not my own as a servant of the Most High God. My mind is in the hands of the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, here then we have, first, the rule of God's conduct,—the feeble, the faint, and those who are lowly before God, get the blessing. "The Lord lifteth up the meek."

Secondly, we have here *divine information given by God*. To whom ? To all whom it may concern. This is what the Lord intends to do, and what He has done in all ages of the world. First, it is information for the world itself, for it degrades the church, and sneers at the people of God. They persecute true believers. Though you say we live in excellent times, and there is no persecution now, let me declare the fact that the spirit of persecution exists to-day, as to its nature and properties, just as it was three hundred years ago. There is sometimes a persecuting look in the eye, which stings the heart very deeply. There is a mode of persecuting God's people even at the dinner table ; for I believe I have seen saints persecuted at home by their family at the table. Permit me to say—the very manner in which the food has been carved for and presented to them, has carried with it indications of hatred, bitterness, and persecution. Here is information for you, my friend ; here is intelligence from the throne of God. God has given you notice of the fact that He "lifteth up the meek." The man that you push down and tread upon, and whose name and honour you trample in the dust, that is the person that God cares for and loves, and whom He lifts up. "The Lord lifteth up the meek." If you cannot love the child of God as such, hold your tongue ; touch him not—he is a sacred character. He would not have been what he is had it not been for sovereign grace. He is God's workmanship and cannot help differing from you. Regard him, if you can, not as a hypocrite, not as a person full of whims and fancies ; regard him as the workmanship of God. By the grace of God he is what he is. God has given you information concerning him,—I will lift him up from the earth, and will cast you down. This is information for the devil ; and if the world do not believe it the devil does, and that necessarily ; for God, he knows, does exalt the meek, whilst he himself is cast down. But what is worse, if possible, the devil avails himself of this information in a manner that is just like himself ; for, knowing that God "lifteth up the meek," and casteth down the proud, he endeavours to make his people proud. Thus Satan makes it a part of his business to excite passion, and to light the fires of anger in our hearts, and to inflate us with self-importance and conceit, because it is God's method to lift up the meek, and cast the wicked down to the ground. He knows that God will not cast you away finally ; but he knows also that whilst pride prevails within you must live at a distance from God. Information for the devil ; and it is information for angels. They are meek, and in sympathy with the meek. A meek angel and a meek saint walk together. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them that shall be heirs of salvation ?" Well, it is information.

Then it indicates divine operation. "The Lord lifteth up the meek." How ? Well, He worked all things after the counsel of His own divine will. He is always at work in relation to the devil, restraining him ; always working in connection with angels in heaven, and always working in the hearts of his dear people, and for them too. "He giveth more grace," and thus He lifts them up. What does it mean ? He gave us a merciful measure of grace in regeneration ; but He has given more since then. Meekness makes room for His grace, if I may so speak. Pride fills the heart, whilst meekness realises its emptiness. It

is one of the operations of meekness to empty the soul, or rather, to realise its need. Heart-emptiness is a state of things favourable to the reign of grace, and to the fulfilment of this text; for as new necessities sensibly arise He gives more grace; as new temptations come He gives more grace. But look rather at the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. I would impress this very deeply on your minds if I could. Take the fact, receive it, and carry it away with you. You have God dwelling within. God the Spirit is in you if you are Christians, for your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost. This divine person is an internal workman. We are not to suppose that all our salvation is external,—that it was all done by grace on the cross or on the throne. No; there is a divine workman in the heart. And what then? He maketh intercession within, according to the will of God, and with groanings which cannot be uttered. There is a hand perpetually at work in the heart of the saint, and hence, says Paul, “I am confident of this very thing, that He that hath begun a good work in you will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ.” There is a workman within, and another without. The Spirit interceding and working in the soul, and Christ interceding and working for the meek in heaven. I am not surprised, therefore, that the meek are lifted up, and divinely helped and blessed.

Fourthly, *this declaration has been verified.* A long cloud of witnesses are ready to prove, and they do prove, the truth of my text,—He “lifteth up the meek.” All in heaven are ready with their testimony to the faithfulness of God, and the truth of what is stated here. Let me take you for a moment to Babylon. There is Daniel and his conspiring enemies. O King, live for ever! Make a decree that not one of your subjects shall call upon any God for so many days, and sign it with the king’s signet. Let it be as the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.” The decree was framed and signed; but notwithstanding, Daniel called upon his God; and the conspirators, watching him, rejoiced that they had caught him in the trap. What shall be done to him? Well, the decree must be executed, and he must be cast into the den of lions. His God, however, was with him there; and perhaps some of the happiest hours of Daniel’s life were passed in the lions’ den. “My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions’ mouths, that they have not hurt me.” He is drawn out, and the conspirators are cast into the den, and before they reach the bottom the lions broke all their bones. It is not safe to touch the Lord’s anointed. “Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.” He “lifteth up the meek, but casteth the wicked down to the ground.” Well, here is true and everlasting comfort and consolation for all God’s beloved though tried people. But I have not time to go further into the subject. May the Lord command his blessing on the few remarks I have made, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

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NATURAL AND SPIRITUAL BIRTH.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, 14th AUGUST, 1887.

"But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood."—Gal. i. 15, 16.

WHEN the Lord had saved Saul of Tarsus, He sent Ananias to visit him and deliver an important message. Ananias offered some objection at first, which however, was wholly removed by Saul's saving Lord, who assured him, "that Saul was a chosen vessel unto Him, and that He would show him how great things he must suffer for His name's sake." His grace led him in a trying and thorny path to his heavenly home. Saul first suffered in relation to his own personal interest in Christ, then in relation to his brethren; then in relation to the churches of Jesus Christ, the care or which rested upon him from day to day. The apostle was meek, no doubt, and when it was necessary he dealt very gently with the people of God; but he was also a very earnest, courageous, and faithful man. He loved the honour and character of his blessed Master, and the glorious gospel of the blessed God was very dear to his heart; and hence he said, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." He then deemed it necessary to advert to his unregeneracy in connection with his regenerated state and condition. The gospel he says, which I preach, I received not from man, "I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." Then he adverted to his former state and condition: "You have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how beyond measure, I persecuted the church of God and wasted it." "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood."

Now let us look at this portion of the word, more especially in connection with ourselves. Paul by grace had experienced the revelation in his own heart which he sets forth here; but in this respect, all the people of God, more or less generally, resemble him.

I desire in the first place to call your attention to *the two births*. "But when it pleased God who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace." I shall have an observation, perhaps, to make upon effectual calling; but I want now to draw your attention to these two acts of God,—separated from the womb, and called by grace. Most of my hearers are aware that I do not care so much as I used for

critical preaching ; for criticisms in the pulpit are not, I think, on the whole, meat and drink. Yet it is important that we should distinguish between things that differ ; and when certain points should be distinguished from each other, it appears to me to be necessary that a minister should not pass lightly over them. " Who separated me from my mother's womb." He here refers to *his natural birth*. " Called by His grace," refers to *his spiritual birth*. Every living child of God is, as such, twice born. To be born naturally is common to all men, to be born spiritually is limited to a number known to God alone. When we look at this mighty London, and see in its streets many thousands of people, and hear their conversation, and observe their conduct, the thought arises in our mind, they have no fear of God before their eyes. Oh what filthy conversation, what sinfulness, what depravity, what wickedness, and what abomination prevail among our fellow citizens generally ! " God is not in all their thoughts," or " All their thoughts are, There is no God," (as the margin reads.) All these have been born into this world, and born to die ; but few, very few comparatively speaking, have been called by the grace of God. Now in our congregation this morning, is it too much to express a hope, a belief, that most of my hearers have been called by Divine grace. If, my dear friends, we have not been called, it were in many respects better that we had never been born naturally. Our Lord said concerning the traitor, " Well would it have been for that man had he never been born." To be separated from our mother's womb, and left in that condition is to be in and of the world ; and to be under the reign, power, and dominion of sin, and under the law of God which is broken, and therefore under the curses of that law. If, however, in addition to this natural birth, we have been born again, and effectually called by grace Divine, we have been brought into connection with God's church, and with the kingdom of heaven. To be separated from our mother's womb connected us with this world ; but called by grace we became connected with heaven, and were brought into vital and experimental connection with God's dear Son. Born into this world naturally, we appeared as creatures only ; but called effectually by God's grace, we appeared as new creatures. " If any man be in Christ Jesus, he is a new creature ; old things are passed away, and all things are become new." Born into this world, we are born into the kingdom of nature ; and there, if uncalled, we shall live and die, and find nothing but eternal death and woe ; but by effectual calling we appear not merely in nature, but in grace. By the new birth we obtain a standing, yea, a seat and resting place in the kingdom of grace. Called out of darkness into God's marvellous light ; translated from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God's dear Son. Born naturally we are in sin ; born spiritually we are in a state of holiness. Born naturally we are sinners ; born spiritually we are saints of the Most High God. If I have been born only once, I shall die twice : if I have been born twice, I shall die only once. If I know nothing of the new birth, I shall die a temporal death and an eternal death ; but if born spiritually, I shall die a temporal death only, and on me the second death will have no power. Paul was as a Pharisee, as a persecutor, as a bitter hater of the Lord Jesus Christ, going hellward ; but he says here somewhat triumphantly, " It pleased God,

who separated me from my mother's womb," and who even then had thoughts of life, love, and mercy towards me, to reveal His Son in me. And when that revelation took place in his heart, his enmity fell down dead, and he ceased for ever to persecute the church of God. The glorious gospel of the blessed God became new to him altogether. Old things passed away, and behold, all things became new. The first and the second birth; a natural, a spiritual one. Born of the flesh, and born of the Spirit. Born for this world naturally, and born spiritually for the world to come. Under my first birth I appeared as a son of man, as a child and descendant of Adam, and no one knew what God might do for me. Born again the second time, regenerated by the Spirit and grace of God, I appeared as one that was united to the second Head, the second Adam, the Lord from heaven. In the first Adam we appeared as his children and descendants; polluted, because our ancestor was so, guilty because he was so, fallen because he was our fallen head. And when it pleased God, who separated us from our mother's womb, and called us by His grace, to reveal His Son in us, then we appeared vitally connected with Christ the Head of grace. As Adam was and is the head of nature, so Christ is the Head of grace, the Head of life, the Head of peace, the Head of salvation, and the Head of all the called and uncalled Church of the Most High God.

