

THE MORNING STAR.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, 29th FEBRUARY, 1880.

"And I will give him the Morning Star."—Rev. ii. 28.

THE circumstances connected with the formation of Christian churches should not be forgotten ; for the providence and grace of God are always inseparably connected with them. We know the circumstances under which the church of Christ in the city of Ephesus was formed, and those under which the church at Thessalonica arose ; and very copiously are the operations of Divine providence and grace described in connection with the origin of the church at Philippi ; but we do not, however, know much about the rise of the church in the city of Thyatira. It is, however, probable that Lydia, a seller of purple, who was called by grace under the ministrations of the apostle Paul, constituted, so to speak the nucleus of that church. If our conjecture be correct—and I think it most probable—we learn that two churches were originated by a gracious God in connection with discourses delivered in the city of Philippi by Paul. You remember the apostle was constrained in consequence of a vision which he saw, to go to Macedonia, and he went to Philippi, where he remained till the Sabbath, when himself and his friends went down to the river side "where prayer was wont to be made," and they "sat down and spoke unto the women which resorted thither," and Lydia's heart was opened by the Lord to attend to the things which were spoken of Paul. We are informed by the Holy Ghost and perhaps intentionally so, that Lydia, who was a seller of purple, was from Thyatira ; the claims of business doubtless having called her to Philippi. I apprehend, Christian friends, that these particulars, so minutely given, might be intended to shew, or to lead us to infer that this Lydia, the seller of purple from Thyatira, was present at this open-air service, in order that she might become the nucleus of the important church which was subsequently informed in that city. Well, the apostle preached the Gospel at Philippi, the jailer and his household were called, and a church of Jesus Christ was formed there also for his praise and glory. All the works of God, we are told, praise their Great Creator, and therefore the sun, moon and stars, proclaim his greatness, and praise his power and wisdom, as Addison has it—

"For ever singing as they shine,
The hand that made us is Divine."

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It appears, however, that all the creatures of God were made by Christ, and for his sake probably therefore, ONE of the great reasons why the sun is what it is, is that it might figuratively represent the greatness and the glory of Immanuel; and therefore he is said to be the Sun of Righteousness and He is also as the bright and morning Star. He is the dayspring from on high, that has visited the world and the church and as he is now visiting individuals he here gives a very important and precious promise—though originally to members of the church at Thyatira, “And I will give him the Morning Star.”

In offering a few remarks on this verse I shall call your attention to the *character* and to the *promise* of Jesus Christ. In the first place *the character of Christ*. I take it that the text is descriptive of the character of Christ as the Morning Star, and that it expresses a promise that he will apply himself. “And I will give him the Morning Star.” In other words I will appear to him, reveal myself to him and apply my light, my lustre, and my glory to him. I shall not introduce anything farfetched or fanciful into my observations, but every character of our Lord is important, and every name he bears, sustains and reveals, is intended to convey to our minds some thoughts of the grace and love which are in his heart and may be seen in his work. He is now before us as the Morning Star, or the Great Light-bearer, which is, I believe, one of the meanings of the word. Does not this apply to the person, the work and the Gospel of our Great Lord? Has he not brought light from another world, light from the bosom of Deity, light from the heart of his eternal Father, and information from the infinite mind of God, and does he not continue to shine as the bright and morning Star indicating the fact that night is gone, that eternal midnight is for ever past, and that a great and glorious day is approaching? Yes, our Christ has brought light into the world, and into his church, and into the hearts and spirits of sinners; and I trust that not a few of my hearers this morning can confidently say they know him as the Morning Star. The Morning Star is the precursor of day, indicating the end of darkness and the approach of morning; that one state is passing away, and another is coming and will soon break upon the world. And the Lord Jesus is the Morning Star in all these respects; for it may be said in relation to many persons that night is past and darkness is for ever gone, and that an endless day will soon dawn; for in heaven there is no night. Here we have clouds, and mists, and darkness; but blessed be the dear and exalted Redeemer, he appears as the Great Bringer and Bearer of Light, and the precursor of the expected day; and therefore, though we are sometimes enveloped in gloom, eternal death and the curse are for ever past and gone. A measure of light we have now, but not broad daylight yet; that is reserved for another state and another world, where the church shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father for ever and ever.

But let me endeavour to give a few particulars. In the first place, Jesus is the Morning Star of *God's new creation*. We read in relation to the old creation⁴ that “The morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy.” Angels, it appears, were created before the world was made, and when God had spread out the firmament of heaven and called this world and others into existence, and given beauty, order and glory to the whole, those morning stars sang together, and those sons of God shouted for joy. If there was a good reason why angels should praise God for the first creation, we are sure there is abundant cause to praise the eternal God for the second, or for that new creation which owes its existence, glory and perpetuity to the person and work of our exalted Lord. The old creation is excellent: the new creation is infinitely more so. The old creation excited the songs of angels, its morning stars; but the new state of things excites far deeper wonder, and renders them most

inquisitive ; for when the Morning Star of the new state shone in the firmament of God's grace, they desired to look into the profound mystery. "Which things the angels desire to look into." They sang, even "shouted for joy" when the world was made ; but in the greater glories of the Saviour's work, they are lost in reverent awe. The people of God are new creatures ; "for if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature : old things are passed away ; behold, all things are become new." We do not hesitate to say that God's new creation is as far above Eden, as Eden was above the present fallen state of things. The world is now a moral wreck, a ruin. It is fearfully unlike the state of things that existed before the fall. The old creation in its primitive perfection was all beauty, glory and tranquillity, and indicated the infinite goodness and resources of the Great Creator. Sin, however, is an awful and universal destroyer : all was ruined, and man became a lost creature ; having fallen into unspeakable distance and enmity when he sinned against his Maker. Therefore there is an unspeakable difference between the original paradise where Adam was, and the present state of ruin. But we have now another state of things, something far superior and more glorious, and that is God's new creation peopled by God's new creatures, and Jesus Christ is its Morning Star. The Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head, and he shall bruise his heel. This new creation was concealed before man became a sinner ; but immediately after the fall God proceeded to reveal it, and Christ appeared in the first promise as the Morning Star thereof. The Seed of the woman was the new Light-bearer, indicating a new dispensation ; for as the morning star ushers in the day, so God's first promise to sinful man ushered in a new and an everlasting state of things. The first promise shone as a bright star in the darkness which prevailed and enveloped ruined man, assuring him that God had made arrangements for the removal of guilt, and elevating the guilty into a position higher and safer than that which was lost. Thus we have another creation, another rank of creatures, and another system of things portended in the first promise given by God to guilty men. If you will consider Christ as the Morning Star of this new creation, you will, as helped by the Spirit, and influenced by grace, be more or less edified and instructed in the mysteries of God's purpose and grace given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.

But let us pass on and notice that Jesus is the Morning Star of the *present dispensation*. The Jewish dispensation was one of darkness and in some respects of night ; but the darkness is past and the true light now shineth. How was the Gospel dispensation ushered in ? By what person and by what power was the present state of things brought into existence ? Passing over the Star which Balaam predicted, I will say only a word or two about the star in the east which guided the wise men from Persia to Bethlehem. That star went and stood over the place where the Saviour was : it became stationary immediately over the manger where the dear Redeemer lay. That star directed them to Jesus Christ. It silently announced Immanuel's advent, and indicated the spot where the expected Messiah lay : it intimated that the dayspring from on high had visited us. Various stars appear along with that which denotes approaching day. The Morning Star of the present state of things was in the manger, in the stable. The Babe of Bethlehem was the bright and Morning Star, the bearer and the bringer of light and the precursor of a new day. He was that Dayspring from heaven with which God visited the world, and especially his beloved people. This bright harbinger of day shone until he said it is finished, rose from the dead, ascended to heaven, and poured the Holy Ghost down, on the day of Pentecost ; and then was literally fulfilled the promise in Malachi : "Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings." Thus Christ appeared as the Morning Star of the

glorious Gospel dispensation. He ushered it in, and I believe the present Gospel day—this day of salvation as it is called will last until the end of time. Many persons think that Christ will live and reign personally here a thousand years. I think, however, the children of God are destined to go to heaven, a better world than this : for “where I am there shall ye be also.” However, should he come, as a good old minister once said, we shall be glad to see him ; and should he live and reign here a thousand years, we shall be thankful to live and reign with him. This, however, is a matter of personal faith. Christ ushered in this Gospel day which will endure until the last vessel of mercy is saved, and the heavens of our God are filled with the objects of his love.

But a little more experimentally. You say, Yes if you please ; for that is what we want. Friends, we want the whole of the Gospel, the doctrines as well as the experience and the practice, the flesh on the bones, and the bones underneath the flesh. We require the skeleton and the body also. Jesus is the Morning Star of *that new life or day which is peculiar to the saints of God*. Look at the child of God in the morning of his new life and spiritual character when he is turned, when the grace of God arrests his heart and turns him from the devil to Christ, from sin to holiness, from death to life, from this world to heaven. He is converted or turned, for that is the meaning of the word “converted.” But he is more than converted, he is regenerated and then turned to the Lord. What is his experience ? Old things are passed away and all things are now becoming new ; for the day does not burst upon him all at once. The darkness he lived in is going, and the Morning Star is shining on his mind. Night is past and the midnight darkness of death is gone, and the true light now shineth—not powerfully perhaps, still it is the true light, and it shines upon a mind that was born into darkness, that lived in darkness, and that would have died and been lost in eternal darkness had it not been for rich, free and sovereign grace. What is the experience of this poor sinner ? It is neither day nor night with him. The night is, as I have said, receding—of this the morning star is a proof—darkness is vanishing and the morning is coming. He knows not what he is, he is a mystery to himself ; he knows not where he is, only he is conscious that a very solemn change has taken place, and that it did not originate with himself. There is guilt upon his conscience, a burden upon his heart, and darkness, doubt, and fear in his mind. Nevertheless there is something that sustains him, that imparts a measure of buoyancy to him, and that something is mysteriously connected with the name of Jesus ; for were it not for that name he would sink into despair. The darkness he is now in would be a thousand times denser were it not for the mysterious and wonderful attractiveness and power in the name of Jesus, which holds him up and saves him from despair. What shall I say to the poor sinner, if I have one in this position in the house of God this morning ? That dear name is a Morning Star to you. The little light you have comes from your saving Lord. The darkness will soon be wholly gone, and the day of liberty, and pardon, and peace, and light will soon break. How do you know ? “I will give him the Morning Star.” What for ? To show that night is behind him and day before him. Penal darkness is gone, and saving light is coming upon him ; for the morning star ushers in the day, and is the certain precursor of a bright and glorious future. If a ray from Jesus has fallen on your mind, if a grain of grace from heaven has been dropped into your hearts, if there is any savour and sweetness in the person of God’s dear Son to your experience—

“The time of love will come,
When you shall clearly see,
Not only that he shed his blood,
But you shall say ‘for me.’”

For "I will give him the Morning Star," and in this respect you already have Christ, although at present it may be with you neither day nor night. Into the night from which you have been brought you cannot return, and you cannot have full day until the Sun of Righteousness appears and shines upon you. My brother, if you will suffer a word of exhortation, keep your position, remain on your knees, hope in God's mercy; for as surely as Christ's name is precious to you, salvation in all its glory and greatness is yours. The Morning Star is a pledge of this.

Now let us depart from that point and look at Christ in another relation. You have heard much about the morning stars of the *Reformation*. Wicliffe, it is said, was the morning star of the Reformation here; Luther, perhaps, in Germany; and Zwinglius, perhaps, in Switzerland. Christ, however, was the Morning Star of that glorious change; and the professing church of God was wrapped in midnight darkness, and the gloom that enveloped the religion of heaven was impenetrable to the creature. Let us for a moment look at Luther in Germany reading the word of God. What did he see? Why, he had a view of Christ in the Bible, and such a view of him as he had never had before. He saw Christ and justification by faith and grace with new eyes. He saw this Morning Star in the holy word of God. The good man's mind became irradiated, and the day of the Reformation shortly afterwards dawned; and by and by—but I cannot speak positively—shortly this and that error, this and that abomination will sink and disappear from the professing church of God. Let me, however, say, that I am afraid we are now living in a state of great darkness. I do not think we have so much Bible and heavenly light as some persons wish us to believe. This is a dark day. Scientifically, intellectually, and politically we are supposed to have much light; but religiously and spiritually it is a cloudy and dark day. Errors are abundant and rampant, and gospel light is avoided if not hated. Well, the time perhaps may not be far off when errors will sink and there will be another reformation, and the church of God shall arise and shake herself, and put on her beautiful garments in which, though they have been called "rags" by certain persons, she shall appear as she ought to appear, the very opposite of this hateful world—the bride of the Lord Jesus Christ, heavenly in her standing, heavenly in her character, heavenly in her practice, and heavenly in her creed. We do not believe in the death of truth. Like its Author, truth is immortal and eternal. It may be concealed in darkness, it may be trampled upon—immortality is in it, divinity is in it, and the everlasting gospel of the everlasting God shall emerge from the present night of darkness, and all this shall be brought about by the rising of the bright and morning star. Oh that our great Light-bearer, Christ, would arise and shine upon his dear people!

Lastly, what shall precede the morning of *eternal day in a better world*? Thank God, antichrist is doomed. I am told I ought to be charitable; and as far as possible I will be charitable to persons, but not to the vile principles of Rome. There can be no peace with her; as a system Christ has doomed it to destruction, and soon the threatening shall be fulfilled, and the word shall be verified: "Babylon is fallen, is fallen!" And then the false prophet, and heathenism, and everything that worketh abomination and loveth a lie, shall be destroyed, and the great white throne shall appear, and the heavens shall pass away, while the Redeemer shall descend, and the raising of the dead shall take place, and saints shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we be for ever with the Lord. Brethren and sisters, has Christ ever shone on your minds? Has his name ever been dear and precious to you? Then heaven is yours. That world and state are yours where there is no night. Eternal day is coming. It will soon break. Behold the bright and morning star. Sometimes clouds con-

ceal him—still he is there, and since Christ is in the word and in the church day will soon break upon our wondering minds. The morning star of the new creation.

I thought I would, in the second place, call your attention to the fact that Christ is the *Star of Hope*. I have, however, included that in what I have already said. Does it not, in the next place, indicate *the promise and the fulfilment*? Christ in the promise, is the Morning Star; Christ in the fulfilment thereof, is daylight. This Morning Star appears in the promise, the prediction, and the prophecy; and as the morning star portends approaching day, so unfulfilled promises portend an approaching God. God is coming we know by the word. The promise will continue to shine more and more until the perfect day. Then something shall occur, some wonderful work in providence shall be done whereby the promise shall be fulfilled, and the prophecy shall be accomplished,—and then it will be day.

Does it not indicate *the supremacy of our Lord*? The morning star does not shine alone; others stars usually shine at the same time; so there are in the firmament of God's grace and church other stars shining now. Are not the angels of God there, and are not the seven stars the ministers of the gospel shining? The prophets, apostles, martyrs, and ministers of the gospel are all shining with a twinkling light during the night of time. Our existence and our light do not insure a coming day. It is our business to point to the Morning Star to proclaim his great office; and, therefore, Christ the Morning Star shines supremely among other stars, and his presence alone indicates a coming day, and that with absolute certainty. Lastly, here it seems to me to indicate the *sovereignty of God also*. The morning star is not always seen; and when it is not, a thousand other lights cannot reveal him, for he is a self-revealing being. The Morning Star reveals himself, and in his light we see light or Christ himself. The poor soul under guilt is pointed to Jesus, and he cannot see him. Guilt intervenes between his mind and Christ. In trouble when it is deep and temptation is strong, the Christian cannot see the Saviour; for he is not always seen. There are times, however, even in the sorrows of life, when we have a ray of light from heaven, a drop of grace from the heart of Divine love, and we can bear the trouble and carry the sorrow and hope for the day. Think of the morning that is coming. Yonder is the Morning Star!

“Yes, I to the end shall endure,
As sure as the earnest is given;
More happy, yet not more secure,
The glorified spirits in heaven.”

Now, secondly and very briefly, *the Saviour's promise and encouragement*. “I will give him the Morning Star.” Look at the *magnitude* of this promise. Earthly blessings are not mentioned here. They are elsewhere; but here they are not. The promise here says, “I will give him the morning star.” It means I will give him myself, or I will apply myself to him.

“Less than thyself will not suffice,
And more thou canst not give.”

Is anything else required? The Saviour uses a particular form of expression—the morning star; and much follows that, as we have already said. The day and the sun follow it; and all that follows the dawn of life the saints shall receive, and that is eternal day. Christ gives himself, his fulness, his salvation, his glory, and he will give him his presence on the throne, and we shall be like him in a better world. “Where I am, there shall also my servant be.” Again, this

gift is inalienable. Some of the gifts of our Lord may be lost, recalled, or become useless, or comparatively so, as some temporal favours when the purpose for which they were originally given has been fulfilled. But here is an inalienable gift. If yonder Christ is ours, and shines for us, and is what he is for us, who can rob us of him? Why, that Star, that Christ, that God is mine. Oh that your faith may be strengthened by God the Holy Ghost, enabling you this morning to look at Jesus with all your mental and spiritual powers, and to embrace him as your Saviour and your all. You may lose your wife, your husband, your father, your mother, your children, your property, your peace, your liberty, your temporal goods, and your life, but you cannot lose your Lord. This bright morning star, this gift is irrevocable—the saving benefits that flow from Christ are yours for ever and ever. Is not this light necessary? If one cannot see Christ, his mind is in trouble, and in view of death is distracted, and his thoughts are in confusion, rolling, and unfixed, without an object to rest upon. But when the bright and glorious Christ of God appears, the mind becomes steady, the thoughts are rallied, the feelings are tranquillized, the whole heart is attracted; for

“Here I’d sit for, ever viewing
Mercy’s streams in streams of blood.”

May we always see this bright Star when we come to this and other places of worship. Do you know what wandering of mind is in the house of God? what it is to see nothing sufficiently strong to engage the attention, or to collect the thoughts? Oh the blessedness of standing an hour in the pulpit viewing the glories of Immanuel! Oh Christ, give us all thyself!

Give Him. Give whom? To whom is Christ coming? Read the connection at your leisure. He that overcometh and keepeth my words unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations, and so on. Overcomers receive him; through favour, you are an overcomer of sin. Why, it holds me fast; but not as it used to hold you. Now it is in you; formerly you were in that. Now it follows after you, and you are fleeing from it. Now you carry it; formerly it carried you where it would. Once it was your master, ruler, and your king; but in some measure you are now an overcomer. I have not time to go further into that matter. When therefore, lastly, *is this promise fulfilled?* First, in *conviction* when a soul is convinced of sin. I have already adverted to this. If my friends in their pews have at their right or left hand persons that occasionally weep in the house of God, speak to them, will you? Do not be officious, nor make yourself, nor the things of God, nor the place, nor the minister offensive, but speak kindly and affectionately to such persons; perhaps you will find they are under conviction and in darkness. It is neither day nor night with them, and they cannot see this Morning Star. These persons require encouragement; try to comfort them; and among other promises mention the text, “I will give him the Morning Star.”

This indicates coming liberty, freedom, peace, and joy. He gives it also *in trouble*; for unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness. What is it that keeps the tried believer who is deep in trouble from sinking? what is it that keeps his head above water, but looking unto Jesus, the Morning Star? In its light he sees the opposite bank of the river, and feels satisfied that God will bless him with preserving grace, till deliverance comes, and then with deliverance itself; for under the influence of this Star he hopes for the day. *In death* what shall we do if we should die without seeing this precursor of heaven, this harbinger of eternal day? Oh, since we must die, how sweet it must be to depart, feeling as many of God’s dear people have felt in the solemnities of death—

"On the Rock of Ages founded,
What can shake my sure repose?"

All is well. The eye becomes feebler and feebler, natural light becomes weaker and weaker ; but there is an eye in the mind, and a bright object before it, and the Christian leaves the world with faith and hope in the bright object before him, or gazing at that bright Morning Star which is ushering in an endless day. The mind thus fixed upon the dear Redeemer obtains the victory in the deep wonders of death.

"I know his glories from afar,
I know the bright and morning Star."

The Lord add his blessing for Christ's sake. Amen.

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THE BEATIFIC VISION.

A Sermon*

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL.

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."—Matt. v. 8.

DAVID, in concluding one of the most important Psalms that he ever wrote, offers a word of advice and encouragement—"Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace." There were perfect and upright men in the days of David, and there are such characters now, and perfect and upright ones will be found on the earth until the end of time. It is important to distinguish between perfection and uprightness. Every child of God is for ever perfect in Jesus; but the epithet "upright" applies to his heart, his experience, and his conduct. A person is legally perfect in the sight of God in consequence of the imputation of the justifying obedience of the dear Redeemer, and standing before God dressed in garments of salvation, and covered with the robe of righteousness is said to be complete in Christ. It is, however, always important to distinguish between the work of Christ for us, and the work of the Spirit within us. The work of Jesus for sinners is finished and perfect, and this fact he declared before he bowed his head in death. Then the great affair of the sinner's salvation was completed. The end of the law was reached, and its curse exhausted, and salvation was for ever finished. The work of the Spirit, however, in the hearts of God's saved people is not yet finished. The Holy Spirit, dwelling in the bosom of every true believer, is carrying on that good work which commences in regeneration, and his operations progress and advance until "the perfect man" reaches death, and his end is peace. But although they are perfectly saved in Christ, and their bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, they are a tried, and poor, and an afflicted people living in sorrow on earth. Trials are sometimes social, at other times they relate to business connections with the world; then they are personal and spiritual, while frequently they arise out of the fact that there is a terrible conflict with the powers of darkness. Anyhow, the righteous man is, whilst here, a tried one, and hence his covenant God and Father has given him many exceeding great and precious promises. The Lord trieth the righteous; but as his days, so shall his strength be: therefore, mark the perfect man in trouble. He is sustained, supported, and some-

On the death of a member.