Now in the second place, let us say a word or two upon *effectual calling*. I said some minutes ago, I did not care for criticisms in the pulpit; and yet I will just observe here that it may be necessary for my hearers to distinguish, when they read the Bible, between regeneration and calling. They are not identical, or the same thing. Regeneration and calling are not synonymous terms. I know persons put two or three important branches of Divine truth together, and never distinguish between them, as conversion and regeneration, and regeneration and conversion. With them regeneration is effectual calling, and effectual calling is regeneration. But, my dear friends, they are three distinct and different forms of truth, and the children of God are more or less experimentally acquainted with each. Regeneration is the first act that God performs upon the heart of a sinner, and when the new birth really takes place it is perhaps almost impossible to say. I do not know when I was born naturally, only as I am told, I have no experience or recollection, or any personal experience in connection with that event; and yet I know it took place. Neither do I know precisely when the Holy Ghost secretly and silently entered into my heart. "Oh," you say, "when you were converted." No, conversion follows regeneration. Then you say, "When you were effectually called." No, effectual calling follows the new birth. In regeneration a new life from God is dropped into the soul; and what then follows? The eyes are opened, the ears are unstopped, the dead heart lives, and the insensible spirit becomes sensible. In the new birth there comes that which subsequently realizes that one is a sinner, that he is lost and ruined, that nothing but the intervention of almighty grace can save him, he becomes sensible of all this, and his sensibility is the result of life. Life precedes everything. "Ye must be born again." "But God calls the dead, sir?" I do not think so; for "*If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.*" God first gives life, and then there is

an ear to hear, and God calls, Come unto Me. Effectual calling follows regeneration, and conversion follows calling. Conversion is a visible and outward change, a change of course and character. The world sees the conversion, the heart hears the heavenly call, and the God of all grace is viewed as the author of the vital, living principle of religion within. Calling is threefold, or it was so in Paul's case. First, he was called to be a saint; secondly, he was called to preach the word, and thirdly, he was called to the apostleship. First, Paul was called to be a saint, a holy one; and he says, "Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." God always makes Himself heard, He never calls the sinner in vain. Paul was called up out of the depths of sin and bitter enmity against Christ, into another state. He was called up from the abomination in which he had naturally lived, into fellowship and communion with God. Oh what a contrast between Saul on the knee of prayer before the mercy-seat, and Saul of Tarsus the Pharisee and bitter persecutor! He now preached the faith which he once destroyed. No man that ever lived knew better than Paul, what it was to be a new creature in Christ Jesus. And then again, some of God's people,—but I shall not tarry here, because it is a somewhat personal matter,—some of God's people are called to preach the word. And do you know, if not, I will assure you, that I have rather strong feelings concerning a Divine call to preach the gospel. "No man taketh this honour upon himself." I believe that a Divine call to preach is absolutely essential to the acceptable, proper, and useful preaching of the word. All are not preachers. God converts a sinner into a saint, and then, if He intends he should preach His word, He gives him in some special way a call to the work of the ministry. Every minister of the gospel should be able to say, I am where my Saviour has placed me, I am what He has made me, and I am doing what He has called me to do. Paul was called to preach the word, and so were many others. Paul, however, was called to the apostleship, called to be an apostle. He was not therefore, the pastor of a church, nor was he permanently settled anywhere. It was his work, as one of the apostles of Jesus Christ, to fly abroad as it were in the world with the everlasting gospel of God. Nevertheless he presided over other ministers, and exercised a very important and necessary influence over the churches of Jesus Christ. He had, however, a conscience void of offence in the sight of God and before man, in relation to his preaching, and his apostleship also, for he could always lay his hand as it were upon the order which he had received from heaven, to occupy the apostolic office, and to preach the glorious gospel of God's grace. Some of my hearers know that it occasions much trouble and trembling of mind and heart, when we are not satisfied that we are following the Lord, or when we doubt whether God called us into the position we occupy. Sometimes I think our heavenly Father permits us to stray and wander for the purpose of embittering things to us which are contrary to His own mind and will. When this is the case, He keeps His eye upon us, and hence as we stumble on in the dark, having no nearness to the throne, and no fellowship and communion with our God, we are very depressed and distressed. Oh there is true peace only in the path in which the Lord leads His people! Paul called to be a saint, a preacher of God's word, and an apostle of Jesus Christ.

Further, "And called me *by His grace*." This indicates three or four things. First, it indicates *the source of Paul's salvation*, the grace of God. Secondly, it indicates *the peculiar power by which he was saved*; the power of God's grace. Then it indicates *the nature of the salvation*; it is a gracious act. And does it not indicate *the end of it*? "The Lord God is a Sun and Shield, He will give grace and glory; no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." But He calls His people by His grace, and that indicates *the source of salvation*, which is God's free favour and sovereign mercy. Oh I have sometimes been melted—would that the melting were more frequent—under a consideration of the absolute sovereignty of Divine grace in my own personal salvation! Pride—I cannot be proud as a saved sinner, for I am saved by grace. Stone my fellow creatures! I have not a stone to cast at any fellow creature; for I should have been in the depths of iniquity to-day, had it not been for undeserved mercy.

"Dissolved by Thy goodness, I fall to the ground,
And weep to the praise of the mercy I've found."

God might have withheld His mercy from me. There was no influence out of Himself that induced Him to save me. The reason of my salvation was in the breast of God, in the heart of Jehovah. He found the cause in His own everlasting love. What had Saul of Tarsus to present as a reason why God should save him? The blood of the saints was upon him; bitter enmity raged within; he never mentioned the name of Jesus of Nazareth without feeling the deepest and bitterest contempt for that name; and I think sometimes of what an old London minister used to say, "*Jesus Christ saved Saul of Tarsus, it was just like Him to do so; but I would never have saved him.*" That was human and like sinful fallen man; but it is not like the God of grace and mercy. He called me by His grace. We must go to heaven as debtors, and also live as debtors here; for our own works are not once to be mentioned in connection with our salvation. And then, secondly, I want you to bear in mind that grace here indicates *the nature of the power by which sinners are saved*. God upholds all things by the word of His power, but He does not uphold all things by His *gracious power*. He made the world by power, not by gracious power. He blesses the springing of the earth; He has put power into the sun, which exercises an influence upon the world and upon the whole system of which it is the centre. These operations go on from day to day, and from year to year; but all that power, though it is of God, is not His gracious power, for that which saves sinners is grace. Omnipotence is in grace, and grace is in omnipotence. It is a power adapted to the sinner's mind, that arrests the heart, and produces a loathing of that which is naturally loved by sinful men. It transforms the sinner, and constitutes him a new creature; it crucifies him to the objects of his sinful love, and creates new tastes, new desires, new wishes, and new longings in his soul; so that although he is the same individual, he is a changed character; for he is saved by the grace of God. And then, my dear friends, if you have been called by God's grace, your faces are towards heaven. *Glory must follow grace*. The grace of God in your hearts cannot be lost, and its operations upon you

cannot become null and void. God's work will never be undone, the impressions made by grace can never be removed. "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance." In this dying world, where we are surrounded by the bitter circumstances of life, how sweet a thought is this that we are going to heaven; that our religion is of that nature, that it requires heaven to consummate it! It cannot be finished in this world, and it cannot be left unfinished. It must be completed, not here, but there; not in this poor, dying state, but in a better world. Called by grace, not to occupy positions of uncertainty, not into a doubtful condition, but unto eternal salvation, being kept therein by God's mighty grace, until the end of life; and then called into eternity to possess all the bliss of being, for ever. Having been separated from our mother's womb, called by grace, and experienced a revelation of God's Son in us, we are going to rest, peace, and perfection on high.

Now one word more before I depart from this point, and that is this, *that God's calls are always heard*. He can make the sinner hear and obey also. He that is regenerated, and called by grace, is never left where he was, nor what he was. God is sure to overcome; He never speaks nor works in vain. I do not care for the idea of a desire to save as applied to God. It is said, God desires you to do this, or that, or the other. Beloved friends, He calls effectually, and one hears and turns towards the God that calls him, and thus conversion follows His call, as I previously observed. When the regenerated believer is called by grace, and converted, he commences his journey towards heaven. He may be burdened, his heart may be broken, his eyes may be full of tears, he may be sorely distressed and deeply tempted; yet, having been regenerated and called and converted, he is now on his way to the heavenly world, and he feels that

"Through floods and flames, if Jesus leads,
I'll follow where he goes."

Another thing that follows God's call is that the called one *is justified in appropriating all that is good*. "All things are yours, for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." Now, have we been called? If so, the sweet promises of our God, and the precious doctrines of Divine grace, even all that God has treasured up in the person of His Son, are ours for ever. Take the whole volume of God, and press it to your hearts, for all the promises revealed therein are yours for ever, for God has called you by His grace.

Now, thirdly, *the revelation*. "It pleased God, who called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me." It is a *Divine revelation*. It pleased God to reveal His Son. Some speak as if it were possible for the sinner to reveal Christ to himself, or possible for Sunday-school teachers and ministers of the Gospel to reveal Jesus Christ to the hearts of the people. My dear friends, a divine revelation is a marvellous mystery and mercy; and just as you cannot command the sun to shine, so neither can you reveal Jesus Christ to your fellow creature, whatever powers you may possess. The natural sun must reveal himself, and God must reveal Himself to the heart, ere any true knowledge of Him can be possessed; therefore Paul ascribes all to His God, It pleased God to reveal His Son in me. Peculiar expression—"to reveal His Son *in* me;" not *to* me,

God has revealed His Son to all, so far as the Bible is concerned ; He has revealed Him unto the world in writing ; but He has not revealed Him in the hearts of all the world. All that read the Bible, read about Christ ; and all that hear Gospel sermons hear about Him. This is an external revelation of Christ. But whilst the ear catches the sound, and the understanding is, perhaps, somewhat enlightened, the heart remains untouched, unfilled, unsanctified, and unsatisfied, without a special revelation by God. He that made the heart can reach it, and He that is the God of salvation can save it ; and when He brought a light into your heart you could not put it out, and no power could quench it. You first saw you were a sinner, and then God came with the revelation of His Son ; and this made Paul leap for joy, saying, " He loved me, and gave Himself for me." Thus the revelation is divine. *It is internal.* This revelation embraces new objects ; but let me not be misunderstood here. Revelation is the uncovering of something that was concealed, and was not known. Revelation is not creation. Objects revealed were in existence before a revelation of them takes place. Why, therefore, do you say that the objects revealed are new. In this way : if a person born blind should receive his sight, the sun which has been shining 6000 years would be a new object to him, but not new in itself. If one that was born deaf, and had never heard a sound, should have his ears opened, a clap of thunder, which is very common would be new to him. And God's dear Son is in existence before He is seen and known. God regenerates the heart and makes it capable of seeing and appreciating Christ, and then He reveals His Son in that heart, and thus the objects seen are new. " Ah me !" one is ready to say, " I read the Bible before, but now it is a new book to me. I heard of Christ before I knew Him, but now he is a new Saviour. I used to hear about His salvation, but now I see all in a new light ; God has revealed His Son in me." This revelation becomes impressed upon the heart which is favoured with it. All revelation is not impressed upon the mind ; but if God reveals His Son, and mark this, in one's soul, it becomes impressed with the object revealed. Thus Christ is formed in you the hope of glory. A revelation impressed upon the heart, is a deep, an abiding, a living one. Not dead strokes drawn upon a dead heart, but living lines upon a living heart, drawn by the hand of the living God. All is life. " I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish." The heart is a living one, the lines written upon it are living lines, the Son of God is a living Person. He is life itself. " This is the true God and eternal life." When a revelation of Him takes place, His image becomes stamped upon the heart, and He is thus formed within, the hope of glory, and the subject becomes a living Christian. What constitutes real Christianity ? An approval of Christianity ? No, but a revelation of God's Son in the heart ; and if we have not been favoured with this internal revelation, we are not true Christians. If Christ has been formed within, we are Christians indeed, and our sympathies are with our Lord. " Whom have I in heaven but Thee ? and there is none upon the earth that I desire beside Thee."

Fourthly, *the Apostle's confidence and assurance.* I dare say the wish on my part is a carnal one, in fact, I think it is so. I will, however, give expression to it ; I wish I were able to lead every child of God in

this house this morning into the position occupied by Paul when he penned these words. He was satisfied that he had been born naturally; God separated me from my mother's womb; no doubt existed as to his natural birth, and he was equally confident about his spiritual birth. Read on: "He called me by His grace." Paul was as satisfied concerning the second birth as he was concerning the first. I say, I wish I could lead all my hearers into that position. No one doubts his first or natural birth. Oh that every saint of God might be led to realize for himself very confidently, that he has been born again. I know there are many of God's people who are tried on that point. Because they cannot describe any particular circumstances connected with their regeneration; therefore they conclude they have not been born again. Because they cannot give dates and places in connection with their new birth, therefore they fear they have not spiritual life. Well, my dear friends, whatever your experience of doubts and fears may be, the time is coming when, having been called by grace, the revelation of Jesus Christ will be made by the Holy Spirit in your hearts, and all your darkness, suspense, and uncertainty will depart. If you have been called by grace, you are as truly a child of God as Abraham who is now before God's throne.

What may *we learn from the subject?* Who knows the destiny of an infant? When Saul was born into this world, who in heaven or on earth thought that that little helpless infant, which was perhaps embraced by the father and rejoiced in by the mother, would become what he through grace divine did become? That he would sit at the feet of Gamaliel, become a stiff and strong Pharisee, go through the blood of the saints, and rejoice in it, and then become a praying penitent, trusting in the name of his Saviour, and a preacher of the faith he once destroyed, and at last enter Rome, as a prisoner, and die there for Christ's sake, saying, "The time of my departure is at hand; I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." Who could have thought that that little infant born in Tarsus was destined to become all that! You take your darling children in your arms, and press them to your lips and breast, but you know not what God may be pleased to do with them. Pray for your children, and I will pray with you for them, as I have prayed for my own and would again if I had others. Pray that God, having brought them into natural existence, would call them by His grace, and reveal His Son in them. To make them rich, healthy, and high in social position, may be very well as far as it goes; but an internal revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ is eternal salvation and life. The Lord command His blessing, for Christ's sake. Amen.

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BUILDING ON THE ROCK.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,
AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,
ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, 18th APRIL, 1886.

"Whosoever cometh to Me and heareth My sayings, and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like: he is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock; and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded upon a rock." Luke vi. 47, 48.

THE person, character, and work of the Lord Jesus are unalterably precious to Himself, to His Father, and also to every saved sinner; and hence the Word of God which reveals Him, is spiritual meat and drink to every gracious person. The Lord said, "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of Me." Since Jesus is precious to the believer, the Scriptures which testify of Him must necessarily be highly prized by all that know and love Him. Our Lord is precious in His birth, and His preciousness was realized when He was taken to the temple to be circumcised according to the law of Moses. The mysterious infant was taken by good old Simeon, and as He lay in his arms and the eyes of the good man looked upon the babe, he said, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation." Simeon saw in that babe everything that he himself required as a guilty sinner, and also all that God required as a moral Governor, to satisfy His claim in connection with the salvation of men. Although the babe was in the arms of Simeon, his believing heart was resting upon the glorious name, the precious person, the faultless character, and the saving work of that apparently helpless child. To him the new-born Saviour was most dear. Looking at Him his heart was calm, and his mind tranquil and serene; for death had lost its terrors, and he was willing to depart. "Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation." Jesus was circumcised, for He was a Jew; and He came, not to destroy, but to fulfil the law. He went from Nazareth to Jerusalem with His parents every year to keep the passover; for being a Jew He observed the law of Moses.

Passing over the interesting circumstance as to what took place when He was about twelve years of age, when His parents lost Him, and afterwards found Him in the temple among the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions,—we learn that He left Jerusalem, went home with His parents, and became subject unto them. To me it is a mystery

that so large a portion of the Saviour's life should have had a covering as it were cast upon it. At twelve years old He went to Nazareth, and was with His parents; and we hear no more of Him again until He was about thirty years of age. He was subject to His parents, and wrought at the trade of a carpenter. But as to His spirituality, how did He employ Himself? Well, the Scriptures say very little, if anything, concerning that matter, during that long period of His life. Some good people refer to the 119th Psalm, which they regard as expressing the feelings and experience of Jesus Christ before He was manifest to the world; and hence they say the frequent recurrence of the important words, "Thy statutes, Thy laws, Thy Word, and Thy testimonies." At all events we know that the Redeemer meditated on the law of God day and night, and that it was very dear and precious to Him. You are not to forget that He was first a babe, then a youth, and then a man. He grew in wisdom and in stature. He was not fully a man at first, but a babe. Bless His name! He became in all things like unto us; and thus He is able to sympathise with us, and to succour all His beloved brethren in the hour of temptation and trial. Our Lord came forth publicly when He was about thirty years of age; and as He was circumcised when He was eight days old because He was a Jew, so He was baptized when He was about thirty years of age, because He was—not a Christian—but the Head of Christians, and of the Christian Church. And in allusion to His circumcision thirty years previously, and His baptism in the river of Jordan, he said, "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." Having been baptized, He was led by the Spirit to be tempted of the devil, forty days and forty nights, and then He proceeded to choose His disciples, or twelve men to follow or accompany Him. Then He ascended the mountain and preached this wonderful sermon of which my text this morning forms the closing part. It seems to me that the men and women or the characters who build upon Christ, the Rock of Ages, are described in the opening sentences of this discourse. Blessed are the poor in spirit, blessed are they that mourn, blessed are the pure in heart, blessed are the merciful, blessed are the peacemakers, blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake; for they all hear and do My words, and build upon the Rock. Try, my hearers, if you can at your leisure to connect the opening sentences of the sermon with what is stated here. Whosoever cometh to Me, even all that mourn, and all that hunger and thirst after righteousness, and hear my sayings and do them, I will show you to whom they are like.

Now let us confine our attention to the text, and endeavour to make a few observations upon it, as it lies before us. I want in the first place, to try to *illustrate the subject*; and in the second place, should I have a few minutes left, I want to *offer a few reflections upon it*. In the first place, let us try to *illustrate the subject* indicated in our text. In doing this, we shall first have to notice a few things as to *the act here mentioned*, "*Whosoever cometh to Me*." This phraseology is of somewhat frequent occurrence in the Word; at least, in the four Gospels, especially in that of John. Coming to the Lord Jesus Christ is a spiritual act, performed by a spiritual character, or by a true believer. Many persons came to Him when He was on the earth, who were perfect strangers to His character. Thousands saw Him, came to Him, heard Him, and followed

Him from place to place, who were not interested apparently in His great salvation. Therefore there is something special and particular in this important act of coming to the Lord Jesus. Our great Lord has Himself described it in a very interesting manner in the sixth chapter of John. "No man cometh unto Me, except the Father which hath sent Me, draw him." And again, "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me, and him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out." You are not offended when a minister uses the words, Divine appointment, and which are Divinely connected with our subject. All that come to the Lord Jesus Christ, do so by Divine appointment; therefore they shall and they must come. They come one by one. They have been coming ever since Christ was here, and God's eternally beloved ones will continue to come unto the Lord Jesus until all have reached Him, and Christ and His people are together in a better world, where they will live for ever and ever. My dear friends, if you and I approach the Saviour, we know what it is to come to Him, to remain with Him, and to hold sweet fellowship and communion with Him. Where do they come from? They come from afar, and hence we read that the sinner is far from God by wicked works. A man who comes to the Lord, comes a long way, and yet he comes in a short time. This is very paradoxical, but all Divine things are so. Morally considered, man is far from God by wicked works. When, however, the Holy Spirit enters the heart, and the grace of God begins to work in a sinner's soul, when his eyes are opened and his ears are circumcised, he wants what only Christ possesses, what the Gospel promises, and what others who have preceded him wanted and received. You hear the coming sinner—and some of you have been in that condition—saying,

"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."

But how does the sinner come to Jesus Christ? Are there any particular rules for a spiritual coming to Him, laid down in the Word? There is only one moving Spirit, and one great power only, by which they come; but they come in various ways. Saul of Tarsus came to Christ in a wonderful manner. Jesus first came to him, and then Saul's face was turned towards the Lord, with "What wilt Thou have me to do?" But sinners come to Jesus just as they are, and this is one of the great difficulties connected with the early experience of the saints. Many of God's people have fancied that they must improve themselves by doing something here and there, before they can be accepted by God. Whereas every one that comes aright to the Lord Jesus, comes just as he is. He comes unclean, to be washed; guilty, to be pardoned; naked, to be clothed, and poor to be enriched. We may be too rich for Jesus, but we cannot be too poor. We may be too good, but we cannot be too bad. We may have too high an opinion of ourselves for the Saviour, but we cannot think too meanly of ourselves for Him. A mass of sin, of uncleanness, and unworthiness is everyone that comes to Jesus Christ. If in coming to Christ you feel these solemn facts, you are coming in a right manner and spirit. The Saviour looks approvingly upon you, and He smiles as you advance by faith to Him, and now and then He drops a

word into your minds, "I will in no wise cast out him that cometh." If he brings a mass of sin, if he is exceedingly filthy and abominable, or if he should hesitate, doubt and fear, and for a time stand afar off, yet I will not cast him out. "He that cometh unto Me and heareth my sayings and doeth them, I will tell you to whom he is like." But the sinner, having thus come to the Saviour, what takes place between him and Christ? Why my beloved friends, such a person stays with his Lord. What a wonderful amount of religion there is abroad in the day in which we live! We have persons coming to Jesus Christ, and leaving Him again; coming to Him for salvation and obtaining it, and then losing it and finally leaving the Saviour. We read in the Word that God says, "I will put My fear into their hearts, and they shall not depart from me." Religion—why one of its greatest elements is love, and if you have ever been brought to the Saviour, and led to love His dear name, you will stay and remain with Him, and pray to be upheld, sustained, supported, and kept by Him. Yes, having reached the Saviour, and felt in some measure His power and preciousness, you will stay with Him all the days of your life. Build upon Him as upon the Rock of Ages, and so build that the storms of life and death shall never remove you. Well, whosoever cometh unto Me. I have my doubts and fears, with regard to this important operation of the mind. You have frequently heard me refer to a period when I believe a change was wrought in my heart, when I came to the Saviour, and when the Saviour embraced me, and I embraced Him; yet I cannot believe nor be steadfast as I would. What a mercy it will be to get safely through all, and to be landed on that celestial, blissful shore, which God has prepared for His dear people. I suppose we shall have our fears and doubts, our darkness and our distresses, as long as we are here. Well, brethren, if we are founded on the Rock, if we are building upon the glorious person and finished work of Jesus, the floods many rise, the winds may rage, the tempests may be furious, persecution may be hot, we shall not be shaken so as to be removed; for in the Lord Jehovah there is everlasting strength.