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times comforted. Mark this man when his circumstances are comparatively smooth and easy—his life is one of intercourse and communion with God. Mark him as he travels towards his journey's end ; and mark him when his countenance is gradually changing, and God is calling him away. His end may not be rapture or overflowing joy ; the power of speech may have left him, and so far as we understand the mind and its operations, his mental powers may be feeble ; but mark him, however, as one with Christ, as having been washed in blood, and as covered with the Saviour's righteousness ; "for the end of that man *is peace* ;" and what then ? "Blessed are the pure in heart ; for they shall see God."

The text suggests several great and important facts, some of which I will mention as I proceed, and offer a few observations upon them. "Blessed are the pure in heart ; for they shall see God." It may be expected by many of my hearers to-night, that I shall preach a funeral sermon, and I may say that although I am not fond of that kind of sermons, the departure of our aged sister has occasioned the selection of this portion of the word for a text this evening ; and I may therefore make such observations upon the words as I might not have made upon them on other occasions. I shall not, however, glorify or exalt the creature. Ministers, in preaching funeral sermons, are prone to applaud and elevate the creature, and to lose sight of the grace of God, and especially of the God of grace.

Let us proceed, however, with our subject, and notice the first thing that occurs to our mind—viz., *the vision of God* : "They shall see God." Now I feel, my dear friends and hearers, that I have mentioned a subject of unspeakable greatness and importance, and have introduced to you through the text a theme which I cannot explain. What a sight ! "The pure in heart shall see God." Some of us have seen many objects, and the sight has affected and influenced our minds in various ways ; but something else is coming in the marvellous future, the grandest sight that creatures can ever have awaits us, even everyone that is pure in heart ; for he shall see God himself. Some of you are ready to ask, Do you think that you should restrict the vision of God to the heavenly world ? Well, I shall confine my attention to that view to-night ; though, blessed be God, there are times when the believer sees his God here on the earth. He is now seen only by faith ; he is invisible to mortal eyes, and his voice is inaudible to mortal ears ; but we shall really hear his voice yonder, and with these eyes we shall see the everlasting God, whom we are not strangers to here ; for we have now some knowledge of Him in Christ. This is the will of him that sent me, that everyone that *seeth* the Son and believeth in him should have everlasting life. Some of you have seen Christ on the cross. I do not mean a material one, nor a golden or a silver figure of the Lord Jesus upon a Popish crucifix, but that you have as guilty but believing sinners, seen by faith the incarnate Son of God on the accursed tree, putting away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and have sometimes been privileged to sing with more feeling than tongue could express—

"Here I'd sit for ever viewing
 Mercy's streams in streams of blood ;
 Precious drops, my soul bedewing,
 Plead and claim my peace with God."

There are some soft seats in the present state, and one of them is found by the believer at the cross. There are some sweet and blessed places now visited, one of which is the holiest of all ; and some frames of mind occasionally enjoyed on earth in which the believer finds himself to be very near to heaven, resting

believingly upon the bosom of eternal love, and saying in all the calm and tranquil confidence of faith—"This God is my God for ever and ever, and he will be my guide, even unto death." Yes ; there are some pleasures connected with our holy religion, and which are sometimes felt here. But "blessed are the pure in heart ; for they shall see God" face to face. We see him here believingly or by faith ; but in heaven we shall see him face to face : and this is what I feel I cannot explain, although I have read this portion for my text. Here we see God's work, being surrounded by them ; but we cannot see the great Workman. We see the work of salvation, but not the Saviour ; we feel the importance and blessedness of redemption, but we have not yet seen the Redeemer ; we are surrounded by the grand and glorious, but the Great Maker of all we have not yet seen. We are passing through his works to the world wherein he lives and dwells, and having passed through providence and nature, the grand sight will be before us, the vision of his face as indicated in the text. We shall see God,—see him in connection with the many who have departed from us as a church and people for a better world. They have fixed their eyes upon their God, and are eternally filled and satisfied. A few more months, and we also shall be there. Shortly we shall cross the swellings of Jordan, and enter that world of glorified minds which is being peopled with purified and sanctified consciences, and mingle with them whilst they cluster, so to speak, around the eternal God, and draw everlasting satisfaction from him through the Man Jesus Christ.

How shall we see God, or how is he seen in heaven ? I am guided only by the Bible. We shall see him in Christ, in our own nature ; and God incarnate is the grandest contrivance of Jehovah. We do not expect that on entering heaven we shall sit down and contemplate abstract Deity, Jehovah as a boundless and infinite Spirit ; and we shall not be required to exercise our minds and thinking powers upon him unembodied. On entering glory we shall at once see him in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. Neither is it expected that three divine thrones will be seen in heaven, one occupied by the person of the Father, another by the Son, and another by the Spirit. We shall stand before a Three-One God ; but he will eternally display His grace, and fulness, and glory, and persons in the man Christ Jesus. Thus Deity is simplified ; this great object becomes intelligible to created minds, and God in Christ is approachable, and amiable, and attractive to blood-washed souls. All the majesty and attributes of God are inseparable from his being, but they will evermore appear in the God-man ; and therefore Christ is represented as the visible image of the invisible God, and as the Word of God. The infinite Jehovah is eternally expressing his mind through the dear Redeemer. Nothing of God is seen but what Christ reveals, and nothing enjoyed but what he imparts, and therefore the ransomed are to be gathered around his one throne, drawing all their knowledge, light, and happiness from the infinite God through Jesus their Lord ; and hence the statement, "They shall see God." Without doubt God was perfectly able to constitute men and angels perfectly happy without revealing himself in this peculiar manner ; for there are moments when the believer is unspeakably joyful in this world, although he has not a face to face view of God ; but it was the sovereign pleasure of God to render himself visible, and to be seen in the very nature of the beings by whom he intended to surround himself. Therefore there is a human body on the throne of glory in which dwells a human soul and mind, and in that wondrous Man all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily and for ever. God is the fountain of all good, and all the good that ever came from him or that shall ever come from him, flowed, and always will flow,

through the Man Christ Jesus. My dear friends, I have so exalted a view of the person of Immanuel, that I believe that if our minds in heaven should be all eye, we shall see enough in Jesus Christ's dear person to satisfy us for ever. We shall never wander from this one Object, our attention can never be diverted from him. All the fulness of God! What a sight! "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see" it all. In seeing God the spectator shall see all things, and especially all things connected with salvation. What is the cause of this vision, do you think? They shall see God, and know all by-and-bye. I do not know, but the period is coming when we shall see him, and then we shall learn all at the fountain, for we shall learn of God. Here we know God through his works, by faith, and by mysterious influences upon our minds; there our view of him will be a face to face one, and therefore we shall then know even as we are known.

Secondly, observe *the connection between purity of heart and this vision of God*: the pure in heart shall see God, every one of them; there shall not be a single exception. And then look at the other side of the question. All that are impure, having nothing but impurity in their hearts, shall never see his face with joy, or pleasure, or satisfaction. I might tarry here and ask the solemn question what is the state of your hearts, and I might put the same question to myself. What is the state of my own heart? Are we expecting to see God with satisfaction, and to find our heaven and everlasting home in his presence? What is there in us that can justify such an expectation? If we are strangers to heart purity, we have no authority for cherishing such a hope. If we have no holiness, it were better that we abandoned all such expectations as those; for only the pure in heart shall see God. What is the nature of the connection existing between heart purity and this vision of God's face? It is one of *Divine decree*. God has resolved to reveal himself graciously and lovingly to certain characters, which are abundantly, minutely, and sufficiently described in the word of divine truth. Without holiness no man shall see the Lord, and the pure in heart shall see him; God has resolved that it shall be so. But that is not all. This connection is a *natural one*. I do not mean that it arises out of human nature, or that state of things which is frequently called natural; but that it is according to the nature of things. A holy God, and a holy observer or spectator; a God of purity seen and enjoyed for ever by persons whose hearts are pure: this is according to the nature of things; and could you, my dear hearer, be taken into God's presence without sanctification or purity of heart, the place and the glory would be no heaven to you, and the songs of saints and angels would be far from being music to your souls. I believe that to the impure and unholy heaven itself would be perfectly irksome, and its employment tedious; indeed it would be a kind of hell to your hearts, and therefore there is a very solemn and important connection between purity and the vision of God's face. The Christian man is now in his element in God's presence, and the language of his spirit to-day is—

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

And when the spirit is disembodied and undressed, and the immortal consciousness in all its perfection, sanctified and purified, enters the presence of the God of heaven, it is at once at home; for the vision of God's face is the very climax of godliness, and the very consummation of all heart-holiness and

heavenly purity. The child of God will be on the wing, and must necessarily be so, until he sees God's face ; for he is destined to see his Maker and his Saviour. Perfect satisfaction cannot be felt here. Heaven is his home and God's purposes concerning him cannot be fulfilled until his immortal eyes are fixed upon his immortal God and Saviour ; then, and not till then, will the soul find a permanent and an everlasting resting-place ; for they shall see him. I might enlarge upon this point, and refer to the unity of God's works, and of God himself. There are three that bear witness in heaven, and three on the earth, and John mentioning their names—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, says, "and these three are one;" and this unity is carried by God himself into the great business of salvation. The purpose of the Father, the purchase of the Son, and the powerful operations of the Spirit. Those that are pure in heart are the temples of the Holy Ghost, and he is working in them that which fulfils the Father's purposes and the designs of God the Son ; and therefore the unity that pervades the works of God shows how natural and necessary is that connection which exists between heart-purity, and the vision of God's face.

But let us pass on to a third point, viz., "*the blessedness of a child of God is most comprehensive*. Blessed are the pure in heart: and therefore, looking, at the phraseology of our text, we observe, that they are blessed now and shall be blessed for ever. Their blessedness comprehends the present, the past, and all the everlasting future. They are blessed as to what they now possess, and blessed as to what they have in view and prospect. Blessed are they, in what and where they are. What are they ? Pure in heart. Where are they ? In Christ. 'Blessed as to where they shall be ? For ever with the Lord, and as to what they shall be ? For ever like the Lord. And, therefore, they are blessed indeed. Heart-purity is a blessing, on which, perhaps, we can better speak ; for we must die to see God's face. Purity of heart is a blessing that cost God more than tongue can tell ; for no mercy, no blood, no agonies, and no suffering were required to make Adam and angels pure creatures. Adam's heart and all his powers were holy, but no death took place to make him so ; but it cost the Son of God his life and death to produce the purity indicated in our text. I know what the world thinks of the church, and what the ungodly man says of God's dear children. He regards a profession of religion as a burden and a yoke, and attendance at the house of God twice or thrice on the Lord's day, and once or twice in the week, as a bore. "I could not bear it"; he says, and this person may be moral too. "What they can see in it, I don't know." No ; the child of God is a mystery to the world, a stranger and a foreigner, and cannot be comprehended. Will you, however, try to believe, my dear hearer, that I speak the truth conscientiously, when I say, that purity of heart is one of the sweetest blessings a worshipper of God possesses ? He who has purity of heart so loves it that he would this minute shake off every sin if he could, and be at once and for ever like the pure and holy God in heaven. Do you then say, he possesses what I do not ? It is even so, my beloved hearer ; nevertheless, try to believe me, purity is one of the sweetest blessings a child of God possesses on the earth. This blessedness is comprehensive. It takes in the present, and it flows into the future. And does not the text indicate the fact that salvation is all of grace ? Who can produce this purity ? Nature can never be its parent. A natural depraved heart can never produce anything like holiness in itself. Man has neither the will nor the power. You say, some have the will. Then God has sanctified it ; for if there is a cordial willingness to be pure

within, purity is in the heart, and God's hand has touched it, and therefore salvation is altogether of grace. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh;" educate, train, restrain, polish it, as you will, give it certain shapes and forms, and do the very best you can with and upon it—"that which is born of the flesh is flesh." If the Spirit of God does not touch the soul, it has no spirituality, and it never can possess any apart from the presence of the Holy Ghost, and therefore salvation is all of grace from first to last. If there is a little purity and holiness in your mind, you may rest satisfied as to their origin for they have only one cause. God, the author of all that sanctity which is mentioned in the text, dwells in you.

I cannot, however, leave the subject without observing that this purity is *perfect in its nature, though it is not in its extent or measure*. I feel that this is a very important branch of divine truth, and one at which many of God's dear people stumble. It is perfect in its nature, for it is the gift of a gracious and holy God, and he gives nothing but what is pure in connection with heaven, and nothing defective in this respect comes from his hand into the heart of a sinner, for saving purposes. If the holiness which you are the subjects of be not like God's, then he must turn away his face from it; but he will cordially receive and approve of that which he himself has produced. However small its measure may be it is perfect as to its qualities and properties. It is divine and heavenly purity, though it is not yet universal. There are some professors, and they are comparatively silent now, though awhile since they made a considerable stir and noise about universal and perfect holiness, who declare it is possible for a Christian so to live, and walk, and talk, and serve God, as to become universally and thoroughly pure. If a child of God ever attained to this position in this world, who does not see that much of the Bible would then be inapplicable to him? He might then very well dispense with more than half of the word of God. And who does not see that it would be hypocritical in him to go to the throne of grace with the prayer, "And forgive us our sins?" If a child of God were universally and absolutely holy, such a prayer in or from such a person would be altogether out of place. I do not think I should want to pray, if my heart were wholly pure, and my mind were absolutely free from sin. Hence the peculiar phraseology of the text, "Blessed are the pure in heart." It follows, therefore, that purity of heart is consistent (and here we have a word for the tried) with that state of things which is denominated indwelling sin. Do not conclude, my brother, that because sin dwelleth in you therefore there is no purity in your heart. You would not feel that sin dwelt in you, if you were destitute of purity. The more purity one has, the more deeply he knows the nature of sin, and loathes himself in the sight of God. This was holy Paul's experience, who though his heart was right, complained of carrying about with him a body of sin and death. "The spirit lusteth against the flesh and the flesh against the spirit; and these are contrary the one to the other, so that we cannot do the things that we would." And your dear Lord, whose face you are to see in heaven, knowing that your purity here would not be universal, has put this petition into your mouth, instructing you to go every day with it into the Father's presence, "And forgive us our sins," to-day. There is provision made for the fact that God's people are in a state of conflict. Purity and impurity are within; but mark, the impurity is yours; but the purity is God's; for he produced it, and hence the conflict which will soon end in the death of the weaker of the two. Shall that which came from God die, or that which is my own cease to be? Blessed are the pure; for they *shall* see God; and seeing

him they shall lose all but what belongs to God. All their own shall die and disappear, and all that came from God shall again return to him.

Again, observe that the fulfilment of this promise involves several facts. It is a positive and unconditional one: "they shall see God." Something must be done, because the pure in heart are very feeble, and mighty powers are opposed to them,—the world, and sin, and the devil. Many evils are within, and many without. However, it is said that they shall see God. What does this involve? The *Perpetuity of the Saviour's proceedings*. He ever liveth to make intercession for all that come unto God by him; and, "Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." That prayer and branch of the Saviour's proceedings keep them upon their feet persevering and progressing. "Father, I will that they be with me where I am." Then they shall see God. The fulfilment of the text involves the *perpetual indwelling of the Spirit*. Should that heavenly Dove leave the bosom, this promise could not be fulfilled; but the Spirit will never leave the heart: for "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." It involves the *omniscience of God*. "They shall see me," says God. Then—with reverence we speak it—he must keep his eye upon them. He never slumbers nor sleeps, but keeps Israel, and hence the positive promise. Again it involves the *constant display of God's omnipotent power*. A person may not lose sight of the object beloved, yet he may not have power to rescue or preserve it. God's heart is unchanging love, and his arm is able to fulfil its dictates; therefore, blessed are they, for they shall see God. Out of all these arises that blessed truth commonly called the perseverance of the saints, and if that is not indicated in the text I do not remember one in the Bible that expresses it. The pure shall see God, if he can hold him up, and land him on the shores of a blissful immortality, or if in other words he can fulfil his word. The perseverance of the saints, what is it? Why, just this, and surely it is not dangerous or terrible,—that union to Jesus Christ is indissoluble, he and his people being for ever one. Perseverance is receiving from Christ, day by day, as the branch receives sap from the root, and the arm blood from the heart. What is there in this that is unfavourable to godliness? "He keepeth the feet of his saints." "They shall never perish;" therefore the pure in heart shall see God.

Lastly, the text contains information for all, and hence it is so prominent in the word. All that are in heaven are expecting the fulfilment of this promise. You also, my brother, may predict your future without having recourse to natural or diabolical means. You know well what will happen or take place, and whither you are going; and what your eternal destiny will be; you may know it by examining the spiritual state of your heart. Through divine favour, heaven is yours if holiness is yours; for the vision of God's face must follow the holy aspirations and desires of your soul, since they are the offspring of God's grace; for it is not in God to create a hope, and then for ever disappoint it. This was the happy experience of our aged sister, who at the age of eighty-five years left earth for heaven. Her husband, whom she survived eighteen or nineteen years, was also a member of this church. Her connection with us was honourable; but in consequence of the infirmities of old age and affliction, she met with us very rarely during the last few years of her life. Jesus, however, was precious to her. Most of the friends who occasionally visited her knew her conversation was spiritual, savoury, and Christ-exalting. I never heard anyone speak more believingly or confidently, or gratefully of the faithfulness of our covenant God to his people. On that she would dwell, for he had been faithful to her. As she lived, so she

died. She had purity of heart, through infinite favour. We must leave her where she is for a few months, or years, or days, and then we shall unite with her again in the worship of God. She has fixed her eyes upon the dear Redeemer that she loved so well, and her purified heart is now filled and divinely satisfied. May we die the death of the righteous, and may our last end be like his, for Christ's sake. Amen.

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THE WIDOW'S OIL MULTIPLIED.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON THURSDAY EVENING, MAY 27, 1875.

"And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, There is not a vessel more. And the oil stayed. Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest." 2 Kings iv. 6, 7.

ELISHA was a great and godly man, and, like his predecessor Elijah, he wrought a number of miracles in connection with the cause of God and truth; and four of those miracles are recorded and described in the chapter out of which we have taken our text to-night. The miracle of multiplying the widow's oil is recorded in the first few verses in the middle of the chapter; that of raising the dead son of the Shunammite to life is described; and a little lower down we have a description of a third miracle.—Poisonous herbs had been ignorantly put into the pottage by one of the young prophets, and the whole was therefore poisoned; and Elisha said, "Then bring meal. And he cast it into the pot; and he said, Pour out for the people that they may eat: and there was no harm in the pot." Then in the last two or the verses another miracle occurs: A hundred men ate and were satisfied of "twenty loaves of barley-bread." So that if miracles were evidence of God's presence and approval, it was abundantly apparent that Elisha was the prophet of Jehovah. He lived in very degenerate times, for the children of Israel were almost swallowed up and lost in idolatry. However, there were some in the land who did not bow the knee to Baal; and probably there were as many godly persons in his days as in those of his predecessor Elijah. You remember Elijah thought that he was the only godly man left in Israel, and told the Lord that they sought his life to take it away. "Hush!" said God, as it were, to the prophet, "you are mistaken, Elijah; for I have reserved to myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." There were some grains of heavenly and spiritual salt left also in the days of Elisha, and in all probability they were as numerous and true as in the days of his predecessor. However, the land was in a very idolatrous and immoral condition, and the times in which Elisha lived and through which he passed were black and degenerate indeed.