The character is further described, "*Whoso cometh unto Me, and heareth My words.*" What words? All the words of our Lord. There are doctrines, and promises, and precepts. There are Divine doctrines, or the doctrines of grace. These are the words of Christ which He has delivered, having brought them, as it were, from His Father's bosom and heart. And what are the doctrines of Divine grace but revelations of God's character and will, revelations of the connection in which He stands to His people, and revelations of their spiritual character. Never was there a day when the doctrines of grace were more deeply despised than they are to-day, and I am exceedingly sorry to see on the right hand and on the left certain indications which are likely to try and trouble the churches of Jesus Christ. It is said that it does not matter what we believe, so that we *do* believe; and as for doctrinal matters it is best not to trouble ourselves with them; if we are practical and our walk and conversation are tolerably pure and correct, all will be well. Doctrine does not affect the character. But doctrine *does* affect the character, which is always what it is as the consequence of the doctrine held, and there can be no experience worth having without heavenly doctrine. Doctrine lies at

the bottom, the promise lies upon the doctrine, and the precept lies upon promise. Begin at the bottom and build upon the Rock which the glorious doctrine of Divine grace reveals, then come to the promises, and thence pass on to the precepts: for he that cometh unto Me and heareth my words of doctrine, My precious promises, and the laws of My lips, is like one who in building his house digs deep, until he reaches the rock. Doctrine affects character and conduct. Have you never seen persons who hold back God's truth, give practical manifestations and exemplifications of this fact? Let me hear the Master's doctrinal word and live upon it, and my experience will be spiritual and heavenly. Let me hear the Master's promissory word, and live upon it, and my experience will be holy and godly. And if I hear the doctrine and the promise, then I shall want to know where and how I am to walk; and the Master's word gives me information on that matter also. "He that cometh unto Me and heareth My words, and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like." As our time is going, let us dismiss that point and pass on.

In the third place, we are told that such a person *may be compared to a builder*. He is like a man which built a house and digged deep. A believer in the Lord Jesus is not an idler; and though a great deal is said about works in the day in which we live, a true believer in Jesus is a hard-worker. What shall we do that we might work the works of God? "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." And we read of the work of faith and labour of love. The work of faith is building on Jesus Christ. The work of faith is digging, and digging is hard work which the child of God knows something about, especially during the early period of his Christian experience. I will be very plain and simple here. The similitude before us is a very interesting one. He is like a man which built a house and digged deep; not a superficial workman who builds his hopes and expectations upon the surface; but building for eternity, he digs deep, and does not cease until he reaches rock, however low down it may be. My soul, he says, is precious; and I cannot be satisfied to build on the sand or to dig down a little way; I must dig, and pray, and, wait, and hope, until I can say, "The Lord is my strength and my salvation." He digs deep: first he digs through all ceremonies, and through the whole of the ceremonial law. Why, a man building for eternity does not found or build his hope upon shadows, and ceremonies are shadows. He cannot build his hope upon types, he wants the Antitype; and he digs through types until he finds Him; he digs through symbols to the great fact that is symbolized, and he goes through the sign to the substance. Take the Bible to him, and tell him to build his hope upon the words printed there, or upon certain sentences arranged. No, he says, I must search into them, dig into them, and find, if possible, the great Saviour whose name is therein. The mere word, Saviour, does not fulfil his hopes nor satisfy his wants. The Saviour whose name is written is under that name. The Redeemer whose name is here is underneath that name, and the believer sits with the sacred volume before him, searching the Scriptures, his eyes filled with tears; as he searches and digs, he lifts up his heart to God, saying, "Open Thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law." And by and bye the Holy Spirit applies a portion of truth to him, and he and the Rock meet for the first time; and he sings—

“Now I have found the ground wherein,
 Sure, my soul's anchor may remain;
 The wounds of Jesus for my sin,
 Before the world's foundation slain.”

He that cometh unto Me and does not stop short of Me, nor go to any other being; but cometh unto Me and heareth My words, he is like a man which built a house and digged deep. He goes through all ceremonies and forms, down deep into the Word of God, and digs until he finds the Rock. Deep in the Scriptures, underneath all ceremonies, deep in the mind and purpose of God, hidden and concealed from the world; through the teachings and leadings of the Spirit, the earnest enquirer met the Saviour, and embraced Him, and realized the sweetness and preciousness of His words, “I will in no wise cast out him that cometh.”

Fourthly, he is not only a hard-working person, but a *builder*; for he is like the man, who, having reached the rock, builds his house thereon. Now, Jesus is the Rock that believers build upon; for, bless His name, He is a Rock in all respects. His *person*. Oh He is a man! and occasionally I receive letters to convince me that Jesus Christ is only a man. I will tell you a secret. Sometimes one of my printed sermons is returned with notes placed in the margins, correcting me on various points, especially as to my views concerning the divinity of the Holy Ghost, and of Jesus Christ. I say that is a secret, for probably you did not know it before. Ministers of the Gospel encounter all kinds of characters, but none of these things move me. I have built upon the Rock, and I am not to be shaken by letters from London, nor from Scotland. I am a poor sinner, but my soul is solemnly precious; for “What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” It is more precious than the world, and it must live when my body is dead, and I build therefore for eternity; I must have something divinely solid upon which to build my hope, and to rest my soul; and the Christ I believe in, and love, and preach, is truly God. He is verily man, but He is God and man in one mysterious person, and I build on this complex, mysterious, and eternal Son of God; He is Rock in His person and character, and I trust in Him,

“Whose honour is engaged to save
 The meanest of His sheep.”

All other ground is sinking sand. There is vibration everywhere else; the thundering waves, and the roaring wind, will beat the house down, unless it is built upon the person and character of the dear Christ of God. His finished work, and His glorious fulness, are rock. God is in Christ, and the believer is in Him also. Every truly convinced sinner comes to Christ, hears His word, sits at His feet, and builds for eternity upon His precious and glorious name, founded upon a rock.

In the next place *his religion will be tried*. The flood arose, and the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it. What do you think of the flood of temptation? The serpent cast a flood of water out of his mouth to drown the woman. Then there are the floods of persecution which have always been raised by the devil, and cast against the people of God. But Satan has hitherto been overcome, and will be defeated finally and for ever. Again, there are the corruptions of the human heart, but these do not drown the builder, or affect his safety,

or shake his house. Again, we have deep trials and afflictions one after another. The wife is gone, the children are going, the father is gone; bereaving providences are numerous, and stripping, and terrible. Can you leave Christ? Have you mean thoughts of Him in consequence of affliction? No, for what should I do, dear sir, now without my Lord? His hand is apparently gone out against me, and His providence is mysterious. Christ, however, is the only source of comfort I have; for,

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

Well, the floods beat vehemently on that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on a rock.

The last point is *the safety of this character*. “Could not shake it.” Now I do not think I can do better by way of expanding this idea, than give you two or three passages of Scripture. First, the church says, “I will trust.” That is good, but it is not all. “I will trust, and not be afraid.” I will, and will not. “I have built on Christ; I trust in Him; and as for the storm that rages and threatens to come against me, I will not be afraid.” Take another Scripture: Paul having mentioned a number of troubles, sorrows, and afflictions, says, “None of these things move me; neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus.” If none of these things move you, Paul, where are you? On Christ, and in His hands. They may move others, even mere professors, but they move not me; I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation. Ah! but Paul, something worse is coming, something still more severe and terrible. Well, let it come, Paul is face to face with death. There are the block, and the axe, and the headsman; and the Apostle says, I am ready; “I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.” But are you willing to die *that* death, and to go to heaven *that way*? Yes, if it is my Master’s will, I am willing. I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me at that day. Once more let me re-quote the portion which I named at the commencement of my discourse this morning; the language of the happy Simeon. “Now, Lord, lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace.” Why, he was an old man, standing just on the verge of the grave; there was only a step between him and death; and yet how calm, and serene, and noble the old man appeared with God’s salvation in his arms! The floods of death could not shake him, and going into the presence of God did not alarm and terrify him. His old age, and the weight of his infirmities, were cheerfully borne. Lord, I am thankful that I may now “depart in peace, according to Thy Word; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation.” May it be ours to be coming every day to Christ, to sit at His feet and hear His words, and then to go forth into the church and the world to do His word, and so appear as believing builders upon the Rock. We shall encounter the storms and tempests of life; but may it be ours to realize the blessedness of what is here stated, the house cannot be shaken.

What reflections might be offered upon the subject. My time is gone, and I can only just mention them. The first is this, that true godliness

or religion is not of nature. It is not natural to us. The religion indicated in my text, comes to one more or less advanced in life. It is not born with us, we do not bring even its germ into the world with us. The mother does not bring forth her child upon the Rock; but if saved, it is subsequently brought to build upon Christ; for true religion is something imparted, perhaps years after one's birth. The heart of a child we are told, is naturally like a sheet of clean writing-paper unwritten upon and unmarked, and prepared to receive just such impressions as precept and example may make, holy or sinful. If good influences bear upon it, it will become godly; but if bad, its natural purity will be lost. But we are born in sin, and shapen in iniquity, and in sin our mothers conceived us; and if we are not brought to the Saviour, and never hear His words, never build upon the Rock of ages, what we brought with us into the world, we shall carry out of the world with us. The new birth does not take place after death; you do not find human nature coming to Christ, neither will you find it producing a desire to come to Him to hear his Word, and to build upon the Rock. A natural man building upon the Rock of Ages can never be. A sinner first comes by the Spirit to Jesus, then he hears His words for himself and for eternity, and then he realizes his condition, and looks for safety, and finds it only in the Lord.

The second reflection is, that God's dear people build for eternity, and not for a few years only, as houses here are built for sale, and not to dwell in. The child of God builds for eternity, and therefore the foundation is the first consideration. The house may be a small one; that is no matter, it will stand. It may not be very skilfully built; no matter, I am building as well as I can, or as well as the Holy Spirit helps me to build, and whether it be a pleasing structure or otherwise, I am anxious about the foundation. It may not be a very attractive object; but whether it has attractions or not, is a matter of little importance; I am concerned to build on the Rock. We must live for ever, and go into the presence of God; and we want to know what is underneath us to sustain and support us. We would not rest on anything out of Christ, or short of His dear name. Well, the child of God building for eternity sings—

“I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name;
On Christ, the solid Rock I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand.”

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

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THE LIGHT OF THE LAMB.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,
AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,
ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, 6th NOVEMBER, 1881.

"And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."—Rev. xxi. 23.

It is said concerning the church of God, "Glorious things are spoken of thee." It is a mercy that our God has a city which is his own in a gracious way, and in which he reigns and will reign for ever. He has always had such a city based upon the Rock of Ages: "And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter; and upon this Rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it;" and that surely is one of the many glorious things that are spoken of Zion. Time is the certain expositor of unfulfilled prophecies and promises. History tells us what the city of God has been, and the promises of God inform us what this city shall be in the future. When those marvellous changes shall take place which are predicted, and what instrumentality may be employed to bring them to pass, I do not know. Those who are wise never become prophets and interpreters of unfulfilled prophecies. I know that there are many thoughtful and inquiring readers of the Word of God, who put Bible facts together in a very skilful manner, and bring a multitude of figures which are given by the Holy Ghost in the Word, and make their calculations as they think satisfactorily; and then, like a certain celebrated minister who recently departed to a better world, they come forward and tell us that the last day will take place in such a year, and they have ascertained so much concerning the purposes of God that they go into details and particulars as to what circumstances will usher in this solemn event. I really think, my dear friends, the hand of Satan is very much in all this. Religion is a personal affair, and, whatever arises in connection with our pilgrimage to divert our minds from this great reality, and from our own personal godliness and interest in eternal things, is more or less deeply injurious to us; and that is one reason why the millennium does not trouble my mind. I can say, like a good old minister in the county of Suffolk, "If Jesus Christ should come and live here a thousand years before the end of the world, I shall be very glad to see Him and to live with Him;" for the Lamb of God is the light of the city. I do not know whether he will so come, but one thing I know, the last day is coming; "for the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with
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the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." Now, my friends, these are future matters which have been revealed. There are secret things which belong to God exclusively; but this is not one of them. God has been pleased to reveal Himself in relation to the end of time and of the world, and the consummation of His own grace, the perfection of His own purposes, and the eternal happiness of His own dear people. I feel, if you will forgive me for adverting to myself, that as I get on in life and gradually advance towards the grave, the promises of God, the precious doctrines of divine grace and all those glorious realities which, if I may coin a word, are understandable, are of vital importance to myself and to my own personal experience. Nevertheless, glorious things are spoken of Zion, the city of God, in heaven and on the earth, glorious things have been spoken of her by the devil, as through the mouth of Balaam and others, and all those glorious things will be verified and fulfilled by God. Very beautiful are the words in the 33rd chapter of Isaiah, concerning Zion. "Thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken: but there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby." The children of Israel were despised, and especially the people that dwelt in the city of Jerusalem; because, notwithstanding that they were as a nation the favoured of Heaven, they had no mighty river flowing through their land; or if Jordan might be considered a wonderful river, it did not flow through or near the city of Jerusalem. To be sure there was a little stream or brook that passed through the city; but the surrounding nations considered it nothing, and taunted God's people because they had not a great river. Babylon could boast of its grand Euphrates, as London of its Thames; but the children of Israel triumphantly said, in this Jerusalem which shall never be taken down, the Lord will be to us what he has never been to you, "a place of broad rivers and streams," or as the word should have been rendered "*in* place of broad rivers and streams." Those nations which have noble rivers flowing throwing their capitals are liable to be attacked by the navies of the enemy; but here no galley with oars shall be found, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby. "The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King; He will save us."

Glorious things are spoken of the church in the book out of which I have taken my text. It is represented as a city, and this city is also represented as the bride, the Lamb's wife. Now, earlier in this book we have a view of the Lamb's wife. There she appears as a woman clothed with the sun and a crown of twelve stars on her head. We follow her until she is driven into the wilderness, pursued by the great dragon, who cast a flood of waters out of his mouth to drown her; and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up the flood, and so it helped the woman;

and there was given her a place in the wilderness, where she was sustained for a period. This woman is not to be lost sight of as we read the Revelation. One army after another appears, one course of troubles after another arises, various bitter persecutions prevail; the woman was hunted everywhere in the wilderness, and hated by all on the face of the earth. Still she was not destroyed, through tried and tempted. Well, after ages had passed away, and army after army had been replenished and tried, and king after king arisen, and the Pope himself had made his appearance, and Popery had raged for ages,—then this woman reappears, emerging from the sea of trial, or from the wilderness in which she was, not as wounded and distressed, or in an ignoble or disgraceful condition. No, for an angel said to John, “I will show thee the Bride, the Lamb’s wife;” for, although rivers of blood had been shed, and Apollyon, and the old dragon, and the locust enemies had all swarmed around her, she was still in existence; for the Lamb, her husband, had manifested and displayed his keeping and preserving power over her. And John looked, and instead of a woman, he saw a city, which he very copiously describes in this chapter. It has “the glory of God, and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.” The vision must have been a very marvellous one; for John was taken up to a high mountain, and he saw the holy Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God. Try to realize, as far as it is possible, somewhat of that scene. The heavens were opened: a vast city, larger than any that was ever built on the face of the earth, descends from God out of heaven, and the whole of it was so transparent that every stone in its twelve foundations is visible, for every foundation was transparent. John saw it, and saw through it; and here he gives a description of it. It had twelve gates, three on each side, and at every gate stood an angel. And then, describing the general glory of the whole he says, “And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.” Now, as well as I could, after these words occurred to my mind, I tried to limit my attention to the last clause of the verse. “And the Lamb is the light thereof;” and in looking at our text, we will, as the Lord may enable, notice the two branches into which it divides itself. *The character indicated the Lamb; the fact asserted, the Lamb is the light of this city.*

In the first place, let us look at *the character represented* in the text—Jesus Christ, the Lamb. Notice one or two points in relation to *the person of the Lamb*. Jesus Christ is the light of the city; not the natural sun, for that emits natural light only, and natural light reveals natural and material objects only, and we are not to materialize anything here. The natural sun can never reveal the religion of heaven, however clearly it may shine, whatever floods of light it may pour down upon us. Natural light is very pleasant for the eye to behold, but it reveals no objects that are spiritual; and, therefore, the light of the sun and of the moon, which were and are natural lights, were not needed by that city. A superior and brighter light than the light of nature ever

was shines upon it and in it for ever and ever. A great deal is thought of material things in connection with the church of God. Dearly beloved friends, everything here is spiritual; I beseech you not to carnalise anything in connection with the covenant of grace or the church of God. The Lamb is the light of this city, and when the sun and moon are mentioned as giving light to it; it is, the Lamb becomes the sun, and, perhaps, the word of divine truth, the moon; and, therefore, the Lamb is the only light of the city and church of the living God. Not symbolical light. There was a peculiar light that attended the children of Israel forty years in the wilderness, in the form of a cloudy pillar by day and a fiery pillar by night; and Jewish writers tell us that such was the brightness of the cloud every day that the children of Israel did not need the light of the natural sun, and such was the light emitted by the fiery pillar every night, that the moon was not absolutely necessary, and, therefore, God, the God of Israel, was the light of the children of Israel by day and by night. But that was a symbolical light—it represented, in a figurative way, the dear Person of whom we are trying to speak this morning. Then there was a symbolical light on the tabernacle, and subsequently in the temple, called the divine Shekinah, which was a bright, luminous cloud dwelling between the cherubims on the mercy-seat. That lighted up the holy place; for there were no windows there, because, “The Lord hath said that He would dwell in the thick darkness,” and God is not beholden to the sun for light; and, therefore, for the holiest places windows were not required and were not made. Everything was, apart from the Shekinah, thick darkness in that chamber. That Shekinah, however, was a symbol of the Lamb, and it is to that fact the church refers when she says, “Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth.” And then, again, we have certain lights in the church of Christ now, which may be called emblematical lights. There is the light of preaching, that will not be required up there; there is the light of the ordinances of God’s house, that light will not be required in heaven. The light, however, which comes to us through preaching, and, through ordinances, emanates from the Lamb of God, and those ordinances which do not throw a divine light upon the Church of God are not God’s ordinances at all. Just as the natural sun shines through a window that is clean and transparent, and fills the room with light, so the Lamb is on the other side of the windows of ordinances, and throws His light through those ordinances into His city or upon His church and people on the earth. There is, therefore, that medium between Christ and His people here; but the whole shall be removed, and ordinances will for ever cease, and the Lamb only, personally considered, will be the light of heaven. “The glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.”

Now, there are other lights floating about in the world, and I am very sorry to say that they may be seen too where they ought not to appear, in the church of God. We have no objection to scientific matters,

provided they be kept in their proper places ; but, say some, the Word of God cannot be explained without scientific discoveries. The Lamb of God is the light of the Word. Let men of science go on discovering, digging, and boring until the end of time, and let them turn the world upside down, and inside out, and bring to light natural secrets the existence even of which is not yet dreamed of, and let those natural secrets be exceedingly bright and wonderful ; they will all go for nothing in connection with spirituality and eternal things. Not natural, or scientific or symbolical or ministerial or artificial light ; for they need not the light of a candle there, nor of a lamp ; for the Lamb, and the Lamb only, is the light thereof. And why is the Redeemer represented here as a Lamb, rather than as a lion ? for our dear Lord is both, and hence in the fifth chapter of this book we read that John saw “in the right hand of Him that sat on the throne a book,” and a loud voice was heard saying, “Who is worthy to open the Book, and to loose the seals thereof?” And no man in heaven nor in earth was found, and John wept. And one of the elders said, “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 John beheld, not a lion, “but a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God.” And why ? Had He not been a Lamb, and performed the part and filled the position of a Lamb, He had never been a Lion. The lamb-like character and condition of the Saviour relates to His priesthood, His sufferings, and His meritorious salvation of His dear people from death ; and, having fulfilled His priestly work, and, as a Lamb, put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, He ascended to heaven, and is sitting upon the Throne, where He appears as a Lion to execute judgment, to claim His own, to exercise His rights, to visit His enemies with judgment and destruction. He is a Lion with the book of God’s purposes before Him. But why is He spoken of in connection with light as a Lamb ? Because the light that emanates from the Lamb of God is for redeemed sinners. Had not sin been committed, a Lamb had never been needed ; the very presence of a Lamb implies the existence of sin. “Where is the lamb for a burnt offering?” “God will provide himself a lamb.” Then comes Jesus as the Lamb of God, and what does that imply ? Why, that God has been insulted, that sin has been committed and guilt contracted, that man has become a fallen wretch, and that a sacrifice for sin is necessary. Jesus was “brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.” The sins of His dear people were made to meet on Him. They all melted away on His majestic and glorious person and character, and when He had put them all away by His sacrifice—He ascended to heaven, where he shines on the ransomed for ever and ever as their perfected Saviour. The question has been asked, Shall we think of sin when we are in heaven ? My friends, we shall think of everything when we are before the throne of God, the thought of which will tend to exalt the Saviour, to humble us before Him, and to fill us with adoring grati-

tude ; for we shall sing, "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. Amen." Through the scars of our once-crucified Saviour floods of pleasurable light will for ever flow upon our dancing souls. We shall become immersed in the light of the Lamb as we are now immersed in the light of the sun of nature, when that sun breaks out and pours his beams upon our hemisphere ; when we enter into glory the Lamb will be seen in the midst of the throne, and we shall enter into that glory, and be for ever immersed in His light.