But we have to do with the first miracle recorded in the chapter before us. "There cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets to Elisha, saying, Thy servant, my husband, is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen." Here was a very afflictive and painful state of things. We do not know the name of the husband of this poor widow. We know, however, from

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her own testimony, that he was a good and godly man ; for appealing to Elisha as having known him during his lifetime, she said, "Thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord." Some Jewish writers have fancied (for I think it can be nothing better than a fancy) that the husband of this poor widow was Obadiah, and that he died poor and in debt, in consequence of the fact that, during the reign of Ahab and Jezebel—those two abominable persons—he spent all his fortune in assisting and feeding many of the prophets of the Lord. That, however, I say, I think is a fancy. Obadiah may have been her husband, or he may not. This woman's husband was a prophet ; he had been known to Elisha, and possibly they had, so to speak, walked to the house of God in company. Well, he was dead, and died poor and in debt ; and perhaps he was not the first husband that left his widow and children in wretchedness and poverty, neither was he the last that died in that state. And Elisha said unto her, "What shall I do for thee ?" I also am poor, and if I am not in debt, silver and gold have I none. As for the sons of the prophets with whom I have associated, if I were to make a collection for you, and ask them to contribute what they could, the sum would not amount to much ; and it seems that you are so greatly in debt that both your sons are required by the creditor as a satisfaction. What shall I do for you ? Tell me, what hast thou in the house ? And then listen :—"And she said, Thine handmaid hath not anything in the house ;" (her tables, chairs, and perhaps her bed were gone)—all, save a pot of oil. I have nothing else, nothing left that I can turn into money save that pot of oil. Then he said, "Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours, even empty vessels ; borrow not a few. And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full." Well might he exhort her to shut the door. If the neighbours had seen her, or had known what she wanted the empty vessels for, they would, no doubt, have derided her, or said she was demented or insane. "Borrow not a few." There was only one little vessel in her house, and she was to borrow a great many ; and in all probability, most of the vessels she borrowed were much larger than her own, yet she was to borrow not a few. And when you have collected as many as you can, enter into your house and shut the door, for God will be with you, and my prayer shall follow you ; "and pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full. So she went from him and shut the door upon herself, and upon her sons who brought the vessels to her." One of the sons took the empty vessels to his mother, who filled them, and the other set aside those that were filled. God was with the three, and the widow's oil was multiplied. "And it came to pass when the vessels were full, that she said to her son, Bring me yet a vessel ; and he said unto her, There is not a vessel more. And the oil stayed. Then she came and told the man of God. And he said, Go, sell the oil, pay thy debt, and live thou and thy children of the rest."

I am not going, as you are aware, to preach a fanciful sermon from this portion of God's Word. Fanciful interpretations of his Word are never profitable. They may tickle the ear, please the fancy, and excite a feeling in the breasts of some hearers that the preacher is an extraordinary man ; but fanciful and far-fetched interpretations of the Word of God I hold to be trifling with holy things. I really hold it to be a sin to trifle and tamper with the Bible ; and therefore I shall preach as solemnly as I possibly can, although I have taken this somewhat unusually considered portion of the Word for my text to-night. I shall regard the text as suggestive, and not confine my attention or my observations to it altogether, but go up and down through the whole context perhaps, and cull a few things from one verse, and a few from another ; but, on the whole, my thoughts shall converge to the two verses which I have read. I shall be experimental as well as doctrinal and practical to-night, and shall consider the text as suggestive.

In the first place, it suggests to our minds the fact, that *outward or temporal circumstances are no criterion of an individual's interest in the love of God*. As Solomon says elsewhere, "No man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before him." Now here was a good woman,—for perhaps we are not going too far by saying that this woman was a believer; and we may, I think, assume that she was a good woman. Her husband was a good man, and, in all probability, they were one in the things of God: at any rate, if she had not had some faith and some grace, I think she would have quibbled and cavilled at so novel a course as that which Elisha had suggested to her; but it is not said that she hesitated a moment: "Go, and borrow vessels of your neighbours;" and she went abroad, it seems, at once amongst her neighbours and borrowed as many vessels as she could; and, therefore, she believed that Elisha was a man of God, and that he was divinely impelled and influenced when he gave her instructions what to do; and I think she in her heart believed that God intended by those means to relieve and help her. Well, then, let us assume that she was a good woman, whatever may have been the character of her sons,—probably they were gracious young men. What were her circumstances? Why, she was poor, and her poverty was not ordinary as to its kind and measure. "Thy handmaid hath not anything in the house save a pot of oil." That was all the property she had in the world, and strictly speaking, that was not her own, for she was deeply in debt, and the creditor had threatened her with legal proceedings. He is about to come, said she, and take my two sons to be bondmen. Well, now, there were the depths of poverty,—poverty that pinched the bereaved and desolate family. I doubt not that she and her children sometimes went to bed hungry, and that when they rose in the morning they had no breakfast. They were dependent upon—what? Well, in a subordinate way they were dependent, it may be, on the charity of some that might happen to know them; whilst as believers they leaned upon the gracious and merciful providence of their God. Why should a person who is beloved of God, interested in the covenant of grace, an heir of salvation, and an heir of God, and of everything that is worth possessing (for this is true of every child of God.) Why should such a person be overwhelmed day after day, and year after year by trouble? Why should such a favourite of heaven walk in so flimsy and thorny a path? I do not know; all that I say here is this, that outward circumstances are no criterion of spiritual character. Oh! there is many a jewel that belongs to the Lord in a state of deep obscurity; and there is many a son of God, many a precious and ransomed soul covered with fine linen and wrought gold, that wears a cheap and a coarse garment outside. Ah! many a soul that is trusting in the obedience of Jesus Christ, that has not a good coat or a good garment to wear. Now, why should it be so? The Lord knows. He will justify his ways with men, and his ways with people at the last day; and until then, there is abundant scope for faith. Oh that we had faith sufficiently strong and vigorous to rest implicitly and steadily upon the holy and righteous character of that God who is too wise to err, and too good to be unkind. Now "it doth not yet appear," says John, "what *we shall be*;" and it doth not appear from outward circumstances what *we are*; for outward and temporal circumstances do not enter into the constitution and formation of spiritual character. If outward circumstances indicated moral or spiritual character, then, perhaps we might look for good people among the rich, and exceedingly bad people among the poor. But spiritual character is independent of poverty and wealth, and rests upon the highest and most enriching operations of grace; and we cannot learn from one's circumstances what a person is, where he is, what is his character, or whether he be interested in the love of God or not. Many, as I have already said, yea, many hundreds or thousands of the people of God are going to heaven through scenes of pinching privation and poverty, whilst thousands of God's enemies are going the downward road through wealth, pomp, and worldly comfort. Now, if you and I had had the

arrangement of matters, this would not be the condition of affairs. Had you and I been consulted, we should have said, Let the children of God, of course, be placed above all trouble, want, privation, and poverty; and if these evils are to exist in the world, let God's enemies have them, but let God's children be free and exalted above them all. "My thoughts," says God, however, "are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways;" and therefore what conclusion must we come to in relation to this mysterious conduct of God? I preach a gospel which cannot be received without that supernatural faith which is the gift of God, and that gospel is this, That whatever trying circumstances the God of heaven may lead his children through, they are, in the estimation of eternal love and unerring wisdom, the very best through which they could pass to heaven. I am bound to preach this for gospel, because God has revealed it as such. We should not like to be stripped of everything and walk in such a flinty path. Yet if the Lord called us to pass through deep and pinching privation, that fact would be no evidence against our Christian and filial character; for it is grace, and not external circumstances, that forms the character of the saint of God. The everlasting love of God and the Spirit of God in the heart constitute the believer's meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light, and not silver, gold, earthly comforts, and honours. Therefore, the first thing taught, is the fact that outward circumstances are never a criterion of one's spiritual position or character. "I will leave in the midst of you a poor and an afflicted people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord." "God hath chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom." But if outward circumstances do not form character, they try, reveal, and develope it; and this I think some of you have had some experience of. Your character as Christians, as godly men and women, has been tried, tested, strained, revealed, and developed by the trials of your life. God has a wise design in connection with all that he permits and produces, and what we know not now, we shall know hereafter. I think this fact is, therefore, one that is suggested to us by the portion of the Word which we have read to-night.

Secondly; *God by leading his people into trouble makes room for himself.* I cannot give you all God's reasons for leading his people into affliction and sorrow. I can give you some now and then, and I do believe in my heart that this is one; so that if the question is asked—Why was this poor woman so tried? part of an answer may be returned thus:—God tried her in that painful and terrible manner, for the purpose of making room in her house and in her heart for himself. Had her house been full of furniture, had money been laid up, had her husband been living, and had there been no affliction at all—why all that would have been very agreeable and pleasant; but there would have been, so to speak, little or no room for those revelations of Jehovah which he intended so mercifully to make; and therefore we may assume that the loss of her husband made room for her God, and that her poverty and debt made way for this miraculous manifestation of his power. Perhaps, if this widow was a good woman, she subsequently thanked God that she had nothing in the house when she spoke to Elisha, and acknowledged that her path, though rough, had been right. My friends, Cowper sings very beautifully and correctly,—

"The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower."

We are something like children in a garden, at this time of the year, where gooseberries and currants are growing. We used to be fond of gathering those fruits when they were hard, sour, and exceedingly injurious. Such is our conduct with regard to the purposes and plans of God—we pluck them before they are ripe, before they are sweet, and before God has matured them, and they taste sour and bitter, and have many disagreeable flavours; for the bud may and will have a bitter taste, but sweet will be the flower.

“God is his own Interpreter,
And he will make it plain.”

One of the great purposes for which we require faith, is that of enabling us to wait, to patiently wait for the Lord. Old Testament saints tell us how they waited for the Lord, and on one or two occasions David said—“I waited patiently for him.” Now it is good to wait for the Lord, but it is unspeakably good to wait patiently for him. Sometimes he comes to our help in a week or a month, or it may be that he does not fulfil his promise and send the required mercy until the end of the year, and perhaps some of the people of God have to wait till they die for the promised revelation and assistance. We want faith for this, to enable us to wait for God, to wait patiently for him, and to believe that he is on the way, and that the vision is for an appointed time, and that he will not tarry beyond that appointed time. Well, now, God brings trouble for the purpose of making room for himself. Mercy, my dear friends, has its severities, as well as its sweetness. Ah! mercy is severe, just as a father is sometimes with his child. It is the severity of love, not judicial anger; and whenever mercy tries a saint she intends to follow her bitters and severities with sweets, and prepare the heart for the sweetness of the grace and love of God. Sometimes God makes an opening in the bank by which we are surrounded, and all our creature comforts flow out through the breach; and when all is desolation, and a wilderness or desert, and there is nothing left but the pot of oil, then he enters by the very breach through which our comforts flowed away, takes the place which had been filled by them, and thus reveals and endears himself unto us as our everlasting portion and all. We pray that we may learn that God is our all and in all; do we always know what we pray for? “We know not what we should pray for as we ought.” Do you pray for stronger faith? Are you not by implication, or indirectly, praying for more work. Do you pray for greater strength? Your burdens will be proportioned by your strength; for God is true to his word—“As thy days, so shall thy strength be.” And do you pray that you may realise the fact that Christ is all and in all? Turn it over, my brother; it is a very beautiful prayer, and very important, but just turn it over in your mind, and think for a few minutes what the answer, the full answer, to that prayer may involve. You want God to come and be your all, but what if he should make way for himself by stripping operations, as he did with the subject of our text? Christian friends, we are in safe hands, and under the guidance of a wisdom that cannot err. In relation to this poor woman it was so. Her earthly all was gone—then God her heavenly, her ever lasting All took the place of those comforts by which she had been surrounded, and endeared himself to her heart.

Thirdly, we learn from the subject *that God is sometimes very surprising by the manner in which he helps his people.* As we have already seen, this poor woman had pledged or sold all that she had, save this pot of oil, and she did not dream that that little pot containing so small a quantity of oil, would be her subordinate saviour; and yet it so turned out—you know what I mean by that—her instrumental or subordinate saviour. That was her salvation. God’s saving hand was in it, and his mercy and fulness were in, or connected with that pot; and out of it her lifelong salvation and comforts were to flow. “Who would have thought it!” she said to her sons, as she looked upon the floor, and perhaps all the floors of the house, and saw that every one was covered with vessels full of oil. Did she not look at her sons and say, “Who would have thought it! How surprising! Oh, how wonderful!” Ah! God does sometimes surprise his people by the marvellous manner in which he comes to them and supplies their necessities, and does them good. He is not limited to one course, nor to half-a-score courses. Our God is illimitable in his power. He can work by miracles, or in the ordinary manner. He can work by means, and without means. The sneerer at miracles

would come to us here and say—"The thing is impossible;" or, he might use softer words, "extremely improbable—*extremely* improbable." Do you believe that all the empty vessels, which the Bible says the woman borrowed, and which perhaps were larger than her own,—do you believe that they were all filled from that one vessel? The thing is incredible. No, my dear friends, admitting that there is a God—and, thank God, we have admitted that, and God himself has caused us by his grace to admit that fact; for he dwells in our hearts;—well, admitting, then, that there is a God, what is our answer to this? It is only a question of the manner in which power is exercised by God; whether God produces the oil from the olive tree (for doubtless it was vegetable, or olive oil) or whether, having produced a quantity of it, he is pleased to increase that quantity in a vessel. The very power that caused the tree to produce it in the ordinary manner, was the same power that increased the oil that was in the woman's vessel. I have heard persons say, God went out of his way to do so-and-so. God never goes out of his way. He always keeps in the path he intended to walk in. God here stepped out of the ordinary course of nature and worked a miracle; so that, instead of giving the poor woman an olive-yard full of olive-trees the fruit of which she might gather, and press, and obtain oil from,—instead of doing that for the woman, he increased the little oil that was in her house. It is only a question of extent of power, the measure of power. Ah! well, our God's arms are long enough to reach us everywhere, strong enough to help us under all the circumstances of life; and sometimes he comes by means and at a time which surprise us, and fetches from the very depths of our hearts, the grateful expression, "Who could have thought it! My circumstances had reached a crisis, the turn was about to take place, destruction seemed inevitable. I was on the brink of ruin. And in an hour the whole heavens have been cleared of their clouds, and all that threatened me with destruction has disappeared. My winter has been turned into summer, and my night into day. "Truly God is good to Israel." "Blessed are all they that wait for him." We see, then, that God surprises his people sometimes by his methods of working deliverances for them.

Fourthly; we learn from the text *that our God is inexhaustible*. "Bring me another vessel." And her son said, "There is not another. And the oil stayed." Oil enough to fill them all, however numerous, however large they may have been. And our God is inexhaustible, my friends. There is enough in him to fill all the vessels. Without being fanciful—we may take "vessels" here in a three-fold way. Let them illustrate all your wants and mine. We have a great many and they are very large; but hitherto they have been supplied, and God's supplying goodness will continue to flow until in heaven, they shall say, "There is not another vessel," there is not another want. All the wants of the poor, and needy, and spiritual are full, they are all supplied;—and then the oil will stay, or cease to flow as it flows now. But there is enough in God to supply every want, to fill every soul, to inundate all the minds of his dear children. Take the vessels to indicate the faith of his people. "According to your faith be it unto you." Can faith surpass the fulness of its Author? It may be strong to-day, as strong as that of Abraham was; there is enough in God to fill it, and should it be strong to-morrow, and strong every day, there is enough in this great Object to fulfil all the heart believes. But let them be illustrative of the vessels of mercy and salvation, the heirs of God. Oh! the fulness of the Lord Jesus Christ and the oil of divine grace are such for depth that they will drop and flow until there is not another empty vessel in all the kingdom of God's dear Son. Bring me yet a vessel,—may I say without being chargeable with fancifulness. The Holy Ghost shall say, "I have brought them all, and all shall be filled with all the fulness of God. God is inexhaustible as to his contrivances. Complications can never exhaust his contriving and arranging mind. He is inexhaustible as to his communicable grace, and he is inexhaustible as to his divine revelation, for he

can never reveal the whole of himself. I do believe in my heart that there is as much concealed as there is revealed : and even more ; I do believe there is enough revealed for all saving, consoling, and sanctifying purposes ; but though revelation is so vast, who can say how much is concealed from even the strongest faith ? The infinite God can never exhaust himself ; he can never so show himself to the creature, nor to all his creatures, as to exhaust his fulness, his majesty, and his glory. This awful God is ours,—our Father and our Friend. This God is our God and will be our Guide even unto death ; and then our God for ever and ever. He is inexhaustible.

Then fifthly ; we learn from this, therefore, *that his help and deliverances are always sufficient and perfect.* They were so in connection with this good woman. The help was sufficient, and the deliverance was perfect. Let me put it before you again as it stands :—First, she was released from debt ;—there was enough provided by God for that purpose, sufficient to pay her debts ; secondly, her sons were released from all apprehension of bondage, “the creditor is coming to take away my two sons for bondmen.” The Lord settled that, so that the two sons obtained as it were their liberty ; and thirdly, the poor woman was released from all her cares and anxieties. It was a trouble to her that she was in debt, a greater trouble to her that she could not pay it ; a greater trouble still, that the creditor insisted upon having her two sons (which was admissible in those days) for bondmen ; but God, by a stroke of his hand and an interposition of his providence, released her at once. Her debt was paid, the legal bondage of her children made impossible, her own distracted state of mind was gone, all her doubts and fears were drowned, and she was, so to speak, a new creature. Oh ! God’s deliverances are perfect and complete. When did he come to help with an insufficient measure of ability ? Whenever did he come too late ? Creatures may help us all they can, and go as far as their limited resources will enable them ; but God does—not all he can do—but all that he wills and pleases to do, and all that our welfare requires him to do. All that we have required Jehovah to be he has been to us till now ; and, therefore, his help and delivering interpositions on behalf of his people have been and still are perfect.

Sixthly ; we learn that our God is a God of righteousness and equity. How does that appear ? She went to the man of God and spake unto him, and he said, “Go, sell the oil and pay thy debt.” Go first and pay your debts. God’s grace always makes a man and a woman honest. I should think that it is one of the greatest troubles to a real child of God to be in debt, and unable to meet his liabilities. I should think the woman having met her creditor and paid her debt, returned home with a light heart. But here was God’s order through Elisha—Go, and pay your debt. Do not live in luxury, do not steal away now ; but having had your oil increased and being therefore able to pay, do not leave your creditor unmet and unsatisfied. “Go sell the oil, and pay thy debt and live thou and thy children of the rest.”

We learn in the next place *that a little with God’s blessing goes a long way.* Here was a little pot of oil under Heaven’s blessing, and the result is before us. A little will go a long way—will it not ? “Oh ! my little weekly income,” one says, “and the large demands upon it ! I do not know, I am sure, how to get on from time to time.” Nevertheless you do get on ! Yes ; but I am sure I do not know how ; it must be owing to the blessing of God ; for hitherto supplies have come. Many of God’s dear people are supplied with oil from hand to mouth ; but how it is there is oil from day to day, they could not tell any one. Yet it is said, “A little that a righteous man hath is better than the treasures of many wicked.” Well, the same may be said of faith. And I see two or three of my brethren in the ministry here to-night : may we not say, my dear brethren, that the text will, in a very comforting manner apply to us ? A very small pot and very little oil in it—but the Lord has sometimes made the little go a long way. Oh he can

do so. We have had perhaps one thought and only one; and in the pulpit that thought as we have been presenting it to the people has been expanded and enlarged; we have gone round it again and again, and made all sorts of uses of it, and it has furnished us with matter for three quarters of an hour or an hour. A little pot and only a little oil in it; yet we have been the means of filling a good many empty vessels through the blessing of God upon our feeble labours. Well, give God the glory; for the men are sinners, and this is wholly the result of the blessing of God. I heard a person the other day speaking of the circumstances of some of the people of God,—and he said, “Many a child of God when the week ends does not know how to make buckle and throng meet.” I think that was the expression. I know what he meant. We may not know how to make them meet so as to bind all our circumstances together; but the band, if I may so speak, is not always a leather one, the blessing of God can make it elastic; and though we cannot by our own wisdom cause the two ends to meet around the week's circumstances, or around our sermons; the blessing of God gives elasticity, and it goes round each day, each week, each year, and round a whole lifetime. Ah! the blessing of God maketh rich, not always by filling the pocket or the house,—the blessing of God maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it; and, therefore, God makes a little go a long way.

Lastly; we learn from the subject *that our God is a worthy object of trust*. This good woman of whom we have been speaking had nothing else, no one else to trust in. Here we see she was hedged in on every side, and saw no way of escape. However, deliverance, and a deliverer were near. And he who increased the widow's oil, and can so bless a shilling as to make it do the work of two is a worthy object of trust. Oh! his grace and providence have never failed. If he empties the heart it is for the purpose of filling it with himself, and if he empties the house it is for the purpose of filling it with displays of his merciful providence, and therefore he is a worthy, a safe, a perpetual object of the believers' trust. Oh that we could trust more implicitly in his dear name and cast ourselves unreservedly on Him whose hands are never tied, whose wisdom has never erred, and whose fulness can never be exhausted. Amen.

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SPIRITUALITY OF MIND.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JUNE 20, 1875.

"For to be carnally minded is death ; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."
Romans viii. 6.

THERE are two great systems of eternal truth, viz., the moral law and the glorious gospel of the blessed God ; and both have their influence upon the saved sinner. The law will have its claims upon the lost for ever ; but they will never be cursed by the gospel of the grace of God. Both, however, affect the believer : "for by the law is the knowledge of sin," and by the gospel the knowledge of salvation. The law reveals, but does not remove sin ; it discovers a state of condemnation, but leaves the sinner therein : here, helpless and lost, the gospel finds him ; and therefore the law makes way for the gospel. The law when applied by the Spirit gives a sinner a knowledge of himself, of the eternal God as the great Lawgiver, and of the dreadful nature and consequences of sin. In the preceding chapter the apostle says, "I was alive without the law once ; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died ; and the commandment which was ordained to life I found to be unto death ;" and thus he sets forth his own experience as a poor law-condemned sinner.

From what is stated in the 7th chapter, it appears that the saints in Rome, having a knowledge of the fact that the law was holy, and just, and good, and feeling a very great disparity between their own experience and that system of holy truth, were greatly perplexed, and cut themselves off from all part or lot in the great matter of salvation. This fact, it appears to me, became known to the apostle, who therefore introduces this portion of his own experience, and says, "The good that I would I do not ; but the evil which I would not, that I do." In this respect I resemble you, and you are somewhat like myself. Am I, therefore, deceived, or an empty professor ? No ; if that were so, I might well say, "Oh wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death ?" but I thank God—(notwithstanding the wretchedness previously mentioned) through Jesus Christ our Lord. My life and experience should, if it were possible, be in perfect harmony with God's law ; but though to will is present with me, how to perform that which is good I find not : therefore "I thank God through

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our Lord Jesus Christ ; with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh, the law of sin." Nevertheless, "there is no condemnation, to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit : for the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death ;" and, therefore, I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. "For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." There is, therefore, no ground for apprehension, although there are many shortcomings in your experience, and your conformity to Jesus Christ and the law of God is imperfect ; yet you are interested in the perfect and perfecting obedience of the Lord Jesus, for you walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit ; and to such persons there is no condemnation. It is really necessary to read the 7th and 8th chapters as one, for otherwise you cannot understand the meaning of the Apostle. "To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."

It is not my intention to dwell upon the first clause of the verse. I have read the whole in order that you may see the contrast, but shall confine my thoughts to the second clause or proposition,—"*But to be spiritually minded is life and peace :*" and we may first notice *the subject indicated,—spiritual mindedness ;* and secondly, *the fact affirmed of this subject :—to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*

First, the important subject indicated,—spiritual mindedness. I feel that in taking such a text as this, and dividing it in this manner, I ought to be a spiritually-minded man myself ; but if I do not possess deep spirituality, I attach the greatest possible importance to that holy quality, and think I ought not to shrink from taking a text out of the Word of God because it shows me my own many shortcomings. Now, what is meant by spirituality ? It is opposed in my text to carnality : "To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace." Well, by spirituality generally considered, I understand that state of things which arises out of God's new covenant of grace ; for that covenant is spiritual, and that state of mind which is the result of interest therein is spirituality. By spirituality I understand further that state which results from union to Christ the Mediator, for there is nothing spiritual except that which flows from the person and Headship of the Lord. By spirituality of mind, I further understand that state of things which is produced in the heart by God the Holy Spirit ; in a word, spirituality of mind is the great and glorious object of God's great economy of saving mercy. There are several economies in God's government, but we are now dwelling on that of saving mercy, and on the fact that all that flows therefrom is spiritual and spiritualizing. Spirituality of mind is opposed to the natural, the merely moral, the legal, and in my text, to the carnal or fleshly ; and, therefore, it is altogether a new state of things. In the first place, let us dwell for a minute or two on the fact that the mind is the seat of spirituality :—"To be spiritually minded is life and peace." It is not yet seated in the body ; but the time will come when our bodies, like our minds, will be spiritual ; but at present it is limited to one part ; and that the nobler, better, and more precious part of the creature ; it is at present seated in the immortal mind only. The bodies of some of the saints of God have already been spiritualized ; for doubtless the body of Enoch was changed when he was translated ; that also of Elijah was spiritualized when he was taken to heaven ; and the bodies also of the saints which were raised from their graves when Christ rose, and which ascended to heaven with him became spiritual ; and thus all the bodies now in heaven, whether they be few or many, are spiritual ; but the bodies of saints on earth are natural ; and, therefore, a little lower in the chapter we read, "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin ; but the

spirit is life, because of righteousness." The body at present is dead, as to the quality of spirituality ; and it is said to be dead also with regard to its mortality. If you will accept the homely illustration, the body may be compared to a flower-pot which contains a precious plant ; the pot is cracked, broken, and decaying, but it contains an immortal flower. The soul has been transformed, spiritualized, and regenerated : therefore, if Christ be in you, the body is dead, because of sin ; but the spirit is life, because of righteousness ;" and consequently the body is a burden to the mind, and cannot sympathize with it. We that bear these burdens, and are thus clogged, do groan. But these bodies will soon die, and be carried to the grave ; and at the last day they shall be raised, and changed, and be spiritualized, like the mind. When the Holy Ghost regenerated the soul, he made it spiritual, and he will re-enter these bodies at the last day, and constitute them spiritual also, like unto the glorious body of our Lord Jesus Christ. And when the body is spiritualized, and re-united to the spiritualized mind, it will be a fitting companion of the soul. The body will not then be a burden, neither will it be as a veil between God's face and the immortal mind. There will be the deepest and most perfect sympathy between the soul and body for ever. At present spirituality is seated in the affections, the understanding, the conscience and the judgment ; and there are times when all the emotions of the mind are spiritual and acceptable in the sight of God. Christian brethren, spirituality is in that part of the believer which is invisible and immaterial, for we cannot speak of a material soul. Here we have one of those facts which constitute the great mystery of godliness,—all of spirituality is invisible except its fruits and effects : all is internal work. The operations of the Holy Ghost are unseen ; and therefore the *receiver* is invisible. The mind, which is marvellous and mysterious, invisible and immaterial, is the seat of eternal life. And not only is the receptacle itself invisible, the reception of spirituality is invisible also. Who saw spirituality communicated to your mind ? The change was solemnly and divinely real, but all was invisible. And then as to the *matter* of spirituality, and that which constitutes it. This also is invisible. Like sap, which circulates in the tree, from the roots to the remotest branch ; that real blessing, that solid and substantial reality, which the text calls spirituality, came into your minds in an invisible and a noiseless manner. Its fruits and effects appear ; but no one, save yourself, heard anything when it was imparted, and you heard only with your mental ears ; none, save yourself, saw anything, and you saw only with your mental eyes which had been opened. And then there was the *Agent*, or the person employed, and he too was invisible. The mind was arrested by God, opened by his hand ; spirituality was dropped into it, and it circulated, and continues to circulate therein. To possess this gift of God is life and peace. We believe, I suppose, (not with some, that religion immortalizes the soul) but that the soul is immortal whether it be spiritualized or not ; and God seats this inestimable blessing in the deathless part of our nature, in that part whose life does not depend upon the body. How mind and matter are connected together we do not know, but spirituality is deposited in that part which returns to God when the body returns to the earth as it was ; for the wise man says, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." And when the spirit returns to its Creator, what does it carry with it ? Why, either carnality or spirituality. "We brought nothing into the world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." We cannot apply that morally, for we carry character with us into the presence of God ; the mind is either spiritual or carnal when it appears before him. A little leaven, my fellow sinner and fellow saint, leaveneth the whole lump, and both spirituality and carnality leaven the whole mind. When the carnal mind appears before God, it stands trembling in his presence ; for, as the poet says, it—

“Ascends to God, not there to dwell,
But hears it doom, and sinks to hell.”

But the saint carries spirituality and a new life with him into the presence of God, and these, beneath God's eye, diffuse themselves in a moment through all the powers and faculties of the mind, and thus the whole mind is spiritualized before his throne.

Secondly, we should say a word on the Author of the spirituality. It is the Holy Ghost; for the spiritualizing of the minds of God's dear people is his official and covenant work. Jehovah in his Trinity of persons is undivided in the great business of salvation. But although we cannot divide the work of the Father from that of the Son, nor the operations of the Son from those of the Spirit, we can distinguish between the acts of the Trinity; and it is the special work of the Holy Spirit to produce spirituality of mind. Perhaps the Holy Spirit's name indicates this fact, for in nature he is not more spiritual than the Father or the Son, and his name may indicate his personal and official work of spiritualizing the mind, imparting new life to the heart, making the souls of the redeemed holy, and rendering them like Jesus Christ their pattern. This state of mind by the Spirit is, like redemption, essential to salvation. My friends, half the errors of the day arise out of ignorance of this fact. Can you go to heaven without a Mediator, without the work of Christ, without the blood of the Lamb? No.—But you could as soon go to heaven without blood as without spirituality, for the Spirit's work in the mind is an essential part of your salvation. Can you think of a being or a state of things that could be a satisfactory substitute for the Holy Ghost? Why, you say such a person is very intellectual. Intellectuality is not spirituality. Such a person is highly moral, and his moral excellencies are both numerous and bright. Morality is not spirituality. Such a person makes a profession of religion and his profession is in harmony with the word of God. A profession of religion may exist without spirituality; and, therefore, intellect morality, and a thousand natural excellencies may only embellish death, and conceal carnality. Morality, intellectuality, gold, titles, honour, learning, are excellent in their places; but they serve only as paint and varnish to the coffin which contains death: for the unregenerate mind is dead: until the Spirit enters into the mind, there is no life or spirituality. “To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” Spirituality qualifies the mind for connection with all that is spiritual. Take an unspiritualized mind—if you could do so—and plunge it into a spiritual element; and what would be the result? It would imbibe nothing, but repel the element, having no sympathy with it. The mind must be spiritualized before it can sympathize with spiritual subjects, for the spiritual mind only can enter into spiritual facts and imbibe them. The child of God is in his element in spiritual things. The atmosphere surrounding him cannot be too bright, or pure, or holy; but when he is surrounded by that which is worldly, and sensual, and devilish, he moves and breathes with difficulty. Place me in a theatre, and I should be where I could not live. I should be glad when the play was over, or be looking out a hundred ways to escape from the place; but a carnal man in such a place might be in his element. You may take this as a test, my friends, and not go far for evidences. Is that which is carnal, and fleshly, and worldly, your element? Are you at home in that which is sinful and God-dishonouring? Can you roll sin as a sweet morsel under your tongue? Are you like the sow which loves to wallow in the mire? Can you feel at home in that state of things? No, no. Well then, I can tell you that there is a measure of spirituality in your mind; for he whose antipathies and sympathies are like those of God is a new creature. You hate the things your Father hates, and love the things he loves.

Further, this characterizes the operations of the mind. Can the carnal mind perform spiritual acts? "Oh, yes, nothing easier, sir. Go and believe, go and obey God, go and do this and the other. Nothing is easier." It is the divinity of the day, that we may very naturally and consistently look for grapes on thistles, and figs on thorns; that it is not necessary to make the tree good in order to have good fruit. God's method is this: he first makes the mind spiritual, and then he looks for spiritual fruit. Consider the exercise of the mind in relation to the graces—faith, hope, and love. There is a faith in the natural mind, but it is a natural faith, like the mind itself. There is hope in the carnal mind, but that too is carnal for the same reason; and the affections of a carnal mind cannot be spiritual. Take the faith of a spiritual mind; it is a spiritual faith, its hope is a spiritual hope, and its affections are spiritual too. Take the thoughts of a spiritual man, his emotions, and his obedience, so far as he is governed by the Spirit of God; they are spiritual; his spirituality may not rise high, but there is life in it, and it has roots in the mind; for spiritual emotions and aspirations arise from the root of the matter in the soul. Therefore, though holy affections are feeble, and though they are few, they are spiritual, and indicate the existence and operation of spiritual power and life within.

Lastly, here; spirituality of mind is very variable—not as to its nature, but as to its measure and strength. The mind has its summers and winters. It ebbs and flows; it contracts and expands; it is alternately barren and fertile, cold and warm; at times it seems as if it were almost dead (but, brother, it never can die!) and at other times it is full of life and energy. Cannot the child of God keep himself in one particular state of mind? No; he cannot. And, my dear friends, you know well that there are many influences which weaken spirituality. It has many enemies. Can you come into intimate connection with the world without suffering spiritually? Worldliness is a foe to spirituality. My dear young friends, be worldly, and drop the peculiarities of your religion for the sake of association with the world—do that and you will be weak, barren, cold, and unspiritual. The world ever exercises a sterilizing influence upon the spiritual mind; so does error, and so do the vile sinful powers and principles which are within. Do you not hate that which rages within, sterilizes your souls, and brings you into a carnal state? You must, however, distinguish between a carnal mind, and carnality in the mind. A child of God is sometimes very carnal, but his is not a carnal mind. Carnal influences come over it, blight it, and blast much therein; and were not spirituality immortal, they would destroy it. However, there are other influences also, as the means of grace; and when God is pleased to bless them, they spiritualize; the reading of the word of God—and would there were more of it—and this, when God is pleased to bless the soul, promotes spirituality. God sometimes plunges one into deep affliction, and sanctifies it; and afterwards the peaceable fruits of righteousness are yielded to him that is exercised thereby. The spiritual is the highest order of mind in all the world of God's creatures. Adam before he fell was not "a new creature." He did not possess regenerating grace. He was not washed in blood, neither did he derive his pleasures from Christ crucified; and, therefore, the spiritualized mind of a child of God differs from that of sinless Adam; and angels do not know what this particular quality is. They are spiritual beings, but they are strangers to Christ's blood, to God's mercy, and to a hundred things which you and I have an experimental acquaintance with. This spirituality of mind enables him that possesses it to go where no other mind can go, and to rise higher than any other minds can rise. It is a vast and glorious blessing. It is as far above nature as the kingdom of Christ is above moral death. How far is the spiritual above the natural? The natural man cannot understand the things of the Spirit, because they are spiritually discerned. There is a spiritual kingdom beneath God's throne, and the Spirit fits the immortal mind

to enter it and live therein as in its proper element; therefore to be spiritually minded is "life and peace."

I am to look, secondly, *at the fact affirmed of the spiritual mind*; it is "life and peace." Let us say here, that nothing else under the heavens can be said to be life and peace. To be carnally minded is nothing but death, and life and peace can be found nowhere but in connection with spirituality. Some of us have lived a few years in the world, and some are older than I am, and I ask the question, Do you believe that life and peace exist apart from spirituality of mind? We have had all sorts of minds before us, and seen the results of their operations. In the first place, take a highly intellectual person, and we know some whose minds are great, powerful, deep, and well stored with knowledge. Have they life and peace in their intellectuality? Do they know what that sweet serenity of mind is, which is described in the word as "the peace of God which passeth all understanding?" Why, the highly intellectual man, if he is only an intellectual person, is dead, and there is no solid peace in his mind. Well, then, you may take the moralist—and I am looking first of all at the most favourable states of mind—is there life or peace in him? Take the lover of pleasure; he tells you he knows what life is, what pleasure is, what peace is! Well we see on the Sunday morning conveyances crowded with pleasure seekers. Thousands of our fellow creatures are carried out into the country, and they call that life and pleasure. Can that be life? Is there anything connected with it worthy of being so-called, or can that be said to be true peace?

"Solid joy and lasting pleasure,
None but Zion's children know."

Indeed, my dear friends, there is no state of things under the heavens that is worthy of being called life apart from spirituality of mind. There is nothing out of Christ but death, and strife, and disappointment.

This, however, I am not going to dwell upon; and, therefore, life and peace,—it may be stated in the second place, include all true blessings, "To be spiritually minded is life and peace." Not to say anything now on the fact that it is life, what is the meaning of "peace" here? It includes all real, solid, and substantial good. Take a living man (for I will call in nature to illustrate grace) what constitutes his peace? Health, affluence, congenial society, and a good prospect, are some of its elements. Well now, apply all this to the spiritual mind. First, a spiritual mind is holy or healthy; and if health contributes to peace, then we see how spirituality is life and peace. Then there may be life and health, but pinching circumstances will interfere with peace; but the spiritual mind puts its hand upon the name of Jesus and the covenant of eternal grace, and says—"All things art mine, for I am Christ's, and Christ is God's. Is good company essential? Well, the spiritual mind has the best of society—"Our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ," and with the saints of the living God. Does a good prospect contribute to peace of mind? Who has a prospect like that of the child of God? All things are his—whether past, present, or future; and it is very certain that he will pass victoriously through death, and enter into the realms of eternal glory.

But that is not the form in which the subject lies in my mind. Where is the spiritual man? Where does he stand? He is in the mediation of God's dear Son. And what is there in Christ but life and peace? The spiritual mind is where there are eternal life and eternal peace. "In Me ye shall have peace: in the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." The Holy Ghost spiritualizes the mind, leads it to the Lord Jesus, connects it with his mediation; and thus to be spiritually minded is life and peace,

because the mind dwells where these blessings are. There is no death and no want in Christ; and when one realizes his interest in him, he has no fear. Oh to be bathed in the love of God, and in the blood of the Lamb! Oh to have sweet fellowship and communion with him that died for sinners, and to be enabled to say, "He loved me, and gave himself for me!" The carnal mind never was and never can be there. The spiritual mind finds a resting-place in the Saviour, in whom there are life and peace for evermore.

And then it is life and peace as to its peculiar exercises. Here we must be experimental. What are the exercises of the spiritual mind? First, it rejects worldliness. If worldliness gets into the mind, peace goes out; for if the soul is undisturbed by worldliness, the stillness is a false and not a spiritual peace. It is a mercy to have a conscience that feels when sin is committed and guilt is contracted; the more spiritual the mind is, the more firmly closed it is against the world:—

"Let worldly minds the world pursue;
Earth has no charms for me."

When one can say that, and feel, as I suppose the poet felt, he has in his mind "the peace of God which passeth all understanding." But that is not all. Passing over sin, which the spiritual mind loathes and shrinks from,—like the sensitive plant, which, if you touch, closes itself as if it shrank from contact with the human hand,—spirituality constitutes the child of God a great mystery to the world. It cannot comprehend him, and I am not surprised that it should be so, because spirituality is a tender, heavenly, and sensitive power; and when it pervades the mind, and the devil breathes upon it, it closes itself. But that is not all. The truly spiritual mind rejects all unbelieving care; there is no room in it for that corroding bane. If the mind be filled with corroding cares concerning the pulpit, the church, the family, the future, and temporal things, as to what we shall eat, and what we shall drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed, it indicates a feeble and shallow spiritual life. Spirituality enters sweetly into the meaning of the words, Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you. One says, "I am happy now?" How is that? Are your circumstances altered? Is your position in life changed? No; still I have peace of mind, for I have had nearness to the Throne, a few minutes close intimacy and fellowship with God; and I have been helped to leave my family, and business, and the future in the hands of my God; and I have peace. This is how the spiritual mind proceeds when it is baptized again and again in Divine and heavenly influences. I am sure that the great want of the times is the Holy Spirit in the churches, and deeper and stronger spirituality. There is a knowledge of doctrine, of the theory of salvation, and of the letter of the Word; but what is wanted is deeper, stronger, and more universal spirituality. Let us, therefore, whilst we pray for blessings, never forget that to be spiritually-minded is life and peace. Again, peace is owing to the fixedness of such a mind. An unspiritual is an unfixed, an unsettled mind. One says, "I do not know what I believe." "I do not know where I am;" and his mind is something like a bird on a tree, which hops from branch to branch. You will find him on the top to-day, and on the lower branches to-morrow; he is constantly changing, having no fixed views or experience; but a truly spiritual mind is fixed: "O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise, even with my glory." Only one mind is fixed, and that is the spiritual mind, and God himself is its rest. The carnal mind strikes its powers into sin and the world; but the spiritual mind is rooted and grounded in Jehovah through the verities of the everlasting gospel, and it draws its life and peace from God in whom it is fixed; therefore to be spiritually minded is life and peace. The spiritual mind is formed for fellowship and communion with God, and hence it is life and peace. But one may say, you have

hitherto been too high. Well, let us drop down very low. Is there a little spirituality in your mind? I ask the question, because I intend to answer it. I must leave you to examine yourselves in the light of the Word, and by the help of the Spirit. I can only say, that if there is, you have eternal life, and that your spirituality is an evidence of the fact that life and peace are yours. How is that? Why, your spirituality flows from the fact that you have eternal life in Christ. This is the fact, and I must leave it with you. A little life in the soul means eternal life in Jesus Christ. A little spirituality means that all things in the covenant and in heaven are yours for ever and ever. And, lastly, as to the exercises of a spiritual mind which accepts all the ways, all the Word, and all the will of God. You are speaking of a mind whose spirituality is strong. I am; and there have been times, I think, in your experience, when you were helped to accept the whole Word of God, and objected to nothing; and times when you were helped to accept all God's ways, and all God's will, and when you fell at his feet in holy resignation, saying, "Father, thy will, not mine, be done." He whose mind is thus reconciled to God, his ways and his will, is a happy man, having life and peace. Oh to be able to say as Luther did, "Strike, Lord, if thou wilt; I am pardoned!" I am thine, and all the rest must be right. I am redeemed, washed in blood, and saved; and all that follows must be good. May we be in this sweet state of mind, and know experimentally the meaning of the text,—
 "To be spiritually minded is life and peace."

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THE HEALING TOUCH.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,
AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,
ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, 15th JULY, 1883.

“And besought Him that they might only touch the hem of His garment: and as many as touched were made perfectly whole.”—Matt. xiv. 36.

SALVATION is represented as “all the fulness of God.” All the wisdom of God, and all the persons in the adorable Godhead, are inseparably connected with it. God has given us His best, and all of it; and in addition to this He has given us Himself: and hence Paul prayed that the members of the church at Ephesus might “be filled with all the fulness of God.” Now it is important to note the different branches of salvation, by Christ and also by the Holy Spirit. It was arranged that Christ should take our nature and manifest God in the flesh for ever; that He should come into this world, die for sin, and redeem His beloved people. That glorious work has been done, and the great Immanuel has returned to heaven, where He ever liveth to make intercession for all that come unto God by Him.