Let us notice *the Lamb's position* : "The glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." I do not know that I can give you a better Scripture for illustrating this than that which you have in the description of the angelic host that came from heaven to announce the Saviour's birth ! Wonderful sight ! "The glory of the Lord shone round about them." That glory must have been at night, for the sun was below the horizon ; it was a vast flood of supernatural light, brilliant, splendid, and glorious, which streamed from heaven and accompanied the angels, and enveloped and surrounded the shepherds. So shall the church of God be immersed in His glory for ever and ever, and the Lamb will moderate, modify, and act as the medium of that glory for ever and ever. Where is the Lamb ? What position does he occupy ? He is in the city, in that part of it which is in heaven. He has acquired a right to enter the city, to give it His own name, to claim it, and to ascend the throne that stands in the centre of it. He has a right to claim the worship and the adoration of every citizen, and to open His heart and His countenance, and flood the city here with His grace, and the city hereafter with His glory. The crown He wears He acquired the right to wear. The sceptre He sways He bought for Himself :—

"His cross, His cradle, and His crown,
Are big with glories yet unknown."

O ! He deserves to be called the King and the Light of the city. He is—

"Worthy to sit enthroned above !
Worthy of all our praise and love !
Worthy for ever there to reign !
Worthy the Lamb that once was slain !"

Bless His name ! the marks upon His person will indicate for ever the fact that He loved us and that He died for us.

His character is spotless. There are spots in the natural sun ; but on the sun of righteousness there are none—all is eternally clear. Oh, the light is peculiar to Jesus and His bride. Adam did not want such a light, and angels would never have had it, had not guilty man been saved by God. And the light is so mysterious to angels that they desire to look into it. Every act of his hand, every word of his mouth, and every office and every name He bears throw light upon something. Does He fulfil a promise ? He casts a light upon scenes and circumstances which had

previously been perplexing and distressing. Does he perform wondrous things, deep and mysterious, in providence? Well, perhaps they are dark for a time, and buried so deep that the creature cannot understand His reasons for His conduct. Wait awhile, fall on the knee of prayer, frequently watch the operations of His wonder-working hand, for

“God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain.”

Every stream of influence that emanates from His person fulfils some deep design, and therefore the Lamb by His person, position and character is the light of the city.

Just a word in the second place on the *fact asserted*. The Lamb *only* is the light thereof. There is a sufficiency in Him for all saving purposes and there will be sufficient in Him for all the requirements of all the glorified millions in heaven so that should we be all eye we shall find enough in Christ to satisfy us for ever—should we be all ear, we shall find enough in His voice to fill us with heaven for ever; should we be all intellect, we shall find mysteries and knowledge enough in the person of Christ to satisfy and fill us for ever. If He is mine, all is mine. If He is not mine, nothing valuable or imperishable is mine. Where He is, there is light; where He is not, there is darkness. The presence of the Lamb makes my day, His absence creates, so to speak, my night. If He shines upon me, hell cannot darken my mind; and if He withholds His influence, and withdraws the light of His countenance, ten thousand suns cannot cause it to be day. It is only necessary to be circumcised, said the people in Galatia; “I would they were even cut-off which trouble you,” said the Apostle. The Lamb is all in all. Say some, it is necessary that people should keep the law, and do this, and that, and the other—something here and something there. The Lamb is the great embodiment of all. Then this light is *sufficient* for all saving purposes, and you need not, my dear friends, as you well know, go elsewhere for light. To a guilty sinner knowing, feeling and mourning over the fact and longing for deliverance, the thing is divinely simple. Here is light sufficient and love sufficient also for all saving purposes; for in this infinitely important matter, educational, moral and scientific light all fail. The generations who went to heaven safely and gloriously—were all illuminated by the Holy Spirit revealing to them that the Lamb is the only and sufficient light: but according to modern thought as it is called—our spiritual forefathers were wonderfully out of Bible secrets, and wide of the mark, and yet somehow or other illiterate as many of them were, they knew the light and had to do with the Lamb—and were godly people spiritual characters, shining as lights in the world, and they triumphed over the devil and death at last, and into heaven an abundant entrance was ministered unto them. They knew the Lamb though they did not know much beside. “The wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.” This light is *true*, “hence the darkness is past and the true light now shineth,” because the Lamb went into the darkness and swallowed it all up. And this

light is true in this respect also ; when Jesus shines upon a soul, that soul is revealed exactly as it is. If He shines upon things He reveals them exactly as they are, nothing distorted or reduced, or magnified. If He shines upon events He reveals them as they are and if therefore you are taught of Him and have been enlightened by Him, your feelings and your thoughts and your conclusions so far as the Lamb shines upon you are correct and true, Jesus never produces an improper feeling or calls into existence a questionable state of mind. "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord." That guarantees the perfection of their character and their saving reception of divine truth, thus the Lamb is the true light. It is an *experimental* light ; the light that comes from the sun is irresistible and if ten thousand worlds of lovers of darkness hated the rising of the sun, their hatred would be in vain. The light is also *silent* in its operations ; it reveals beauties or deformities as they exist. There is a beautiful garden yonder, its hedges are faultless, its walks and paths are perfect, its plants and flowers are lovely ; but all is invisible if it is night, and though you walk in the path very close to most charming scenes, you cannot see any. Our dear Redeemer reveals existing facts in their deformity, or in their beauty, and He enters the heart silently. The operations of light are carried on without noise. We are as dependent upon light for our life, as we are perhaps upon air—at all events light is essential to life ; and the light of the Lamb is essential to the spiritual life. It enters the heart, works wonderfully there, comes without observation, and produces a change for God and for eternity. Lastly it is an *eternal* light. "The Lamb is the light thereof." Here we have nights, for clouds come between the face of our dear Lord and our souls. Sometimes He seems to hide His face and then it is dark ; but there is no night there, no clouds there, no tears, no fears, no devils there. The Lamb crowds out of existence all evil, and brings into being and operation all excellency and all that is beautiful. The Lord add His blessing, for Christ's sake. Amen.

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STRENGTH AND PEACE.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, 26th APRIL, 1874.

"The Lord will give strength unto his people; the Lord will bless his people with peace."—Psalm xxix. 11.

THE Lord Jesus Christ, just before his death, said to his disciples,—“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.” Very frequently are the hearts of the followers of the Lamb of God troubled; for “In the world they shall have tribulation.” It is impossible that the child of God should live in this world without experiencing trouble. The devil has great power. It is true he is chained, and the hand of Omnipotence holds the chain by which he is restrained; yet the chain is long, and the power which the devil now possesses is too great for feeble man. He is permitted to tempt every child of God, and stir up the depths of evil which are in his heart; but he is never permitted to destroy an object of God’s love. Whilst a child of God is on the earth, he finds himself in the field of conflict, and he is frequently pierced with the poisoned darts of the wicked one; and since there is a principle of holiness in his heart, he cannot be otherwise than troubled. Again,—“The Lord trieth the righteous.” He is sovereignly pleased to do so, and it is impossible that the children of God should avoid or escape trouble; for it is God’s intention to try that faith which he gives, and to test the religion which he imparts to the heart; and therefore their way will sometimes be rough, their burdens heavy; and every Christian will be found carrying a cross. Hence the comforting exhortation of the dear Redeemer,—“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.” Faith is a precious grace, and one of the most important gifts of the Lord our God. What could the child of God do in temptation without faith? As it is, his faith sometimes reels, and he is ready at times to say,—“My hope is perished from the Lord.” What could he do in this world of perpetual, uncontrollable change without faith in God? Faith may well be said to be a saving grace; for the Apostle says,—“We are.....of them which believe to the saving of the soul.” I have no means of knowing the mind or experience of an atheist, or a deist—if a deist be one or two degrees better than an atheist—when the storms of life are raging; I do not know how an atheist or a deist then feels. In the storms of life, the child of God sometimes reels and staggers like a drunken man; and were it not for a little faith in God, a little hope in the mercy of heaven, and for the strong hold which God has upon the immortal mind, they would carry his religion away. Faith is so precious a grace that it cannot be lost, and the soul in which it is seated shall be saved for ever. It is a mercy that the least measure of faith is saving. I wish I could always believe this for myself, and I had almost said I wish I could induce all my hearers—my spiritual hearers—to believe this for themselves,—that the least measure of faith is saving faith. Just as gold-dust is precious as well as a sovereign, or that piece of gold which weighs several ounces or a pound; so a little faith in the heart is heavenly gold, and God will see that not a grain of it shall fall to the ground or be finally lost. If you have a grain of this

gold of heaven—if I may so illustrate the subject—in your hearts, you are rich. Notwithstanding the fact that you feel your poverty and wretchedness, your hearts are rich; for every one's heart in this poor world is not favoured to possess a grain of this heavenly gold: and therefore faith in the least measure is an infinitely precious boon. It appears that the faith of the Psalmist was in vigorous exercise when he penned this beautiful and glorious song out of which I have taken my text this morning. The faith of the Psalmist saw God in everything; and that is most desirable. It is the devil's policy and object to divert the attention of the people of God from the fact that God is in some way connected with everything. He is connected with every tempest that rages, and every storm that brings or leaves desolation behind it. He is connected with every trial, every wave, and every billow; and the Psalmist's faith realised this fact when he penned this song,—“Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty; give unto the Lord glory and strength, give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.” And why? “The voice of the Lord is upon the waters, the God of glory thundereth.” It is, to a certain extent, proper to speak of thunder as the result of the operation of the laws of nature, but it is better to see the power of God in the tempest; and therefore the Psalmist says,—“The voice of the Lord is upon the waters, the God of glory thundereth.” The infidel does not see God in the thunder, and sneers when we speak of thunder as the voice of God. Nevertheless the Psalmist said,—“The God of glory thundereth, and the Lord (or Jehovah) is upon many waters.” The voice of God, he says, is “powerful” and “full of majesty;” it breaks the cedars of Lebanon, and makes them to skip like a calf, Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn. Then he proceeded to set forth the fact that God was in the lightning as he was in the thunder; for the voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire. Does not faith bring us into blessed nearness to God? And does it not calm and tranquillise the heart when it is surrounded by circumstances of affliction and sorrow? “Let not your heart be troubled.” Does it thunder? I am in the thunder, and the thunder is my voice. Does it lighten? I am in the lightning, and my voice divides the flames of fire. Are trees and forests uprooted? It is by the breath of my mouth. I bring wind out of my treasures. View me in connection with all things. “Ye believe in God, believe also in me.” And thus the Psalmist proceeded with his exhortation until, reaching the tenth verse, he says,—“The Lord sitteth upon the flood.” What sublime language! What a glorious fact! Jehovah sitting upon the flood, and sitting upon it, too, during a tempest! The waves that rise and the billows that rage do not shake his throne, do not endanger his government or dominion. “The Lord sitteth upon the flood, yea, the Lord sitteth King for ever.” Praise him, bless him, adore him; for, in addition to all these, he “will give strength unto his people,” and he “will bless his people with peace.”