Then it is interesting and important to view salvation in connection with the Holy Spirit. His work is as essential to our salvation as is the work of Jesus Christ, for it is said, “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.” It is the Spirit's work to arrest the guilty sinner; for though by nature man is resolved to be lost, yet—arrested by the hand of the Spirit—he is held fast by a power from which he cannot release himself. Then another branch of salvation is regeneration.—“Ye must be born again.” “Except a man be born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.” The words are not mine but Christ's. “Never man spake like this Man.” His lips were, and are, the lips of eternal and inviolable truth. There are two kingdoms which we have more immediately to do with. We have been delivered from the kingdom of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. Now, depend upon it those persons who are in the kingdom of darkness know nothing experimentally of the kingdom of God's dear Son. The natural man cannot go beyond his own sphere. But beyond nature there is another sphere, which is that of Grace; and the boundary line that separates the one from the other is the new birth. In regeneration, the soul leaves that which is natural and sinful for that which is gracious, spiritual, heavenly and divine. Hence, then, we have, first, the mind arrested by the hand of God, and that captive is born a child of God, and bears in some measure the image of His Father. The life of His heavenly Father is in his heart, Jesus is his elder brother, and he becomes openly and avowedly related to every being

in heaven. I do not know how to explain it, but every regenerated person becomes related to Him that sits on the throne, and related in a peculiar manner to all God's angels and to all the happy millions that are singing in infinite pleasure before the face of God. Oh what an honour it is to be a child of God! And we have no reason, and ought not in fact to believe, or even to suppose, that we are God's children, unless we have been thus born again.

Another important branch of salvation by the Spirit is *calling*; but I will not make any critical observations this morning. I like for purposes connected with myself, more especially to distinguish between the new birth and effectual calling; for God does not strictly speaking call the dead. He first gives life to the mind, and then he calls the sinner. We leave that, however. When a person has been thus born again and called from sin to holiness, he discovers the terrible fact that he is guilty and filthy; and requires pardon and cleansing. "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me:" and mind and soul washing is a wonderful work. You know well how to defile your souls, and pollute your minds, for that is easily done; but you cannot wash them. There is only one Being in the universe that can wash souls and make them whiter than snow. That Being David appealed to when his bones were broken, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." And when guilty Peter was washed in the atoning blood of the Redeemer, those words were understood at once by him, at least in some good measure: "If I wash, thee not thou hast no part with me. The idea of having no part with Christ was very terrible to Peter. And then he said, "Lord, not my feet, only but also my hands and my head. The blood of Jesus was shed for the person, and the whole person shall be cleansed by it. When our bodies and spirits are in heaven before God, and some bodies as well as immortal minds are now there, we shall be all that holiness can possibly require us to be. The powerful blood that washes sinners clean was appointed and prepared, and the whole arrangement for our salvation was in the hands of infinite wisdom and love; and if love and wisdom can take us to heaven, and the work of the Spirit is sufficient to produce in us all that God requires, we shall be as perfect as God can make us, and as happy as it will be possible for creatures to be in the presence of the eternal God. Then further, these persons are represented as clothed, and hence the church says of herself "He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation and covered me with the robe of righteousness." The garments of salvation, how well they fit the sinner! and they never will wear out. They were made by Christ; all their materials were wrought by Himself; and He put them, if I may so speak into the wardrobe of grace, in order that the Holy Spirit might bring them forth and put them on the guilty sinner. Sometimes sinners realize a little of the blessedness of this, and say with the church, "He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness." Yes, He will perfect our salvation before He has done with us. He never began a work without intending to finish it, and many of God's works are already finished and completed. He began creation and finished it. He began redemption and finished it. He has commenced His intercessory work in heaven, but

that He has not yet finished. The Holy Spirit is not to be separated from the Father and the Son. Having begun the good work in the hearts of sinners, He will carry it on until the day of Jesus Christ. Time is short, eternity is near, and our ransomed and regenerated spirits must soon be there. During the thirty years I have stood in this chapel, I have known many depart from the body for the house not made with hands eternal in the heavens; and, whilst I have preached, my hair has become grey and my head almost bald, and soon I shall go the way whence I shall not return. Oh what a favour to be interested in the salvation of God!

The last branch of this salvation is that of health. "I am the Lord that healeth thee." I will read the 35th verse, for by doing so we shall have the whole sentence: "And when the men of that place had knowledge of Him, they sent out into all the country round about, and brought unto Him all that were diseased; and besought Him that they might only touch the hem of His garment; and as many as touched were made perfectly whole."

Now let us make a few observation on these words, or on the last clause of the last verse, "As many as touched were made perfectly whole." I shall remain on the surface of the subject, and take up a few facts here and there and place them before you.

In the first place, we have an *infinitely important object*. Jesus Christ, the Healer or the great Physician. "As many as touched Him were made perfectly whole." It is a fact that our Lord is the fountain of every good. Every good, merciful and gracious stream flowing here on earth has its source and spring in Him. He is the fountain of every created good, and the fountain of every spiritual and saving favour and mercy; and, blessed be God, he is not a sealed but an open fountain. This fountain of all natural and temporal mercies was opened by revelation immediately after the completion of creation, and all saving blessings began to flow, after man became a sinner. It was opened actually and meritoriously when Jesus shed His blood, and in our text our Lord is represented as the fountain of health. Physical and mental health are great mercies and favours, and perhaps it is impossible to properly estimate their real worth without losing them. I have heard some persons say they never had a day's sickness or pain in their life; and I do not suppose that such persons really know the importance and worth of this great blessing; but let no one ever forget that it is a favour great and undeserved, and that it comes down to us as all other blessings do: for every good and perfect gift cometh down from above. There is nothing good in this world but what came down from heaven. Natural health is one of the great favours with which the world is blessed, and spiritual health is one of the richest gifts which flow from this great fountain, the Lord Jesus Christ. Adam was a healthy being in the garden of Eden before He fell; and had He remained in that sinless condition, he would have transmitted his moral and physical health to all his posterity: but his condition in Eden was loseable and uncertain, (and I use that word for want of a better one.) Adam's moral and natural health was precarious, and he lost it; and in-

stead of transmitting to his posterity perfect health and life, he became—and mark this—the fountain of disease and death to all his children ; and the world has been sinful, polluted, diseased and depraved ever since.

The second Man is the Lord from heaven. The second Adam is the dear Redeemer, and if the first Adam is the source of all disease, the second is the source of all life and health. But now let us look at this Great Healer—the great object before us. Whilst dwelling on this theme, we observe that our blessed Lord is perfect in Himself, and that He owes His perfection to no creature, but entirely to Himself. He is essentially perfect. In Him was no sin and in Him was no disease ; but I need not dwell on that point. In Him is no sin. Sin is a defiling, a polluting thing ; and He bore the sins of millions without becoming a sinner. He took our diseases without becoming diseased. The vile abomination was imputed to Him, for the Lord laid upon him the iniquities of us all ; but sin did not stain Him, and it left no trace of its abominable character upon Him. Our God was and is a consuming fire ; and let me illustrate it : if I poured a quantity of ink upon a burning globe, it would be utterly consumed, and no trace thereof would remain ; so the black transgressions of the millions of God's people which were imputed to the Saviour were consumed and left no trace upon Him. He put them away, out of sight, and out of being as to their guilt and consequences by the sacrifice of Himself ; and now he stands forth as the Great Fountain of life and health to guilty men and women. Had the Great Fountain of life been diseased in any measure, touching Him would not have cured souls ; but He was not diseased, he was perfectly whole, and let me say, He was absolutely impeccable. He could not contract disease by coming into contact with sin, nor was it possible for Him to contract it by coming into contact with the sinner. Sinners might touch Him, but they left no mark upon Him ; and though defiled they might embrace Him and they were and are still welcome to do so ; yet He remained pure, and His character is unstained. "I will, be thou clean," were His words when He was here, and they are the words which He speaks to His people now. He is perfect in Himself. But He can communicate His own health to others. As many as touched Him were made perfectly whole. Here is a Physician ! You call in your medical man and a physician also, if the case is thought to be critical, but the remedies they prescribe and use are not brought out of themselves. But here is a Physician whose health is divinely and eternally perfect, and who has life in Himself and for millions of others, and the health with which He is full is communicable to others. He means to make millions of diseased beings as healthy as He can before He sits down as a Mediator ; and the wondrous method by which they obtain new life and health appears in this word : "As many as touched Him were made perfectly whole. Man can communicate his diseases to his fellow-man, but the healthiest man that ever lived cannot communicate his health to another. It is very possible for a healthy one to become diseased by contact with a diseased person ; but it is not possible for a healthy person to communicate his health to one diseased. There is only one Being who can do this, and that is the blessed Christ of God. I am not particularly

fond of the word "stole" as we have it in one of our hymns. It is said of the woman who had an issue of blood that she "healing virtue stole." She went behind Him with the words, "If I may but touch the hem of His garment I shall be whole;" and she touched Him, and a cure immediately followed. And the Saviour was conscious of what had taken place; for He never saves unconsciously, unintentionally, or accidentally. People do not go to heaven that way. No, Christ knew what had taken place; and since He cannot be hid, and is not ashamed of His work, He turned round and said, "Who touched Me?" and the disciples said, "Master, Thou seest the multitude thronging Thee, and sayest Thou Who touched Me?" There are many near Thee, and they cannot help touching Thee. There was a great difference between a mere physical touch of the Saviour and a believing contact with Him. The multitude touched Him and thronged Him; but there was no faith in them or in the persons who did so, and no healing virtue went out of Him. This poor trembling woman had a living faith in the Great Fountain of life and health, and she said, "If I may but touch Him, I shall be whole:" and virtue went out of Him and healed her. Christ said, "I perceive that virtue is gone out of Me:" and when the healed one found that she could not be hid, she came forward trembling, and avowed the fact that she had touched Him. "Daughter, be of good cheer, thy faith hath saved thee and made thee whole." Here, then, is the Fountain of life and health communicating His life and His health to others, and thus making them for ever like Himself. This is peculiar to Christ, for no other being can do it. You who are parents having lovely children, would see them possess the grace of God if it might be so. Place yourselves in whatever attitude you will, connect yourselves with your dear children as you please, you may form their habits, and perhaps it is right that I should say that it is the duty of every parent to try to do this. You may form their habits and bring them up according to the strictest and best rules of morality, but though you have a measure of grace in your hearts and are Christians, you cannot communicate any of the oil which you possess to them. This is the prerogative of Jesus. When the people heard that He was there and had knowledge of it, they said, having faith in Him, "He is a Saviour and we believe that He can and will save," and they brought the people, and as many as touched were made perfectly whole. An angel comes in contact with me but does not change me nor give me any of his angelic properties. And if ministers come into contact with others, there is something which they cannot communicate; but when the mind comes into contact with its Maker, when the child of God comes into connection with Christ, then health and peace take possession of the heart. To touch Christ is to be Christianized; to come into contact with God, is to be constituted a Godlike character; to touch the Saviour is to become a saved sinner, to touch the righteousness of Christ, so as to receive it, is to become a justified person in the sight of God; to touch blood or to come into believing contact with it, is to be purged and purified; but to remain at a distance from that blood in doubt and fear and unbelief, is to possess a defiled mind in which

springs up a thousand doubts and fears. Do not expect to be pure and healthy by consulting yourselves and looking within. Health does not come that way. You may pore over yourselves from one week to another until the disease becomes, if possible, deeper, and the pain more acute, and your apprehensions more dreadful than ever. There is only one Being, and, oh, the beautiful simplicity of it!—there is one Object full of life and health, and O that I may come and touch His dear person and remain for ever healthy and well. As many as touched Him were made whole. God touched our nature—more than that, He took it into union with Himself, and by so doing He expressed His intention to heal both body and soul and that for ever. And now the sinner comes to Deity,—and I beg attention to this, for we have more than a man here. Now, the sinner comes into the presence of Deity, for God is manifest in the flesh. Take a guilty sinner and talk to him about abstract Deity, or God out of Christ, and it will strike his disease into him and send it through him in the most fatal and destructive manner. In abstract Deity, or God out of Christ, there is nothing for a poor trembling mind to touch or to approach. There is majesty everywhere, but not in the form in which the sinner wants it—a world of glory, and majesty, and splendour, but not a seat to sit upon nor a place to put his feet upon.

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

Well, here is God in Christ, and that means in our nature. He is approachable and apprehensible; and though I cannot find Him out, yet it is possible for the Holy Spirit to form correct feelings and ideas in our minds concerning the blessed Christ of God; and with those ideas and feelings our souls come into sweet connection with this Saviour, and we touch Him, and life and health are the results. Christ was born in purity, and thus he became the source of health to all his dear people.

In the second place we have a *very important act*—the act of touching. As many as touched were made perfectly whole. This is the act of poor broken-hearted sinners. Others care not to touch Him; they flee from Him, and their language is—“Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways.”—Like the Gadarenes who requested, or besought, Him to depart out of their coasts. Now, it is not the case with the poor, burdened penitent sinner, who says:—

“Come nearer, nearer, nearer still,
I’m well when Thou art near.”

Well, here comes one whose mind is contrite, afraid to lift up so much as his eyes to heaven, yet he is following the Lamb; but following Him at a distance, yet cannot be induced to remove his eyes from Him, for all his hope is there. O that I knew He loved me and gave Himself for me! I must follow Him though at a distance; for though I sink into hell at the end of my journey, yet I must follow Him.

“God be merciful to me a sinner.” Well, here is one of the persons that come to touch the Great Author of life and health; he is bruised, contrite, humble; aye, and holy too in some measure in his own mind; and the language of his spirit is:—“If I may but touch Him, I know I shall be made whole.” But how is He touched? I think He is touched sometimes in a very trembling way; but then you know it does not much matter whether the hand of faith shakes or not. A weak hand may hold a sovereign and even a thousand pound note, as really and truly as a strong one; and therefore it matters not whether the hand be weak or strong, whether one be courageous and bold or otherwise. As many as touched Him. “But my spirit was so bruised and my hand shook and trembled much.” No matter. And do not some of God’s people touch Him in a very awkward manner. No matter—contact is the one thing needful; coming into vital connection with the Saviour is the great necessity. They may pray very awkwardly and strangely, yet He understands the touch and responds to the trembling hand. The trembling and fearing, the contrite and the tempted—even as many as touched were made whole.

But how is He touched? Every grace touches Him, for He is always touched by those powers which He Himself gives. It was not the hem of His garment nor the literal contact which took place between His flesh and the fingers of others, it was not so much that, it was the fact that those who touched Him had a living faith in His dear name and character: hence, “Thy faith hath saved thee,” therefore faith touches Him. One says, “My faith has never touched Him. Have you any faith in Him?” “Yes,” you say, “I have a little.” Well faith must have an object; it cannot exist without one. You do believe in Him. You do not know that He is willing, but do believe He is able?—You touch His hem. You have a hope. In whom? You have said to your soul, “Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise Him who is the health of my countenance and my God.” Love, you are not in a state of enmity against Him, and can never take up the sword and fight against Him or His cause again. You feel that you would live in the exercise of love to His dear name all the days of your life here on earth, and wish you could love Him more. O, you are in living contact with Him. Grace comes to Him, or carries the heart into living connection with the Saviour. Therefore, let me put it thus:—repentance touches Him, every heartfelt prayer indited by the Spirit touches the Saviour and, if I may so speak, it raises a feeling in Him—at all events it touches Him—and the word feeling in Christ is not altogether inappropriate, for He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, as our Great High Priest.

Well, prayer touches Him, and penitence touches Him; and let me come down as low as I can, and I will give you Scripture for doing so,—a hallowed, a spiritual thought touches the Great Fountain of health; for “they that feared the Lord spake often to one another, and the Lord hearkened and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that *thought upon His name.*”

A holy thought in the mind of the sensible sinner comes into contact

with Jesus and touches Him—not kissing an artificial cross made of gold, or silver, or anything else ; not looking at a cross nor kissing it. Oh, the ignorance, the antichristian ignorance of the times we live in. When certain criminals were executed, a cross was presented just before they were launched into eternity, and they kissed it and were supposed to be healed ! “ Kiss the Son, lest He be angry ; ” and “ Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth. ” “ His love is sweeter than wine. ” Away with crucifixes, extreme unction and saving sacraments, and all the rest of idolatry. As many as touched Him—not the wood He died upon, even if it could be found ; not the tree he was nailed to ; but as many as touched Christ Himself were made perfectly whole. Thus we have a wounded sinner in contact with a wounded Saviour, and I think it is Quarles who says :—

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

A wounded heart and a wounded Christ applied to that heart heals it ; for by His stripes we are healed.

Although my time is gone, let us in the third place say a word or two upon *the persons themselves* : “ as many. ” None ever touched Him in vain ; and if you touch Him in the sense I have tried to indicate, you shall never perish. All in heaven touched Him and are now perfectly whole and happy. I meant to have said a word on the *great result*, all that that touched Him were made perfectly whole. To be whole is to be healthy ; and to be so is to be whole—for Jesus Christ perfectly cures the sinner ; The *perfection* might be considered, as to its nature, its extent and its duration. The nature of the cure is perfect. When He has completed the work, both body and soul shall be for ever like Himself. Oh, He can cure by a word, or a look, or an application ; only mark whenever He works by an instrument, he makes and uses it Himself. When He used clay to cure the blind man, He made it Himself, for He spat on the ground and made clay. All the glory is His. What we shall be when we are thoroughly like Him in body and soul, it doth not yet appear. There is nothing in the world or in the visible universe to indicate to us what we shall be when He shall appear, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is and be forever with Him. The Lord add His blessing, for Christ's sake. Amen.

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THE RIGHTEOUS REMEMBERED FOR EVER.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,
ON THURSDAY EVENING, 27th NOVEMBER, 1873.

“*The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.*”—Psalm cxii. 6.

IF I mistake not, my subject this evening relates to the justification of a sinner, that high and blessed act of God which may be compared to one of the streams which emanate from the river of eternal love. How very blessed is the first clause of this verse! “Surely he shall not be moved for ever.” A good man is very frequently and deeply moved; so moved that he is often filled with wonder, consternation and astonishment; but *surely*—and I beseech you, my dear hearers, to lay all the stress you can upon God’s “surely,” for this is God’s word, and His “surely” always means much. The believer may be moved to-day as he was yesterday, and as perhaps he will be to-morrow; but Heaven has said, “Surely he shall not be moved for ever. The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.”

Let us look, in the first place, at *the character*; and then, secondly, at *the fact* stated in relation to this character; and then thirdly and lastly, should we have time, we will draw one or two *inferences* from the glorious truth asserted in relation to this interesting character.

In the first place we have to notice *the character* indicated in the text: “*the righteous*,” who shall be in everlasting remembrance. And there are such persons as righteous persons; there is such a character on the earth as a righteous man. The assertion is sometimes made, “There is none that doeth good, no, not one.” “The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand and seek God.” And then God proceeded to say, “They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.” And yet Scripture does not contradict itself, for the Word of God is always perfectly and divinely consistent; therefore we must ever remember the two great grounds upon which mankind stands. We must consider the position in which man lies, in which Adam his father left him, and the position into which the Lord Jesus Christ has saved him, and keeps him. If we contemplate man as a fallen creature, and look at the sons and daughters of Adam in the position in which their father left them, we see that Adam carried us a long way from God, and we ourselves were perfectly satisfied with the distance from Him at which we lived, for our first father carried us down to the very threshold of hell, and left us, lost and ruined, and under the curse of a broken law; and Jesus Christ has brought us back again; and therefore we have to contemplate the two Adams, the two heads, the two great roots, the two great trees.

If we look at Adam as the root, and at the many branches that grow from that root, "there is none that doeth good, no, not one." But when we look at Christ as the second head, the second root, I find over that tree the words, "Thy people also shall be all righteous." They are all right there, as they are all wrong where Adam left them. We have to speak for a few minutes on this character, the righteous; and this subject renders it necessary that I should set forth the obedience and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Having stood here so many years, I really feel at times very considerably embarrassed and at a loss, because I know, as a minister of the Gospel, that a preacher should not always dwell on one doctrine; and yet we have not many subjects to bring before the people, for the doctrines of Divine Grace are, comparatively speaking, few, although they are neither small nor insignificant: but they are certainly not numerous. Twelve, fourteen, or perhaps twenty great facts constitute the articles of the faith that is so dear to us. What, therefore, shall we say on this great subject that I have not already said? Well, I will make this passing observation. The people of God are righteous in three respects. They are righteous mediatorially, and they are righteous vitally, and they are righteous practically; and of course I might add to this, that they are righteous, and shall be so eternally.

Now the people of God are righteous *mediatorially*. The obedient life and sacrificial death of the great Righteousness of God are imputed, transferred, put upon every object of God's everlasting love, and every sinner dressed in the obedience of Jesus, is all that, in the sight of God, which the obedience of Jesus Christ can constitute him; so that if there is perfection in the obedience of Christ, and that obedience is mine, if there is infinite value in that obedience, and that obedience is mine, if eternal duration is inseparable from the obedience of Christ, and that obedience is mine, then I am as perfect, complete, just and righteous—I would speak with all reverence—as the Lord Jesus Christ Himself is; I do not mean internally, or vitally, or experimentally, but I mean in God's account; I mean as before God's throne, and as beneath His eye; for God does not see me as I see myself, or look at me as I look at myself; God ever regards me, if I am His dear child, through the perfecting and purifying medium of the mediation of His dear Son. In the second place, a righteous man is *vitally* or experimentally right. I do not mean by that that he is satisfied with his own internal righteousness, or with the work of grace that is going on within, or with the depth and extent of that work. But there are times, blessed be God, when he is satisfied as to its nature, qualities and properties, and with the fact that he is a child of God. As long as he is here, he will be looking within and saying,

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

And that utterance is a righteous utterance, and is the effect of the righteous operations in the heart of the righteous Spirit of the righteous God. It is all right together—the utterance is right, the principle which that utterance gives expression to is right, and the Author of that principle is right, and the grand result of all will be perfect

inherent internal righteousness ; so that the child of God is right by imputation and by impartation. And then the child of God is right *practically*, not perfectly or satisfactorily ; for there is no perfection in the flesh, and no perfect living or walking while in the flesh ; but a man is in God's sight what he earnestly and heartily desires to be ; a man is in God's sight, and in God's account, what his heart intreats the God of heaven to cause him to be. "O Lord, I would be holy." Then you are holy. "O Lord, I would love Thee." Then you do love Him ; and God regards you as one that loves His dear and blessed name. With such intense desires, and such a fervent love as this, you cannot live in sin ; you cannot roll it as a sweet morsel under your tongue, or feel at home in the world ; ungodliness and worldliness are not your elements, you would live soberly and righteously, and godly, in this present evil world. Well, this is practical righteousness, and those who are righteous in these respects shall be in everlasting remembrance.

I want, however, to call your attention to-night to two or three points in a somewhat different direction. Looking at this righteous character, made so by God Himself, several things must be regarded as inseparable from it. In the first place, we have the idea of a *standard*, and I do not wish to separate that idea from the character in the text. A righteous man is right or righteous, according to some law or rule, there must be some standard. We know what man is, and what we are ourselves. We are very prone to accommodate, if I may so speak, the standard of righteousness to our own condition and capabilities, and prejudices ; but, dear friends, and I beg your attention to this point, for it involves your salvation and dignity, and glory ; you are righteous by an infallible standard, and according to an eternal and infallible rule. There is no mistake about this, there can be no defect as to the righteousness of the character of that man who is God's workmanship. God does not apply one standard to one individual, and another to another. All must—I hope I shall not be misunderstood—in this respect, be of one and the same height ; all must be perfectly upright ; all must be of full weight and divinely straight, according to the inflexible line of God's eternal truth, and it is the believer's mercy that he is right, according to every law. I do not mind what rule you apply to the character of a child of God. Look at the moral law. Well, you say, that is the only standard of right or wrong. That is one, and on certain premises that is the only one. I ask how the child of God stands in relation to the moral law ? Will his character bear comparison with, and bear the light, the majesty and glory of God's moral law ? If the obedience of Christ was a divine obedience to the moral law, and that obedience is put upon the sinner, then the sinner is all right, according to that standard. Well, take the sinner that is justified and righteous to the Gospel,—and the Gospel is not less perfect than the law ; there is more in the Gospel than can be found in the law, intentionally so on the part of God. The law involves and embraces, and contains the Gospel ; the Gospel, however, contains more than can be found in the law. There is no mercy in the law, there is plenty in the Gospel. There is no pardon in the law, there is plenty in the gospel. Take the sinner to the law, and that

is perfectly straight and right, and he is all right. Can you go higher than this? As high as ever you like with this righteous man. Yes, we are going above the law if possible, and above the Gospel; we will go to the great Lawgiver, we will go to the great Author of the Gospel, Jesus Christ, and consider the Christian in relation to his Author, Christ. And how does he stand in relation to Christ? He is like Him; "as He is, so are we in this world." We are members of His flesh, of His body, and of His bones; and a man is not human flesh in one part of his body, and the flesh of birds, or beasts, or fishes in another part. And the mystical body of Jesus Christ is one nature, one flesh, animated by one Spirit; and if the Head is perfect, the members are perfect also. Here, then, we have the child of God as a righteous character, agreeing, and in harmony with all the laws of God. Dear brethren, you are safe, if you are not happy; for if you have the grace of God in your hearts, and the principle of godly fear in your minds: you are as safe as Abraham in heaven is safe; as safe as Gabriel before the throne of God; he wears the righteousness which God gave him when he created him, and that righteousness is perfectly satisfactory to God. But you and I wear a better robe than Gabriel ever wore, and you and I are righteous, in a sense, in which he never was righteous. The righteousness of Gabriel is angelic righteousness, and is perhaps a moral righteousness; it is a creature righteousness; but the righteousness which constitutes you what you are, is emphatically said to be the righteousness of God. "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

Then we notice, in the second place, if the first idea be scriptural, that this character must be capable of a *very high position*. If he agrees with God's holy law and blessed Gospel, and if he is in perfect harmony with the perfect Christ of God, and with God Himself, he must occupy a marvellous position. Well, you will see he does, and the position is inseparable from righteousness. We ask, where will the ungodly and the sinner flee? Where are the ungodly there said to be? In the arms of the wicked one, far from God by wicked works, and their position is very variously described by the Word of God. Where is the righteous man? Listen:—"For they are without fault before the throne of God." That is where they are. Yes, and he that is all right, must stand before the throne of God; and more than that, he that has been made righteous by God may sit down before it. It is a great thing to see God's throne at a distance, and to pray for grace to enable us to draw near; but a greater thing to have grace, enabling us to approach, and a greater thing still to have grace that enables us to look with calmness into the face of infinite Majesty; but the greatest of all blessings is to have that measure of grace that enables the soul to sit down and rest in the presence of the everlasting God. I think I may say that those who enter Her Majesty's presence stand before her, even those who occupy a high official position; the premier himself, when he enters into her presence, does not sit down, but stands and receives what are commonly called her commands. It would be considered, I suppose, an insult to royalty, even for the prime minister himself to sit down in the Queen's presence when officially attending her. But here

are worms of dust, covered in the beautiful, blessed, and permanent obedience of the Son of God ; they are permitted to come into the presence of the Monarch of the universe, and stand boldly in that presence, to sit down at His feet, and hear the words that proceed from His mouth, and find rest unto their souls. Good David said, when God disclosed to him a little of His will concerning himself and his family, "This is not the manner of man, O God." Man would not have thought of treating me so. No, this is the manner of our God, the method which He adopts in relation to those wretches who deserved eternal perdition, and darkness, and hell. Well, they are before the throne, without spot ; and they are there because they are thus pure, and their spotlessness is owing to their interest in the doing and dying of the spotless Son of God. There are lines of condemnation beyond which the church of God are carried ; every righteous man stands beyond the line of condemnation, and the line that separates condemnation from justification is the line of a Saviour's precious blood, which is to be seen all round the throne of God ; and within that line, and within the covenant bow, stand all the justified people of God. The curse cannot fall upon them, condemnation cannot reach them ; for it cannot flow over the lines of a Saviour's blood. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Dear Christian friends, we may go as far as our little minds are capable of going in contemplating this glorious truth. I know it is said in various places that we may express ourselves too strongly in relation to the privilege of justification. The namby-pamby stuff—forgive me for using such a word in a sermon—which we hear in relation to justification does stir me up from the very bottom of my heart. Surely, in having to do with the deeds and triumphs of incarnate God, we have to do with that which is infinitely rich and infinitely high. "Oh, we are said to be righteous, and God deals with us as if we were righteous!" My Christian friends, repudiate such trash, put it all away from you. Heaven has said—and there are no religious fictions in connection with salvation—"Thy people shall be all righteous;" and as if to sink for ever all quibbling on this point, the Holy Ghost has wondrously said, "This is the name wherewith she shall be called,"—not only He, but—"This is the name wherewith *she* shall be called, the Lord our righteousness." Believe in a salvation that saves, and in a justification that sets you for ever right, and in perfection by the Son of God that makes you eternally perfect. I repudiate a half-way salvation, it is the bane of the churches in the day in which we live. Strong consolation our God has given to us, and one of the streams of consolation flows in connection with this doctrine.

Thirdly, *power*. We have noticed in the first place the standard of righteousness, and then the position which the righteous necessarily occupy, and now we notice their powers ; for to be have been made all right by God is to possess very important powers. What are they ? The righteous man is powerful in every way. Strong in every way in the law. Is there an unspeakable force in moral power that belongs permanently to the righteous man ? The man that is legally right that has not violated the law, that can show an unblushing face anywhere and everywhere has

strength. The Christian is legally strong : he has violated the law, but he has that upon his spirit and upon his person which answers all the requirements of God, and concerning which God Himself says, Christ has magnified the law, and made it honourable. He has, then, moral, legal, and spiritual power. How does this power of a righteous man operate ? Well, he has power with God. If I were apprehended in the morning, on suspicion of having committed a murder, I should not be afraid, if it had not been committed by myself ; at any rate there would be no grounds for me to fear to appear before the magistrate. Therefore a righteous man has power to appear before the great Judge of all. He is not wrong. Oh what a mercy ! I spoke loudly, but I spoke solemnly. He is not wrong. All his breaches of the law are gone, he is God's own workmanship. God has given him a character, and for ever established it, and acquitted him, and then invited him into His presence ; and he has power and confidence to enter into the presence of God, and stand before Him. And the power of a righteous man is great with the devil. Oh let me know for myself that I am justified by the imputation of the Saviour's righteousness, and I can meet all hell. There is nothing that gives me power with the devil like this knowledge ; when I can say, True, I am a sinner ; true, if God dealt with me according to my iniquities I should sink into eternal darkness ; all I have committed I confess ; but the blood of Jesus Christ, God's dear Son, has cleansed me from all sin. " Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Fourthly, such a person must have *rights and property*. His rights must be very extensive, and his property very valuable. What are the rights of the righteous man, and what is his property ? Well, the Bible tells us, " All things are yours." What for ? On what ground ? Why so ? " For ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." There is not a gracious covenant name of your God which is not open to you, and everyone of God's covenant names is a chamber, and your justifying God says, Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, they are all open and they are revealed, and were set open for you, and you have a right to enter. " Come, My people ; enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee ; hide thyself as it were, for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast." " The name of the Lord is a strong tower ;"—not *as* one—the righteous runneth into it. Yes, they have a right ; they know they may ; they are driven by necessity ; they know that God is their God ; they run to Him just as a child pursued by danger runs towards its parent, so the righteous runneth into this strong tower, and is for ever safe. The promises, they are all his ; the comforts and consolations of God are all the property of the righteous. Just establish if you can the fact that you are righteous by the mediation of Jesus Christ, and all that is in this book is yours. All that is good, that is gracious ; all that is in Christ, and all that is in heaven is yours.

The last thought is, of course, to complete the whole, *the destination* of this character. Where must he go to ? Is there any necessity ? Yes. It is absolutely necessary that he should go to heaven ; for that world is

the proper level, the true home of every man and woman who has been saved equitably and honourably by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now just two or three thoughts on the second particular, namely, *the fact asserted* in relation to this character. "The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance." Curtailing the remarks which I meant to make, I will just mention three points. He shall be had in everlasting remembrance on the earth, and in heaven, and in hell. He is had in everlasting remembrance on the *earth*. Take the word "everlasting" in a limited sense here, because I mean by this that the righteous will be remembered on the earth as long as the world stands. How so? This first position applies chiefly to Old Testament saints, to those who have gone before; whose names are written in this book of life, which we have here, for you know it is said the Lord's people are written among the living in Jerusalem. Well, that must mean that their portraits, their characters, their experience are set forth here. Here we have the living in Jerusalem described, and if God's description of His own dear people tallies and agrees with your experience, your name is written here too, you are written among the living in Jerusalem. Then such persons are said to be written in the Lamb's book of life in heaven. Well, we have here in this wonderful revelation the lives, the history, the deeds, and acquisitions of many righteous men and women, and they will be in everlasting remembrance. Righteous Abel—that name will never be lost. Enoch, who walked with God. Noah, that righteous man, we shall never cease to talk about him as long as we are here; and the next generation will talk about him, and following generations will remember Noah and the deluge. Then come Abraham, the friend of God, and good old Jacob, and David, the sweet Psalmist of Israel; and then comes righteous Mary, concerning whom the Saviour said, Do not trouble the woman, Judas, she has performed a good deed upon my person. Therefore the thief on the cross, unrighteous enough at first, but made righteous by the dying Redeemer, and righteous Saul of Tarsus shall be had in everlasting remembrance. Why, you go to the sick room, and I have been there rather often of late, and have a little conversation with our afflicted brethren and sisters, and very instructive and confirming to one's faith you frequently find these interviews. And thus the righteous dead, the righteous departed, the righteous glorified are thankfully remembered by us. "Oh, sir," says one, "I have been thinking very blessedly of the trial of Abraham's faith, and of the experience of Jacob, and David, and of other of the cloud of witnesses." Ah, the righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance. Abel, and Enoch, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and other Old and New Testament worthies, have formed the subject of more writings than all the host of monarchs the world has ever had. The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance in *heaven*. The Father will never forget them, and the Son will never forget them, and the Spirit will never forget them, and the angels will never forget them. The righteous were remembered when God made all His appointments, for they were then the objects of His love. And what was the advent of Christ but Heaven's remembrance of the objects of Divine love. And what do you think is going on in heaven

now? Why, He ever liveth to make intercession for all that come unto God by Him. You cannot be forgotten whilst Christ is thought of, and you cannot be forgotten whilst Christ makes intercession, showing the breastplate of love, with your names indelibly engraven upon it. Everlastingly remembered in heaven. But I said they shall be had in everlasting remembrance in *hell*, and did I not speak scripturally? How is that? The remembrance will ever be a bitter and penal one, and when God shall have chained the devil, and hurled him into eternal punishment and despair, he will remember his temptations, accusations, and suggestions, and his perplexing, distressing, and defiling influences; and the remembrance will be tormenting to him for ever. The righteous will also be remembered there by their persecutors, for there are persecutors there, men and women who have cruelly, and in the most dreadful manner shown their hatred of the dear people of God. Oh, they will carry their memories with them into hell. Sinner, there are no bad memories in hell; and the memory of the righteous in the souls of the condemned will be a bitter thing; and therefore the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance in hell itself. Lazarus lay full of sores, and Dives fared sumptuously every day. Lazarus died and went to heaven, and Dives died and went to hell; and he remembered Lazarus. I think we may learn as much as that. Dives remembered that he had treated him with a kind of negative contempt. Will the negative kind of contempt of the world for the child of God torment in hell? Just listen to the Saviour's words, "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." Remembered to the end of time in this world, and remembered everlastingly in heaven and in hell. May the Lord command His blessing, for Christ's sake. Amen.

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SALVATION.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, 6th DECEMBER, 1885.

"He saved others; Himself He cannot save."—Matt. xxvii. 42.

WE are assured by Jehovah the Spirit, that Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." What he has been in the past, that He is now, and will be unto all eternity. He will never change His name, His intercession, His position, His love to His dear people; or any of His thoughts, or any part of His character, in relation to them and their salvation: hence He is "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Before the world was made, the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ was contemplated by the Trinity, and rested in before the Child was born, and before the Son of God was actually given. Abraham rejoiced to see the day of Christ: he saw it, and was glad. Enoch walked and talked with the dear Redeemer. Abel believed in the glorious Son of God, and the faith of Old Testament saints, was as to its nature and properties, like the faith of New Testament ones. The Church of God is divided, so to speak, into two branches; but they constitute but one church. Old Testament believers laid their hands on that dear head of Christ, and New Testament believers are resting upon the same glorious Person, and finished sacrifice of the Son of God. Therefore, Christ says His beloved is but one. However far one saint may be from another, as to time; however much one saint may differ from another, as to external circumstances; and whatever variation may exist between the experience of one saint and another, the church of God is but one family, one mind, one body, of which Christ is the root, and the everlasting Father, and the great and glorious Head.

"The saints on earth, and all the dead,
But one communion make;
All join in Christ, their living Head,
And of His grace partake."

The world changes, but our Jesus remains the same; one generation passes away, and another comes; but His years are throughout all generations. Ministers of the Gospel are raised up, and qualified for their important work; they are sent to their respective spheres of labour, and

more or less blessed therein. Eventually they become grey, and are called away to their eternal rest : but the great High Priest of our profession remains the same; and “ this God is our God for ever and ever ; He will be our Guide even unto death.”

The portion of divine truth which I have read to-night, is a very solemn and interesting one. The words were not spoken by God, or by a child of God; they were not uttered, so to speak, by the devil himself, though he prompted and influenced the minds of the speakers. My text is the utterance of wicked men—the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, as they surrounded the mysterious cross of the Christ of God. We are told that some of them that passed by, wagged their heads, all of them more or less scoffed at the marvellous Sufferer, and among other things that were said,—and there is many a truth spoken unintentionally—were the words, “ He saved others ; Himself He cannot save.” I might divide the subject into two heads. Here is first, a very important concession : “ He saved others.” And secondly, here are words of derision : “ Himself He cannot save.” I shall not, however, cast my thoughts into that form to-night, but will call your attention to a few facts in connection with matters which are suggested by the text.

In the first place, let us tarry a few moments and try to glance at *salvation itself*. “ He saved others.” And what is salvation ? It is one of the weightiest and most important words in the Bible. I rather think that next in importance and weight to the name of Christ Jesus, and to the offices He bears, is this mysterious and glorious word. “ Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation.” To be lost, is a very solemn state to be in—lost as to ourselves, and as to the power of all creatures, even that of angels; so lost that we can never recover ourselves, and must remain in darkness and condemnation for ever and ever, if God should not condescend to find us. What is salvation ? It is the very opposite of being lost ; it is the darling work of God ; the most honourable and glorious scheme of Jehovah; it is all the fulness of God. There is much of God in nature, and much of Him in providence, and in His moral government ; but the whole of God does not appear anywhere but in eternal salvation and everlasting life. Salvation is a *barrier* between guilty sinners and eternal damnation, between lost sinners and an everlasting hell. I am going to make no critical or far-fetched remarks upon hell ; I do not like to preach upon the theme, but I must revert to it now and then. Where is hell ? Where the wrath of God burns for ever ; where all God’s enemies must live and suffer for ever and ever. But there is heaven. Here are guilty sinners, lost and ruined, fitted for destruction by the fall, and by their own actual transgressions : between them and an everlasting hell we find a barrier, and that barrier is the suffering Christ of God, and the curse of God rolls against the cross, and it stops there. The wrath of God rolled against the suffering Son of God, and it stopped there ; the indignation of Jehovah rolled against the cross, and against the Saviour, and He met all, and bore all,

and exhausted all, and rose from the dead, and then said to His discip'les, The glorious work is done ; proclaim the good news. "Go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." What is this barrier composed of? Love, blood, and power. Love lies at the foundation, blood comes from love divine, and power divine to save the sinner comes from love and precious blood. Had there been no eternal love, there had been no blood in time; and had there been neither love nor blood, there would have been no gracious power to arrest the sinner, and bring him into the presence of God. God, however, says, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." And what is the evidence of that fact? Let Paul speak—"Who loved me, and gave Himself for me." And what follows blood, but the power of the Spirit: the operations of the Holy Ghost; the grace of God communicated to the heart, so that we have in salvation, all the Father's love, all the worth and dignity of the suffering Son of God, and all the omnipotent power and grace of God the Holy Spirit; and love, blood, and power come between my sinful soul, and the hell, which, as a guilty sinner, I deserve. I cannot soar so high as some professors of religion, yet I do trust I am a believer in the dear and blest Redeemer; and if I am a real child of God, I cannot go to hell, because no saved sinner can ever pass through this grand barrier, and there is no wrath for those thus protected by the blood of the Lamb; that poor sinner, who, by faith, is clinging to the Saviour's precious and glorious name is eternally safe. What is it that makes this barrier so strong? It is the salvation of the Son of God. What is it that makes it so special, and peculiar, and precious? It is the great fact that He saved sinners by dying for them; by suffering for them; by being overwhelmed for them in the wrath of God. It is the fact that the withering curse of God's holy law fell in all its heat and power upon His suffering soul; this is salvation, my dear friends. I want to be the means of comforting some of you, if I can; and if you, as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, could go to hell, it would have to be through the blood of the Lamb. "We are going to heaven that way, sir." I know it. We cannot go to hell that way. Christ is the way to God, and not to the devil. The blood of Christ is the way to heaven, and not to hell. You that are clinging to the precious person of God's dear Son, can never be forced through the wounds and sufferings of incarnate God, into eternal darkness and punishment.

"Salvation! oh the joyful sound!
Tis pleasure to our ears;
A sovereign balm for every wound,
A cordial for our fears."

Then again, Salvation—and I am trying to take a new view of the subject—is represented as a *mountain*. "He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munition of rocks: bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure." How blessed is all this! He shall find himself exalted, and he shall dwell there permanently.

“Praise the mount—O fix me on it,—
Mount of God’s unchanging love.”