First. There are two blessings indicated in the text—strength and peace; and, in the second place, there is a divine assurance given in relation to them,—“The Lord will give strength,” and he “will bless his people with peace.”

I. There are two blessings indicated in the text, and both of them are very important. The Lord will give strength, and the Lord will bless his people with peace. Beloved hearers, we may be sure that if Jehovah will give us strength, we shall have *suitable* strength, for God never disappoints either himself or his people in this respect. If they want strength, he will not give them something else; and, if they want bread, he will not give them a stone. If they require gold, and must have gold, he will not give them something else which will not fulfil the purpose of gold. He made the heart, he knows the heart, he has bought it, he inhabits it, and he searches it; and there is no being in all the universe that knows what kind of strength is required by the saint but God himself. If he has bound himself to give strength unto his people, we may be sure that he will give it in suitable forms and measures. Here we are this morning, in the house of God, able to say,—“Having obtained help of God, we continue unto this day.” This was how Paul expressed himself. Having obtained strength, we stand; having received the fulfilment of the promise, we are here. “Ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls,” said the leader of Israel, “that not one thing has failed of all that the Lord

your God promised you. Therefore, God, in giving strength to his people, considers their necessities, measures their requirements, examines their exigencies, and suits his mercies to their circumstances. We may be sure, in the second place, that, if he will give strength to us, we shall have it *seasonably*. Help from a fellow-creature, sometimes comes too late. When he brings us help, we may, with tears in our eyes, say,—We wish you had come yesterday; we wish you had brought that help last week, or an hour or two earlier; the evil has reached us now, the crisis has come. We thank you for the kindness and affection of your intention, but the help, though it would have been available yesterday, is not early enough to do us good. But our God comes seasonably; he never was known—and he has been dealing with his people for about 6,000 years—to come a minute too late; so that every saint that has been received into glory feels that he was strengthened by God in a suitable and seasonable manner. Then, again, if God strengthens suitably and seasonably, the strength which he imparts is always *sufficient*. He never comes with *nearly* enough. He always brings sufficient strength when he meets his people; and if he communicates new strength to the fainting, feeble, and reeling mind, the mind feels that the new strength communicated is sufficient for the day and the evil thereof. My brother, one says, you have brought that which will, in some measure, strengthen me; but if it had been a little greater, if there had been a little more of it, I should have been perfectly delivered from my trouble, and extricated from my difficulty. But the Lord will give suitable strength at seasonable times, and that suitable and seasonable strength will always be sufficient to answer the purpose for which the Lord is pleased to give it. What a God we have to do with! I may repeat what I have said so frequently,—We do not need a better God nor a better arrangement of things than that which has been fixed by our God; nor do we want a better covenant of grace than that which is already in existence; but we do want more faith, and we feel the importance of the prayer of the disciples,—“Lord, increase our faith.” Let us go a little further into this first blessing,—“The Lord will give strength unto his people.”

1. In the first place, he will give strength for the purpose of answering all his own purposes concerning his people. I hope you will turn that fact over in your minds. I do think it is important. It comes, therefore, to this. He will give strength to his people, for his own sake. It is sweet to view the operations of God in connection with the honour of his own great name. He will give strength for the sake of his own purpose, decree, word, and thoughts concerning them. Listen to it. He will give strength for the sake of his own character, name, and fame. Are his name and fame connected with the strength of his people? You will, if you carefully read the Bible, find that it is so. “Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord your God; but for my great name’s sake.” If he will give strength for his own sake, his people may be sure that they shall be blessed with strength and help. Every child of God is a subject of divine purposes which can never be fulfilled unless God gives strength. Every child of God is a centre of divine decrees, which will be fulfilled in his personal happiness for ever; but all these would be frustrated, and God would be disappointed, if he should not give strength, and help, and peace unto the person that is thus the centre of so many important purposes. Every child of God is compassed with dangers and personal infirmities. While we are here, our infirmities will be great and numerous, and it is impossible that we can live here without living in danger. Now, is my life the subject of divine purposes? And are they to be fulfilled in my personal salvation? Are my infirmities numerous and great, and are the dangers I am surrounded with sufficient to swallow me up, and will God lose his aim if he loses me? Then, Christian friends, we may be sure that he will put underneath the saint his everlasting arms, and give strength to his people for his own great name’s sake. What are God’s purposes concerning his people which must be fulfilled by the impartation of strength to them? In the first place, it is God’s intention that every one of his children should be a sanctified, an enduring sufferer. It is God’s purpose that every one should be a sufferer; and, blessed be his name! that is not all his purpose. It is his intention that every child should be a sanctified and an enduring sufferer—a sufferer that shall derive benefit, and profit, and improvement

from his sufferings. Is God's intent that his people shall be all the better for the fire, the storm, the water, the tempest, and the disappointment; and all the brighter for the furnace? Is it God's intention that you should experience all this? Then, in order to realise that intention and fulfil that purpose, he must give you strength and help, or your afflictions will never be sanctified, and you will not be able to stand under them. He that feareth God shall come forth of them all. They shall emerge from their troubles, their furnaces, their floods, their difficulties, and their sorrows all the stronger, all the more heavenly minded, all the more spiritual, for their disappointments and troubles. Then, if this is his intention, and he should not change his mind nor alter his purpose, God must give strength to his people, or there will be disappointment. Again, it is God's purpose that every one of his children should be a victorious soldier, a conquering warrior in the field of battle. Are not the promises of God absolute in relation to this matter—that every one of his children shall be not only a soldier but a conqueror—aye! and more than that, a conqueror through him that loves him! I sometimes feel ashamed of myself for hanging down my head, and being full of unbelieving fears concerning the conflict and its issues, just as if I had not overcome thus far. I suppose the devil blinds me,—I forget the great fact, that I have overcome thus far, or I should not be in the pulpit to-day; and you have overcome thus far, or you would not be in holy connection with the church of God to-day. You are mourning, weeping, groaning, and lamenting, as if the devil had you under his feet, and had conquered and ruined you; whereas, my dear friends, you are here to-day in the field of battle, armed with all the armour of God, with your faces towards heaven and your backs upon the world; and, though you are out of breath, you are standing—though you are faint and feeble, you have not been driven out of the field—and though you have been wounded, and bleed from the wounds, you are not destroyed; therefore, you have gone on conquering, day by day, and, as the Apostle says—and he was divinely inspired,—“In all these things,”—*in them*, he speaks in the present tense, in all these things we *are*—not we *shall be*. That would have been true. “In all these things we *are* more than conquerors, through him that loved us.” And if all the world, or that diabolical power that prevails over the children of disobedience—if all that power is against me—if all that hostility is opposed to me, and I stand and am here to-day as a monument of mercy—I have been strengthened by God. Ah! but the future! Leave that with your Lord. “Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.”

“He that hath helped me hitherto,
Will help me all my journey through.”

Again, it is the intention of God that every one of his children shall be a persevering follower of the Lamb. If it is his intention that you and I shall follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, until he shall have led us into heaven, he must give us strength, or we shall sit down and stop short of that which is necessary to fulfil his design. The Lamb of God leads some of his followers into painful and difficult circumstances, through which they could never go unless they received strength from on high. Well, what is your experience as a follower of God? It is this. You are “faint?” Yes. But where are you? Pursuing, through mercy—pursuing. Yes; the experience of Gideon and his little army is the experience of every child of God. Faint, yet, through mercy, pursuing; and it is God's intention that every one should get through all his trials, sorrows, sins, and conflicts, and enter into that better world, to reflect his glories and honours for ever. Then, if God's purposes terminate in heaven, and it is his intention that you should reach that glory world, he will fail, and he will lose his pleasure, his pains, if he should not verify my text,—“The Lord will give strength unto his people.” But once more. He will give strength unto his people, for the purpose of fulfilling all their requirements as new creatures. The old creature requires a great deal; the “new creature” requires more. “If any man be in Christ he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” In Christ. Ah! that is the place in which he strengthens his people. A new creature in Christ. Leave the sinner for a moment. We know what he thinks he needs. Go back to the Garden of Eden, and look at Adam be-

fore he fell; for he was not, as a holy creature of God, what a Christian is now, neither did he require, as an unfallen and innocent being, what a saved sinner requires. Go to the Garden of Eden, and you will find that a saved sinner requires more from God than Adam required. Go to angels, and you will find, if you look carefully into the matter, that the child of God travelling through this world requires more from God than angels require. They never sinned, never needed blood, never forfeited and lost their righteousness. They do not know how pardon tastes, nor what it is to have guilt removed; they do not know what it is to have infirmities, to fall down under weighty sorrows, and groan before God. Angels do not know this; but the new creature knows it, and, therefore, requires more of God than angels themselves require. If we are new creatures, God has made us what we are, and he, therefore, is the Author of our holy desires, our hopes, our expectations, and the holy aspirations of our minds. And can he have taught me to desire that which he does not mean to give? Can he have taught me to hope for that which has no existence in his covenant? And can he have given me to expect that which he does not purpose to supply? Oh no! He created the want because the supply was in existence, and he gave the hope because it was his intention to swallow it up in the fruition himself. Therefore the Lord will give strength unto his people. And what strength is required by the new creature? Well, there is one name in the Bible which is an all-comprehending name, and that name is Christ—and it seems to me that Christ is the strength of the new creature. If any man be virtually in Christ, he will require Christ, and Christ only will be his strength. Does a convinced sinner require a substitute? The Lord gives one. Does a new creature require a Friend before the throne? He liveth to make intercession for us. Does a new creature require Christ in the heart—the hope of glory? There he is—his likeness drawn there by the hand of God the Holy Ghost. Does a new creature require peculiar supplies from the fulness of God? It pleased the Father that in him all fulness should dwell. Christ, then, is everything—in life and death.

“When ye hear my heart-strings break,
How smooth my minutes roll;
A mortal paleness on my cheek,”—

Ah! that will come. That must come. But what of the “paleness on my cheek?” What if the heart should fail! What if the soul should despair! No,—

“And glory in my soul.”

And what will diffuse a glory through the soul in the solemnities of death? Christ in the arms of one's faith. The Lord will give strength to his people. First, then, as a new creature, he will give every one of them strength to remain, to continue to be what he has made them. Do you say, “I shall lose my religion.” If God has given you a religion, you will not lose it. “I shall lose my Christianity.” Never; if God has made you a Christian. “I shall cease to be what I have been.” If you are a humble hopper in the mercy of God, he will give strength to the new creature he has brought into existence, and it shall never cease to be.

2. He will give strength to his people as new creatures, to enable them to do all that he requires them to do. He will never require any of his dear children to do more than he will give them grace to enable them to perform. You—masters, and fathers, and mothers—may lay too heavy a burden upon your servant or your child. You may lay a few pounds too much. But our God will never lay more upon his people than he will give them grace to stand under; for, as thy days, so shall thy strength be.” God always weighs two things in relation to his people,—first, the burden, before he lays it on the shoulder; and secondly, the strength required by the bearer to enable him to bear it; and God gives just as much strength as is necessary to sustain the soul, and no more. He will give strength to enable you to do all that he requires you to do. “I had a very difficult duty to perform, and I trembled at it; but I was obliged to meet it. I tried to evade it, but I could not, and I thought I should have been half-ruined or destroyed; but I met it, and performed it to the best of my ability, and, thank God! he was better to me than all

my fears." Truly he was; for he will give strength to his people, to enable them to do all that he requires them to do, and to go wherever he requires them to go.

"O that I had a stronger faith,
To look within the veil,
To credit what my Maker saith,
Whose word can never fail!"

3. Thirdly, he will give strength to his people, to enable them to overcome all that are against them. Is the world opposed? We shall get through it, and leave it behind us. Is hell opposed? The last step we take on the earth shall be taken as conquerors over the threshold of heaven; for "the very God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." Think of stepping as a conqueror from the neck of your enemies over the threshold of eternal happiness and glory. I *believe*, however little I may *feel*, that if I am a child of God, no difficulty in my pathway will be too great for me. You know I am not telling you that I always believe this with sweet heavenly comfort; but I must preach the gospel. I believe that no difficulty will be too much for me,—no danger, or depth, or height too great for me, and no enemy will be too strong for me, if I am a child of God.

4. He will do it to glorify himself in the eyes of all. In the eyes of the devil, whilst the devil is overcome by every saint. He will do it to glorify himself in the eyes of angels,—to justify their early songs; for angels sang when you first shed tears of repentance before the throne. When you first fell on your knees as humble penitents, there was joy in the presence of the angels of God; and the angels of God shall see every penitent sinner enter into heaven, and God will be glorified in that way. He will glorify himself in the eyes of the world. The world has stood around the stake when martyrs have been burning, and talking, and singing, and praying, and shouting, and have been foiled and disappointed. They saw there was something connected with the men and women that were burning that they could not reach; that there was an influence in operation that they could not control; and it was so, for the Lord gave strength to his dear people then in the fires of martyrdom. And then at last, before assembled worlds, God will present his church to himself; then will be a visible verification of the words, "These are they that came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Thus the Lord will give strength to his people.

II.—He will bless his people with peace. Mark—"He will give strength to his people," and then "he will bless them with peace." Is not strength peace? No, not necessarily so. Strength is not always peace; hence there is many a sad and sorrowing soul strong enough to bear the burdens that are laid upon him, that is, comparatively speaking, a stranger to peace. He is strong enough to climb the hill, but he is far from happy; strong enough to bear the cross, but he is very uncomfortable; strong enough to stand in the field of battle against the devil and all the powers of darkness, but he is wonderfully wounded, and he bleeds at every wound; strong enough to hope in the mercy of God, but he has many doubts and fears at the same time;—and therefore, is it not a fact that the blessings of the Gospel are stated in the Word in beautiful order? "He will give strength to his people, and bless his people with peace." The word "peace" is a very sweet word. I do not know a word that indicates greater sweetness than the word peace does. National peace is a great blessing. Peace in the family, how desirable a blessing that is! We have known families in which there have been continual contention and strife. What a blessing is peace in the church of God! We have heard churches called bear-gardens. The church of God a bear-garden! How unlovely! How unlike what it should be! and how unlike what it really is when God is pleased to give peace!

1. He will bless them with peace *with himself*. Now, this may exist without the sinner's knowledge, and when the sinner has no comfortable faith in the fact. This peace was made by Jesus Christ between God and the church, when he said, "It is finished!" And how is this peace made? By the interposition of blood. There can be no peace between God and guilty man without the peace-making and peace-speaking blood of the Lamb. Man may talk of his works—work as hard as he can all the days of his life, and interpose them, after he has performed them, between God's throne

and his heart—it is impossible that human works and excellencies can establish a settled peace between God and the soul, since there can be no peace between God and the sinner without the intervention of the precious blood of Jesus Christ. This peace with God is made by the interposition of *blood*, and perpetuated by the eternal worth and fragrance of that blood, for it is an offering of a sweet-smelling savour unto God. God keeps his eye upon one object in relation to your salvation, my brother,—the fountain of the blood of his dear Son; and so long as that fountain appears beneath God's eye, there will be peace in God's mind towards you, and towards all that are interested in it.

2. He will bless his people with peace in their consciences. Sooner or later he will do this; for if he has given grace, he means to give peace; if he has given life, he means to give *health*. He will bless his people with peace in their consciences; for the blood of Jesus Christ is a guilt-extractor. I do not know that I am coining a word—I am applying a word to the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ which, I think, may tend to illustrate its power on the conscience. The blood of Christ *draws guilt* out of the conscience. I dare say you have heard of a person who suffered greatly from a small piece of iron which had got into his eye. Various means were tried to remove it, but all failed. Feathers, hair, the human tongue, were applied. At last a magnet was thought of, and applied to the eye. It drew the iron out, and, of course, ease soon followed. There is only one thing in the dominions of God that can draw piercing, stinging guilt out of the sinner's conscience, and that is the blood of Jesus Christ. Man may do what he pleases, guilt will remain in the conscience, and pierce and sting him morning, noon, and night, until the blood of Christ is applied, and then guilt comes out, and what is the result? Why, the feverish state of the soul ceases, the *moral* thirst is slaked, the wound is healed, pain subsides, serenity takes possession of the conscience, and we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

3. He will bless his people with peace in the church. I have already made one observation on this. Members of a Christian church, notwithstanding their Christianity, are such imperfect beings, that unless the Lord gives his people strength and blesses them with peace, there will be discord, discontent, and dissatisfaction among them. If God blesses every member of the church with a measure of peace in his own heart, that will go far towards the preservation of peace in the church; if he clothes every member with humility, so that each brother esteems others better than himself, that will go far towards the preservation of the peace; and if he helps the minister of the church to preach the gospel of the grace of God, so as to feed the church, that will have a wonderful influence upon a church's peace. If there are not power, unction, life, and variety, in the minister, and if there is not upon all these the blessing of God, there will not be enough for God's people.

4. He will bless them in death with peace, and bless them in heaven with peace. I think this is a wonderful demonstration of the divinity of religion. Tranquility and confidence in the deep wonders of a dying hour, when heart and flesh are failing, when eternity is near, and all one's life and time are behind him,—then to have peace is one of the most wonderful illustrations of the divinity of religion. "No fear, Sir. No; this is one of the best—this is the best moment of my life. I have no doubt, no fear, no anxiety;—if I have a wish, it is that my dear Lord would come quickly and take me to himself." What a blessing is peace in death! Death comes without a sting and without terror. We usually associate the idea of coldness with death; but really death seems to lose its coldness, if we may credit the observations of dying saints, when Jesus Christ is in their arms. Can an angel give a dying man peace? Can all heaven, without God, come and give a dying man peace? They cannot do it; and therefore the Lord blesses his people with peace—and he blesses them with peace for ever in heaven. That is a world of rest—a world of peace. Bless us there with peace, because sin will be eternally absent, and holiness and perfection eternally present;—bless us there with peace, because there every hope and every desire, every expectation and every prayer, will be satisfactorily and eternally fulfilled.

II.—The assurance given,—“He will give,” and “He will bless.” Now, how will he do it? First, through union to his dearest Son. He will give us strength and

bless us with peace through union to Christ. "I am the Vine, ye are the branches." Christ is the root of our life; and just as the branches are at this season of the year, deriving the sap in a wondrous manner from the root of the vine, so the Lord Jesus Christ causes to proceed from himself fresh measures of his Spirit, fresh communications of his grace, and fresh impartations of his fulness; and thus he gives his people strength, and blesses them with peace: and all this is as silent and certain as is the circulation of sap in a vine or in any other plant. Take a vine, however,—how silently the sap circulates through the whole! It ascends from the root, proceeds through the trunk, and then diffuses itself through all the branches and sprigs, and twigs and leaves, and by-and-bye, in a few weeks or months, all will appear in that beautiful result—a vine loaded with grapes. The sap ascends, and fills every part of the vine noiselessly—yet life flows everywhere. And the Lord gives his people strength, and blesses them with grace, in this silent but sure manner.

"O may my soul each hour derive
Thy Spirit with delight."

Just, then, as the most distant branches derive their life from the root, so the feeblest saints derive daily strength from the exalted Jesus in another world. He will give strength, and bless his people with peace.

Secondly, he does it by constituting himself their stronghold. The Lord is a stronghold in the day of trouble. The name of the Lord is a strong tower, into which the righteous runneth, and there is his strength. The conies are a feeble folk, yet they make their houses in the rock; and you know a feeble, tiny worm may have its hole in a mountain; the whole mountain is over it, covers it, shields it, defends it. What is the strength of the worm? The mountain. What causes the worm to be secure and peaceful? The mountain. Conies are a feeble folk;—perhaps we are to understand by "conies," rabbits. Rabbits are feeble, but they make their houses in the rock. What is the strength of the coney? The rock. What gives it its serenity and tranquility? The rock. What is the strength of the feeble believer? The Rock in which he lives; the Rock of Ages that is round about him—that is underneath him. And the Lord will give strength to his people by giving himself to them, by covering them, by shielding them, by opening his arms and inviting them into his bosom, and helping them to run there.

Then, in the next place, he will do it by rooting and grounding them in the great verities of the gospel; for he that is rooted in the truth of the gospel is rooted in God himself; and what a mercy—what a blessing it is to be rooted in the everlasting God. Just as the tree receives nutriment from the soil in which it is planted, and that continually, so the Christian receives spiritual nutriment from his God; and just as the soil in which the tree is planted holds it fast, so God holds fast the believer, the roots of whose faith have struck into God's character and love. There is almost as much of a tree concealed in the earth as is visible above the surface. The tap-root of an oak, we are told, strikes to a depth into the soil equal to the whole height of the tree. What does this teach us? If the Christian is a tree of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, it teaches this fact,—that there is as much of the Christian unseen as seen—as much of the believer in God concealed, as there is of him in the world revealed. Aye! and depend upon it we may go further here,—there is *more* of the believer in his God than the world sees of him; and being so rooted and grounded in God and in eternal things, there is a fulfilment of this text in his experience,—*"The Lord will give strength, and the Lord will bless his people with peace;"* for *"underneath are the everlasting arms."*