Salvation is a high mountain. The swamp of condemnation and ruin is below. The world lies there in sin and iniquity. You have been uplifted by the hand of God, and set upon a rock, or fixed upon the mount of eternal love and salvation, and God says, “Ye shall dwell on high.” How high is salvation? It is infinitely higher than the very best that belongs to this world. Salvation goes beyond the clouds, and mists, and fogs, and darkness, of this poor dying world. “He shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munition of rocks,” and then it is said, since he that dwells on high, and in a rock, might be starved to death, or die for the want of water, “Bread shall be given him:” he shall not toil for it, but shall receive it as the gift of grace; bread, the necessary of life, as much as he needs to carry him through this life, into a better one; and since it cannot be supposed, naturally considered, that there is water at such a height, this blessing shall also be sure. And how is he employed there? “Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty.” From this exalted position, thou shalt also “behold the land that is very far off.” And what else? “Thine heart shall meditate terror.” Where? Down there at the bottom of the mountain. The terrors which enveloped the dear Son of God, to whom we owe our salvation and our life; we meditate the terrors of our suffering Lord, and wonder that He died for us, and adore the grace that sweetly took us in and saved us in Christ, with an everlasting salvation.

“High beyond imagination,
Is the love of God to man;
Far too deep for human reason,
Fathom that it never can.”

How does Jesus save? By substitution and communication, and by application. In the day in which we live, education is progressing on the right hand and on the left, and the people are wonderfully advanced in knowledge. It is said by many, that the age is too enlightened to believe in the doctrine of substitution. We are told that our forefathers, and especially the puritans, used to believe it; but it is not to be received now. Many years ago, it was altogether exploded, and men have left it behind. Such, I am sorry to say, is the teaching in many places. But God’s thoughts are not as our thoughts, neither are His ways as our ways. If the substitution of Jesus Christ was ever required to save a sinner, it is required to save sinners to-day; for He is “the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever;” and if Christ ever took the place of one sinner, and died in his room and stead, He took the place, and died in the stead of all the millions of sinners, who shall live with Himself in heaven for ever. Set Him forth, say many, as a perfect example of patience in suffering. He died to set us an example, and He died for our good. He did so—He died to set us an example of patience in suffering, and meekness, and He

died for our good. But He died *for* us ; He died in our stead ; He died in order that we might never die. All that was due to you and me of a penal character, fell upon the dear Son of God ; and if eternal death was due to us, that eternal death fell upon the dying Christ, and He abolished death by dying for us. Hold fast that truth, that Jesus is the sinner's substitute.

“ My faith would lay her hand
On that dear head of Thine,
While like a penitent I stand,
And there confess my sin.”

A spiritual Jew having committed a transgression, when he brought his victim to the priest, laid his hands upon its head, and confessed his sin and guilt in that manner ; then the victim was slain, and the offerer saw in the slaughter of the victim that which he himself had deserved. He saw in the victim his own substitute, and felt that it typified that dear Lamb of God who would come in due time and take his place, and die in his room and stead. “ He saved others ; Himself He cannot save.” And then our dear Lord saves by communicating it, for religion is something more than notion ; something must be known and felt. The great atonement of the Saviour is received. I know some talk about the difference between the atonement and reconciliation, but we are such sinners that we have no time to attend to all those minute niceties in connection with our religion. “ Not only so, but we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.” Let the Scriptures be received, let God be true ; we have received the atonement—then there was an atonement to receive. Yes, we did not go after it, and take possession of it ourselves. No, it was brought to us ; and how did God deal with us ? He communicated it unto us, dropping it into our hearts ; and what was the result ? “ We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Fill any vessel with water, the top of it being open, and take something heavier than the water and drop it in, and it will force the water out and make way for itself, and remain. The Holy Spirit brings the atonement to a heart full of guilt ; to a soul full of sin, and drops it into such a heart and soul, and it forces out the guilt, and the sorrow, and the pain, and the sense of condemnation ; there is cleansing, there is peace, and there is “ joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Salvation is the result of application, and therefore the blood of Christ is said to be “ the blood of sprinkling.” Where is it sprinkled ? It is sprinkled in heaven, and upon the sinner's conscience, and upon the book also : I mean the covenant of grace : “ for when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people, according to the law, he took the blood, saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you ;” and “ he sprinkled both the book and all the people.” The book was the covenant that God had then entered into with the people, and thus He ratified that covenant. And so the precious blood of Jesus has satisfied Divine justice, and pleased Jehovah well ; and now it is applied by the Spirit to sinners' consciences ; as the Saviour says, “ If I wash thee not,

thou hast no part with Me." And how does Christ wash poor sinners? By His Spirit now. In what does He wash them? In the fountain of His own blood. He does not say, If I teach thee not, or, if I enlighten thee not, or, if I lead thee not. It is a fact that He teaches, enlightens, and leads; but the stress is laid upon the purity; "If I *wash* thee not, thou hast no part with Me." It comes to this, therefore, my dear friends, that the cross of Christ is the meeting-place of God and the sinner. And what a meeting it is, is it not? We know what it is to meet the devil, and we know what it is to meet enemies, and difficulties, and dangers. We know what it is to meet sin, and to conflict with it. Do we know what it is to meet God? To meet God where he is well pleased; to meet Him on Calvary, under the shadow of the Cross, under the influence of a bleeding, crucified, and dying Immanuel. Oh, what is the result when God and the sinner thus meet together? There is absolutely no moral difference between them. God's enmity is gone. "God's enmity! what is that?" His law-enmity, that is gone; and the sinner's sinful and moral enmity is gone. God embraces the sinner, the sinner embraces Jehovah, and God and man are agreed. "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" How can they be agreed, except the sinner be saved; and how can the sinner be saved, except the Saviour save him; and if the Saviour has saved my soul, I shall sooner or later meet God, as my Father, and my eternal portion, under the shadow of the cross. And we meet under the cross to part no more. God and Adam used to meet together in Eden; but they parted company, and a terrible distance was found immediately between them; a separation had taken place. But when God meets the sinner under the cross of Calvary, parting will never again occur. God is our God for ever and ever, and Jesus Christ is ours for ever and ever.

Now, in the second place, the text states *a fact*, notwithstanding the words fell from unclean lips. "*He saved others; Himself He cannot save.*" I do not know how many there were in heaven when our dear Lord was nailed to the accursed tree. Abel was there, and Enoch and Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and Joseph were there. The dear old prophet Isaiah, and the weeping prophet Jeremiah were there. Elijah was there in his body, and Enoch was there in his; and I believe that Moses was there in his body. Well, all Old Testament saints were there, through and by Jesus. On what ground? By what authority? That of "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Did all go that way? Every one of them? How many were there in heaven? I do not know; but all of them owe their eternal salvation and glorification to the dear Lamb of God. He saved them all: "*He saved others; Himself He cannot save.*" And He has been saving sinners ever since, and it is a glorious truth that He was saving sinners there and then with an everlasting salvation. Every groan and every tear, every pang, every sting, and every sorrow that He experienced, contributed to the eternal salvation of countless millions of sinners. He was paying the debts of those who had been saved,—

paying the debts of that thief that was at His right hand,—paying the debts of some of the people that wagged their heads. Some of his detractors, we have reason to believe, were called by grace on the day of Pentecost ; and the Saviour was praying for them when they derided Him. “ Father, forgive them ; for they know not what they do.” He was saving sinners then, notwithstanding that they said, “ He cannot save Himself.” He was paying the debt, gradually paying it, and God was gradually receiving it. Justice was progressively smiting Him, blow after blow ; and wound after wound, sorrow after sorrow, fell upon Him. He continued, however, to pour out His worth, to pour out His merit, and to pour out the power of His person, and God continued to receive it, until He had poured out the whole of His soul unto death ; and then He said, “ It is finished ;” it is done ! the debt is paid ; the people are saved ; Justice is satisfied, heaven is opened ; and “ He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost.” Oh, has He saved you and me ? Are we interested in this great and glorious work ?

In the short space of time remaining, let me notice, in the third place, one or two facts as to *what salvation by Jesus Christ involves*. “ Himself He cannot save.” Was that a fact ? No, and yes. It was a fact in one respect, and in another it was untrue. In what respect was it untrue that He could not save Himself ? If we reduce the matter to a question of omnipotence, He could have drawn out every nail in a moment, and have descended from the cross in the twinkling of an eye, for although He hung on the accursed tree, all nature hung at that moment on Him, and He was then upholding all things by the word of His power, and all the joys of heaven—if there was joy in heaven at that solemn moment of darkness—were produced by Him. Therefore, if you reduce the matter to a question of naked power, it was not a fact that He could not have saved Himself. But then we are not permitted, thank God ! to reduce salvation, or any branch of it, to a question of bare omnipotence. Our Lord was a Mediator, and is Mediator between God and man, and as such He could not save Himself ; for He had pledged His word, His honour was involved. The consequences of sparing Himself would have been terrible and dreadful indeed. He could not have saved Himself without violating His word, breaking the covenant of grace, and losing the whole church. All depended upon His sufferings and death, and if He had come down from the cross without paying the debt, and saving His people, His word would have been broken, and His honour dimmed. Yet He did save Himself—by saving others He saved Himself ; and that is how that portion of Divine truth should read. “ Behold thy King cometh unto thee ; He is just, and having salvation.” The learned tell us that in the original it reads, “ He is just, and saving Himself.” He saved Himself by saving others—in what respect ? He saved His honour, He saved His name, He saved His glory. He said He would die, and accept all the consequences of His mediatorial engagements, and He did accept those consequences, and died according to His

own oath, and promise, and signature. Therefore He saved others, and saved Himself also.

“This gospel bears my spirit up ;
A faithful and unchanging God
Lays the foundation of my hope,
In oaths, and promises, and blood.”

Had time permitted, I meant to have drawn a few inferences from the subject ; but upon what I have said may the Lord command His blessing, for Christ's sake. Amen.

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THE LOVING AND INFALLIBLE GUIDE.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 20th, 1876.

"And the Lord shall guide thee continually."—Isa. lviii. 11.

THE grace of God is an unspeakably sweet and precious theme to dwell upon. Every glorified spirit in heaven, every sanctified soul on the earth, and every minister of the gospel meditate thereon with holy joy. The Apostle Paul discoursed with more feeling than tongue could tell upon that high and heavenly subject, and he evermore rejoiced in assuring his friends and hearers that, "by the grace of God, he was what he was." We read, however, of the riches of divine grace; for there is not only grace in God,—his grace is infinitely rich and eternally enriching to all its favoured possessors, and hence we are said to be accepted in the beloved, "to the praise of the glory of His grace." And again, the Apostle speaks of preaching among the Gentiles "the unsearchable riches of Christ." Our God is rich in grace for ever and ever, and he has expressed this fact in a very beautiful and comprehensive manner in the gospel of salvation. The holy doctrines of the Bible, the promises of God's love, and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, considered in its various branches, express the riches of God's eternal grace and love, while his covenant characters and names are the outlets of rich and saving mercy. God has constituted himself our covenant God and Father, and sovereignly taken upon himself vast and momentous responsibilities. The word responsibility in relation to God is, I know, a very strong one; but the promise of God is strong, and the solemn oath with which he interposed himself can never be violated. I will be a God to thee for ever, and will do all that thy circumstances require me to do. He is first their covenant God, and then their gracious and everlasting Father; and hence the Redeemer says to His brethren, by way of teaching them how to pray, "When ye pray, say, Our Father who art in heaven." Again, our God has been pleased to assume the title of a Saviour, calling himself by that important and blessed name Immanuel, which, being interpreted, is God with us. He was God with us in our flesh and in our world, to redeem us from guilt, and deserved curse and wrath, and He is God with us now for the purpose of blessing and guiding us continually. I might go further into the riches of grace as they are expressed in the names and titles of our Lord; but what I have said may perhaps be sufficient to introduce my subject this morning. How very blessed and important to the saints of God, who are strangers, and sojourners, and pilgrims here below, is this declaration,—*"The Lord—i.e., Jehovah—shall guide thee continually."*

In offering a few observations on our text this morning, I will first try to show *what it implies*, and then explain, if I can, *the great fact which it expresses*.

I. In the first place, let us look at some important facts which I think the text implies: "The Lord shall guide thee continually." I will try to fix your attention for a few minutes upon a few points which I think will

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be profitable to all our minds. The text implies, in the first place, that the *safety and salvation of God's people are important*. I hope we shall be able to bring our thoughts to this subject, for we need the consolation and comfort it is calculated to afford. It is a blessed truth that our salvation and security are important to all parties concerned? Why, it is so in some respects to the devil himself; but I will not go out of the way this morning to preach him. Your safety is important to God, and to all his angels in heaven. It is important to all the glorified above; for, listen, my friends, they without you cannot be made perfect. The spirits of the just ones before the throne require your presence in heaven, and also the presence there of all the chosen of God; for without the feeble sheep and lambs who are now on earth, the flock of Jesus Christ above cannot be complete. And hence the importance of their salvation and the necessity that God should guide them continually. Whatever love produces is important to love, is an observation which will hold here on earth, and even apply to creatures; but let us attend to divine things. Whatever the love of God produces is important to the God of love. He produces vital religion, true Christianity, a good hope, those tears of repentance which fill your eyes, that spiritual state of things in which you exist, and all that experience which savingly distinguishes you from the rest of mankind. Hence we read of a divine bottle for the tears which love produces, and that God will fulfil the desire of them that fear him, and hear and accept their sighs and groans. Now, my dear friends, if your groans are acceptable to God, and your tears are, so to speak, bottled in heaven; if your thoughts are of so much importance that they are registered on high, (for there is a book of remembrance written for them that fear the Lord and that think upon his name) and if the Bible is God's word, and therefore divinely true, then, is it not a fact that your person and the whole of your salvation are important matters—so important indeed that God looks upon you in this desert place and waste-howling wilderness, and says, for your comfort, "I will guide you continually." My friends, if it were not so, God would not have charged himself with the guidance of your souls through this world; but He has taken that business into his own hands, and constituted himself responsible for your safety, and hence his eye is continually upon you, and influence from himself is ever in some way affecting you.

" His honour is engaged to save
The meanest of His sheep :
All that His heavenly Father gave
His hands securely keep."

Things, places, and persons, are important in proportion as they are interested in God, or God is interested in them. Places are important in proportion as God is interested in them, and I will mention three or four. There is, first, Mount Sinai. There God's holy law was given, and God appeared as Israel's King and God. Calvary is another important spot. And its importance is derived from the fact that the God-man sweat, and bled, and suffered, and died there; and did that work there by which we are for ever saved, and which will fill heaven and eternity with adoration. And then, again, Zion is important, and its importance comes from the fact that God is interested therein. What is it that makes a chapel divinely important? The spire, if there happens to be one? The organ? The choir? Or is it important because it contains a crowded, a fashionable, an intellectual and a wealthy congregation? Oh, no; that which makes places of worship spiritually important is the fact that God is there. And, then, heaven is what it is from the fact that God is there. Now, you may apply these observations, not only to things and places, but to persons. The nearer a person is to God, the more important he is. If God is lovingly interested in an individual, the life and preservation of that individual are sacred facts. God is interested in all human creatures. Yes; but he is not *alike* interested in all, and therefore turn your attention to the regenerated, or the newborn man and woman, to the children of the living God. You are more or less deeply

interested in the dear little children that belong to your friends and neighbours. They are interesting creatures, and you love them. You take an interest in them ; but that interest is shallow and weak compared with your interest in your own beloved ones. Now, though God is interested in all the creatures of his hand and power, there are the creatures of his *heart* ; new creatures ; beings who are God's dear children, and concerning whom he says, "Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee." The God of heaven calls you precious, and you call him so, which we are not surprised at ; but that he should so speak of you is marvellous indeed. So precious are you to God, and so deeply interested is he in you, that he cannot afford to lose you, nor to allow you to wander alone through this mazy world, it being so full of difficulties, and dangers, and death. God says, Dear child, you shall live for ever, and never perish, nor be destroyed ; and as you cannot find your way alone, and heaven is to receive you, and your name is written in the book of life, I will take upon myself the responsibility of saving and guiding you day by day. I will guide thee continually by my counsel, and afterwards, I will receive thee to glory. Oh, Christian brethren, hold fast your privileges, if you can. Let them not slip out of the hands of your faith, and be not tortured and tormented by the observations which are made on the right hand and on the left, about the high doctrines of divine grace. It is the will of our heavenly Father that we should have strong consolation, and when I see that the great Jehovah is guiding a number of men and women in a saving way through this mazy world, I come to the conclusion at once that the life of those people is dear and important to him ; otherwise he would not come down to guide them, nor would he spread his wings over them to cover them all the day long. I know you feel your own personal insignificance, vileness, and sinfulness. I feel them, we all feel them ; and that feeling increases in strength, as days, and weeks, and years increase ; for twenty years ago we did not so deeply realize those facts as we do to-day ; but whilst these are facts, and painful ones, there is much more connected with our salvation. Our God accounts us precious, and the great Jehovah looks upon us with complacency and delight, and if he is pleased to give us names better than of sons and of daughters, let us bless his name. If he is pleased to call us great, or to speak of our life and career through the world as important matters, let us adore his grace if we can. It is ours, perhaps, to hang down our heads in shame sometimes, and confess our own insignificance and vileness ; but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, and mount up as well as sink down—they shall mount up with wings as eagles, run without weariness, and walk without fainting. Well, then, Christian brethren, you see, if these positions be true, that your life is precious, and your safety important, and therefore God says, "I will guide thee continually." Now, observe that you are redeemed men and women. I speak of course to the people of God ; redeemed by the precious blood of Christ ; and, further, you have been regenerated by the Spirit of God. Imagine that, having been redeemed and regenerated, you were left alone in this wide world of ours, that God left you to shift for yourselves in the midst of these perplexing and bewildering scenes ! Why, then, redemption's work would all be, as far as your glorification was concerned, in vain, and your regeneration would terminate in nothing ; but having redeemed you by his blood, and quickened you by his grace and Spirit, Christ comes and says to you in his word, It is my intention to have you in heaven, to crown you with glory and honour there, and that you shall enter into everlasting rest ; and since that is my intention, "I will guide thee continually." Thus, friends, we arrive at the conclusion that salvation is certain. I do not know what there is in this proposition, or in the fact which it expresses, so terrible and dreadful ; and yet the truth that salvation is divinely and absolutely certain is represented as a very dreadful affair—something that everybody ought to shudder at. We are told that such a doctrine, or a belief therein, will lead persons to live licentiously

and loosely. Persons who talk in that way are, I fear, strangers to the grace of God, and to the God of all grace. If God works, he works in a manner that is worthy of himself; and I ask the question here, in connection with this subject, Is not our Guide infallible? I ask the question, and leave it on the minds of all my hearers whether they accept these positions or not—Is not our Guide infallible? Is He a Saviour? Is He a Shepherd? He is infallible. Is He a Leader, a Guide? He is competent to lead souls through this world to the better country; for his power and wisdom are divine and perfect. As a Guide he knows the way, and obtains the will, and the affections, and the faith of his followers. He attracts all his followers and brings their souls and minds into sweet subjection to himself, and will never lose either himself or the people he is leading. He speaks authoritatively and powerfully when he says, follow me here and follow me there. "This is the way; walk ye in it." Soon, and perhaps by some sudden stroke, your journey will end, and the tie that holds soul and body together having been snapped by the hand of God, you will, ere you are aware, find yourself with him in heaven, in a better world, in everlasting rest and joy; for there can be no disappointment here, since God is our guide—there can be no failure here, since he that guides you bought you with his blood, and represents you now before the throne of eternal glory. I believe every pilgrim's journey is arranged, and his arrival in heaven is timed. We are expected there. There is not an angel of God in heaven but what expects us; for did they not sing when we repented of sin under the grace of God the Holy Spirit. "Verily I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." They sang when you repented and shed tears of godly sorrow, and ever since that wondrous moment they have believed that you would reach heaven, and are expecting you in that world of eternal glory (for they are believers in the final perseverance of the saints.) By-and-bye the clock will strike the hour appointed and registered by God—the clock will strike, and the blow of death will fall, the last blow and the best that we shall ever feel, and that will set our ransomed spirits eternally free; and then shall we be for ever with the Lord, to bless and adore the riches of his wisdom in guiding us continually through this waste howling, wilderness.

I might add a few more thoughts to these on this part of our subject, but time is going, and therefore we will notice, secondly, that the text implies the *importance of the character of God's people*. Now, if, in the estimation of my hearers I have been soaring a little, I am about to come down, not into matters of uncertainty, for I shall always keep out of them in connection with religion, but to matters of experience, or rather, of practice. "The Lord shall guide thee continually." Wherefore? Because the public or outward walk and conversation of His people are divinely important. You observe, beloved hearers, that if God had simply decreed that we should have heaven without regard to our character, or our walk through, and our public reputation, in this world, we might have lived and walked anywhere and anyhow, but that decree is not all in connection with our salvation. It is a fact that salvation is of divine decree, and that God's decree shall stand for ever, and be eternally and honourably fulfilled, and that heaven shall therefore receive all the objects of His love; but it is also a fact that He has redeemed us from all iniquity, and that He purifies unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works; and, therefore, having respect to the character, and reputation, and general walk and conversation of his people, he says, "I will guide thee continually." Is this necessary, O God? We shall be sure to be saved, and must reach heaven. Our reputation here is of no particular importance or consequence. Yes, says God, it is; it is of great importance and consequence to me, and, therefore, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. I will guard thee all the day long, and guide thee continually. Hence David says, speaking of Christ as a shepherd and a guide, "He leadeth me in paths of righteousness, for His name's sake." We have not only a righteous heaven, and a righteous

birth, and a righteous life: there are righteous paths for righteous people to walk in; so that you see it is righteousness all the way through. He leads them in paths of righteousness. I believe our God leads his people in paths of doctrinal righteousness, and that so far as a saint is in error, he is walking in unrighteousness, and is not led by God; for Christ leads his people by his Spirit in paths of doctrinal truth. He leads also in paths of experimental, and practical, and circumstantial righteousness. The world know nothing of God or His grace beyond what they see in the walk and conversation of His followers. My friends, the world invert God's order of things. They judge the Bible by professors of religion, and God by his followers. This is inverting God's order of things. Looking at the conversation of the people of God, if a professor of religion lives loosely and intemperately, and in a worldly and sinful manner, they immediately conclude the Bible is not a book of facts, but a cunningly-devised fable, and that God is not what he is represented to be. Now our God says, I will guide them continually, for their walk through this world is of importance to Me. I will only add here, that if a saint can live in sin, and worldliness, and intimacy with the enemies of Jesus Christ, he is to me a most inexplicable character. That is all I will now say about it. If you want such a character explained, you must go to another than myself, for I do not know how a believer can live in sin. I know that He can fall into it, become defiled by it, groan and weep under it, and how he can be carried away and held fast thereby; but I do not know how he can live in sympathy therewith. I say I do not believe it. And, then, again, with regard to the world, how can a child of God live serenely and happily in a state of worldliness? "Are you never worldly, sir?" Yes. And what then? I trust I realize the fact, thank God! When a spirit of worldliness creeps over the regenerated mind like a withering wind, and burns up every green thing, leaving one's poor spirit barren, and desolate, and sterile,—thank God, if there is, generally speaking, life enough in the soul to realize the existence of such a terrible state of things. If that is the case, you are not wholly left by God. He is still with you, if you realize your condition at such a time. Thus, the character and conversation of God's people are important, and this fact is implied in our text—"And the Lord shall guide thee continually."

Now let us pass on and notice, the text implies that *God himself will choose our way*. The Lord shall guide thee continually; then He shall choose the path, else He would not be our guide. If we were permitted to tell Him what paths we should like to walk in, and if He suffered Himself to be governed and controlled by our wishes and desires, then I could see no meaning in my text: "And the Lord shall guide thee continually." My beloved friends, He that has loved you with an everlasting love has a right to choose your way. He that died to put away your sin, and that did by death redeem you, has a right to lead you home to heaven; and He that arrested you by His grace, and regenerated you by His Spirit, has a right to do as He pleases with you during your pilgrimage here. This is an experimental point. Most of us should have been elsewhere this morning had we had our own way. I do not know whether I should have been in the pulpit at Chadwell-street had I had my own way, and I do not know whether a single person in the house of God this morning would have been in Mount Zion Chapel, Chadwell-street, had he had his own way. You wanted to be in such a position, and in another place. The fact is, we are here,—here by the will and leadings of God, and ought we not to say with adoring gratitude, that God having guided us, we are where we are. I do not mean to say that the place is so excellent, or that the preaching is anything particular; but, looking at the fact that our frequent and bitter disappointments have forced us into courses and paths which have resulted in our sitting at His feet this morning, let us adoringly say: "The Lord has guided us until the present moment." Yes; "the Lord shall guide thee continually." He chooses the way and walks before His people, and leads them on—and very blessed indeed it is when they can say,

"Though dark be my way, since Thou art my Guide,
'Tis mine to obey, 'tis Thine to provide!"

for He makes the way and goes before. May God give every one an obedient will, and bring his mind, affections, and feelings into sweet subjection to himself. Let us never forget that the journey is short, that life is brief, that eternity is near, that the rest above is unbroken and eternal, and that infinite wisdom and love are our guide. Whilst God guides his people he is influenced by his own love, and knowledge, and infinite wisdom. We look upon the surface of the path in which we walk, and are discontented and dissatisfied. Believe, my brother, that there are depths of Divine wisdom as there are of Divine mercy. If you could take as wide a view of things as your God takes of them, and comprehend the whole of your life and all the circumstances thereof, then you would thoroughly acquiesce in the arrangements of your Father, and fall in adoring gratitude before Him, and bless Him, that you are where you are, and what you are. "The Lord shall guide thee continually," and, therefore, He chooses the way for His people.

There is another word in the text which ought not to be passed over, and that is the word "*continually*." His influence is incessant and uninterrupted. "The Lord shall guide thee continually." Suppose our God suspended His gracious and saving influences for an hour. What then? We should all sink into destruction. Suppose our God absented Himself from His travelling children for an hour, and left His church alone for that short period in this dangerous and dying world, He would then lose every one. Why, you take a hard view of the world, of sin, and of enemies. It is solemnly true, however. I believe, in the very depths of my heart, that if God suspended his blessing and absented Himself from this world for only an hour, or from the church on earth, the world would swallow up the saints, and God would lose his own; and, therefore, "The Lord shall guide thee continually." And the operations of our God as a guide are felt everywhere. All in heaven, all in hell, and all in this world are influenced by the fact that God is guiding his people. The church of God is so dear to him, that in guiding and making a way for them through time, He influences kings, and noblemen, and merchants, and tradesmen; aye, that all the world are directly or indirectly influenced by God's guidance of a beloved people through it. Kings—why, our guide is King of kings, and they cannot do as they would. God says, "There shall be a way for my saints," and, therefore, He restrains or constrains them. Noblemen—they to fulfil their wills and tastes may resolve to purchase estates in such places, and build mansions, and bring large establishments into existence therein, and in doing this it is necessary that a number of hands should be employed, and some of them may be the saints of the Most High. Our God takes advantage of the will and the purposes of the rich, even in relation to particular lands or portions of the country. There are saints of God there, and all things work together for their good. All, directly or indirectly, are overruled by the influence of this fact. Well, He has guided us thus far. Thus far we've proved the promise good—"I will guide thee continually." I do not think I ought to dismiss this part of my subject without just observing that *implicit faith and trust in God are glorifying to him*. You say, that is a fact; but faith is the gift of God. I have never ignored this. I cannot do so. I know it is the gift of God, and that without His blessing it cannot be vigorous, nor exercise itself confidently upon His Word, His fulness, and His faithfulness. Nevertheless, implicit faith and trust are glorifying to Him. "I will guide thee continually." Amen, O Lord, here I am; take my heart, my hand, my head, my home, my family, and all my concerns, and arrange for me, O Thou great Jehovah. Can we thus surrender ourselves and all we have to our Covenant God and Father, and gracious Guide? Recklessness and carelessness are black sins and crimes; but implicit trust and confidence in God are heavenly virtues or graces; and if God means what he says, "I will guide thee continually," then our immoderate carking care is needless, useless, and pernicious. It is needless, for He cares

for us, and there is no room for immoderate care in God's government, and I wish there were not in our bosoms. It is useless ; for it fulfils no profitable purpose, and accomplishes no good design. The mind is vexed and chafed, day by day, and month by month ; and what for ? Without any result, but pain and dissatisfaction on our part. Not only is it needless and useless, it is insulting and offensive to God ; and it must be so in the highest degree. Our God has said, "I care for you ; I will guide you, and that continually," yet we want to take the reins or the rudder into our own hands. Such a state of mind is insulting to God, and offensive to His infinite Majesty. O for a stronger, steadier faith, to cast ourselves intelligently and believingly into His Almighty arms, or throw ourselves flat, as it were, upon His will and operation, rejoicing in the fact that He will guide us continually.

II. The truth expressed. It is a Divine fact and well attested ; for everyone in heaven is prepared to prove, and, indeed, his glorification does prove, that the promise-making is a promise-fulfilling God. He guides His people *by His Spirit*. I should like, if time permitted, to dwell upon this point. He guides His people by His Spirit into all truth, into nothing but the truth, and gives that measure of knowledge which is essential to their salvation. He shall guide you into all truth ; and surely, during the first stage of our Christian experience, He guided us through labyrinths of errors and works of our own. Sometimes we were ready to give up truth altogether, then we grasped it again, but thought we should never see daylight, nor God, and never have salvation ; and we resolved, and tried, and schemed ; but God's eye was upon us all the time, and at length we were sweetly conducted into the mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ, and helped to cast our guilty, wretched, and filthy souls, upon His blood and righteousness for all. "The Lord shall guide thee continually." Since that time we have lived in the midst of errors, and our minds have sometimes been entangled, and I may just say here that I believe we are living in very serious and solemn times. There never were so many dangerous, poisonous, and plausible errors in existence, I think, as in the day in which we live. Everybody has something to say about God, and religion, and doctrine, and many of God's dear people are more than a little perplexed ; many who are honest stumble, and the unwary and somewhat unstable are very seriously and solemnly bewildered. To-day I deeply feel the importance of that prayer—

"Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim through this barren land ;"

which I refer to doctrinal, as well as to circumstantial matters.

"I am weak, but Thou art mighty ;
Hold me with Thy powerful hand."

Oh there are rocks and quicksands about us, my friends ; and without a heavenly and Divine Pilot, we shall run upon them and be damaged, hence—"I will guide thee continually." He guides His people *by His Word*. Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. "Oh, bless His name, it is by the light of His Word that we see the way, and walk therein. By His Word we see in a measure what we are, and whose we are, and in what relation God stands to our souls. O for greater faith in the Word of Truth, that we may follow the dictates of heavenly wisdom in our way to our heavenly home ! He guides us by *His Providence*. He makes, perpetuates, or changes the way by making it crooked. We were going on comfortably, and travelling smoothly, but suddenly there was a turning in the road, and we went off the moss, and walked among thorns and upon flints, and He said ; "This is the way, walk ye in it." "The Lord shall guide thee continually." Would it not have been better had we walked in ease ? Would it not have been better had we lived under circumstances that were smooth and pleasant ? Let infinite wisdom decide. Let the God that made us, and loves us, and bought us, lead.

"This is the way, walk ye in it." If two, or three, or more ways seem to meet and unite, and you stand still and hesitate, and wonder what the will of God is, and which way you should take, do not consult your own hearts first. I will not if I can help it; for "he that trusteth to his own heart is a fool." Depend upon it, if we become our own guides, we shall take the road that is wrong. No; let the Lord be your guide. What are we to do? Drop down on your knees, when difficulties and perplexities are before you, and say:—

"Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrim through this barren land."

I might proceed with the subject, but time is gone. *Jesus Christ is the example of his people*, and we are also followers of them who through faith and patience now inherit the promises. As to the evidence that we have been guided by God, take only two or three thoughts. Has the Lord been our guide? One thing is certain if you are in the vital way to heaven, and are walking and living in Jesus Christ; if God had not guided and blessed you, you had never been there. That is something. Then, again, you are not walking in the way that you planned for yourselves, but in that which God has planned for you. This we have already dwelt upon; and then in the next place, you are still followers of God as dear children—are you not? "I do not know," you say; "I do not know whether I am a follower of God or not." I cannot tell. One thing I can say, either God or the devil is your guide, for there are but two leaders, as there are only two ways through life. There is a broad way and a narrow one, a straight way and a crooked one. The devil leads millions in the broad and crooked way; and Christ leads his people in the straight and narrow one. You are not in the broad way—you know you are not. You know that you are not a follower of the devil, and that He is not your lord, and ruler, and master. However, I will put it before you in this strong way—If you are going down to hell and eternal darkness, the love of Christ constrains you. That is putting it in a strong form, is it not? It is the name of Christ that draws you, and the love of Christ that constrains you. There is, in your estimation, more in Christ's name than there is in anything else you know; and, following that name, are you going down to hell! Is it not absurd? Is it not worse than absurd? Is it not wicked and blasphemous?—No; if his name is precious, and His love constrains you,—the way may be steep, and rough, and thorny, it leads to eternal day; for "the Lord shall guide thee continually," and the attractions of Immanuel's name have never drawn a sinner into darkness and despair. Amen.

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SPIRITUAL RECEPTION, RETENTION & REPENTANCE.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, 10th APRIL, 1887.

"Remember, therefore, how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent."—Revelation iii. 3.

We have a whole flood of Divine revelation in the word of God, and certain branches of it are especially important and precious to the believer. Among other facts, we are assured that no Scripture is of any private interpretation. That is information from God Himself, and such information as cannot fail to bring a measure of consolation into the heart. Therefore the promises which were given to Abraham and to Jacob are not to be limited to their persons, their circumstances, or their lives. If we limit those promises to them, they have no force whatever to-day, they have no meaning for us, and it will do us no good to read them, nor benefit us to meditate upon them. No scripture, however, is of any private interpretation; and therefore the promises which were given by God to Jacob, are fresh and green to-day, and are applicable to the saints of God at the present time. How sweet and encouraging is this fact, especially when we think of that important promise, "I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest." "And again it is said, "I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." Yes, the family of God is one family; and what one saint requires in connection with salvation, all need, and the promises which were given to Old Testament believers are also the spiritual property of those under the Gospel dispensation. Hence, as God said to Jacob that He would be with him in all places whithersoever he might go, He was, according to His promise, always with that good man, and Jacob is with His good and gracious God now.

But the promise is being gradually and progressively fulfilled at the present time, and no man received sweeter fulfilment of it than did that disciple whom Jesus loved. The Master had told Peter that He should be crucified, that one should gird Him and carry Him whither He would not. Immediately afterwards Peter, under the influence of the flesh, said, "Lord, and what shall this man do?" He is the youngest of us all, he leaned upon thy breast at supper time, thou art apparently exceedingly intimate and familiar with him; it has sometimes occurred to our minds that something special in the future belongs to him. "What shall this man do?" Jesus saith unto him, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou Me." It is important that we should know and attend to our duty at all times. There was a certain sphere, within which Peter had a right to move, but beyond it he

had no right whatever either to stand or to speak. "The secret things belong unto the Lord or God ; but things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever." John did tarry till the Lord came, that is, until the destruction of Jerusalem ; and by the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ we are frequently to understand the destruction of that city. Satan is a cunning foe, but I think wisdom is too great an excellency to be ascribed to him. His knowledge is very deep and comprehensive, and his cunning is wonderful, and I have no doubt that he was quite confident that if He could get John banished to the Isle of Patmos his apostolic career would be ended ; he was banished ; but if his mouth was stopped, his usefulness did not cease. We are told by John, that he found himself on several occasions especially, in a very happy and sweet frame of mind, and he had not been long on the barren island before he was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard the voice of one that spake, and turning round to see the speaker, he was favoured with a glorious view of his beloved Lord and Master, and hours of holy and heavenly intercourse, and communion, and fellowship, between Christ and His dear John passed away, and John saw, in a marvellous manner, the whole of the future of time.

The words of our text were addressed to the Church of Christ at Sardis, and the Lord said, " Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die ; for I have not found thy works perfect before God." " Remember, therefore, how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast and repent." Whatever may have been the condition of the Church at Sardis, I am perfectly sure that the words of the text will apply to the people of God at the present time, and perhaps in this place they will come home to the people ; and therefore I feel no difficulty in reading them to you this morning. Now I purpose endeavouring to look at the words as they stand ; they naturally divide themselves into three points : Divine *reception* of something spiritual, *retention* of that which is received, and *repentance* enjoined upon the Church of God for back-sliding and departing in any measure.

In the first place, let us look at *the spiritual reception indicated*. " Remember, therefore, how thou hast received and heard." Let us try to remember *what* we have received, if we have received anything, and let us come down to the text, and try to bear in mind *how* we received it, and then let us look at the *exhortation*. Now, in the first place, a few remarks upon *what is received* by the saints of God. Are we saints ? If so, we have received something, we have received much from God ; and if we are saints, and have received much from God, we are marvellously distinguished thereby from our fellow creatures, for the grace of God in the heart is something which cannot be concealed. It is said of Jesus Christ, that he could not be hid ; and if Christ is formed in our hearts the hope of glory, it will be impossible for us to conceal our religion for any length of time. What is received, therefore, by the poor sinner ? The word " receive " is rather frequently applied to blindness. " What wilt thou that I should do unto thee ? " " Lord, that I might receive my sight ; " and the great Physician said, " Go thy way : thy faith hath made thee whole ; " and immediately he received his sight ; and therefore

I put these two points before you ; first, life, and secondly, light. First, life is received into the heart from God, and then the eyes are opened. "O sir, the eyes are opened before life is received into the heart." Do you think so ? Do not you think that life is the first blessing that God ever communicates to the soul ? He said, "If any man have ears to hear, let him hear." Now, the dead have no ears to hear. Life is communicated to the heart, and the hearing ear is at once given. Life is communicated to the heart, and the blind eyes are at once opened, and if there is a little life in the soul, we shall be sure to pray for more and clearer light. Remember, therefore, what you have received. You have a life which is peculiar to the believer. You are the possessors of principles which Adam, before he fell, was a stranger to, and of realities which the angels of God know, experimentally, nothing of. They are learning of you. They are, if I may so speak, sitting at the feet of the saints, or at all events, they are standing before true believers ; for we read thus, "To the intent, that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church, the manifold wisdom of God." They know nothing experimentally about repentance, but they see its fruits and effects in penitent sinners. They know nothing experimentally about pardon, for they never committed a sin, their names were never stained, their consciences—I suppose they have some such power—were never stung or pierced. Angels are strangers to your experience, as really so as is the ungodly world. The ungodly world sees the fruit and effects of the grace of God in your heart, and they hate what they see. The angels of God see the fruits and effects of God's grace in your heart, and they love what they behold ; but they never felt as you have felt, and therefore the words of the Master are very important indeed. "Remember, therefore, how thou hast received and heard." But what is received, and what does Jesus Christ here more especially refer to ? To God's eternal truth, to the glorious and precious word of Jehovah. Remember what in that respect you have received. Have you received the truth of God in the love of it, received it for its own sake, in connection with its own special and peculiar power ? If so, you are a peculiar person, you belong to a peculiar people, and are interested in the deepest and richest love of God, only there are times and seasons when we backslide ; and then we hold, as it were, rather loosely the great facts which have at times been so sweet and precious to us. Hence the importance of the exhortation,—“Remember, therefore, how thou hast received and heard.”

There are many systems floating about in the day in which we live, and there are thousands of open mouths and ears, perfectly ready to receive and imbibe those systems. No matter what systems are afloat, and what religious theories are launched, there have always been persons found quite ready to adopt them, and imbibe them, and to shape their life and conversation according to them. I am praying that I may know the truth, and nothing but the truth, and that I may be brought to love it, and to love it intensely and increasingly. "Lo ! here is Christ, and lo ! there is Christ," are words which may be heard anywhere and everywhere, and that almost every day in our life, for there are lords many, and gods many, but there is only one Christ who belongs to God, and only one Christ who is

formed in the heart, the hope of eternal glory. Has he been formed in your heart and mine? A whole Christ, not *a* Christ, but *the* Christ, the Christ of God, that Christ on whom Jehovah leans, and in whom He puts His trust. I think I am right in expressing myself thus—that Christ in whom Jehovah puts His trust, on whom He leans, His delight, His darling, His chosen, His elect—has that Christ been formed in your heart and mine? If so, we have received the Word of Truth; for just as the melted wax receives the impression of the seal that is placed upon it, and just as the impression made upon the wax remains thereon, so, when the Word of God was applied to your softened hearts, holding, as it did, the image of the Saviour, the image of Christ was stamped upon your hearts, which were thus prepared to receive it, and there it is to be found to-day; and since the work of God can never be undone, the work of the Holy Spirit can never be nullified; Christ formed in you, the hope of glory, will remain there; though now it is sometimes covered with corruption, and guilt, and sin, still it is there, and will remain there for ever and ever. Sometimes it will be so dark that you cannot see it, and you question the reality of your religion, but “if we believe not, yet He abideth faithful; He cannot deny Himself.” I have been trying to preach the Gospel for many years, and some time ago, a friend hearing me preach, who heard me when I was a youth of between nineteen and twenty,—for I began to preach when I was, I think, about nineteen years of age—said, “Why, you preach the same Gospel now that you preached at Mount Bures and Bungay!” I replied, “Well, my friend, it would be strange if I did not preach the same Gospel, for I never learned another. I never knew another, God has been revealed another to me. I have never loved another, and I have never leaned or rested upon, or confided in another. The Gospel of the grace of God which I received at first, I love to-day, and I feel that if the denomination of which I am a member should melt away and disappear, I should retain, as well as possible, the glorious Gospel of the blessed God. But let us pass on, as time is advancing, for I am thinking of that sweet portion of the 5th of Romans. “And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.” What have we received? Life and light. What have we received? The truth of God, and Christ Jesus Himself, in connection with the truth. What have we received? The atonement. How have we received that? We will speak on that point presently. Where have we received it? Not merely into our heads, but into our hearts. It forms, not merely an article of our creed, but it constitutes the ground and principle of our immortal spiritual life, and it fills our souls; for just as a lump of lead sufficiently large to fill a basin, would, if dropped into the basin, when filled with water, force all the water out, and make way for itself, and remain there afterwards, so the atonement, when dropped into the heart of a sinner, by it guilt is forced out, the pain ceases, the bitterness departs, and the sacred pleasure remains, and the heart, instead of being filled with that which will condemn and occasion curse for ever, is filled with the peace of God which passeth all understanding. What we have received is the atonement. And then “Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all

things." As, however, time is going, and we desire to get through the subject, let us pass on to another point.

Remember how thou hast received it, "*how* thou hast received and heard." How did we first of all receive the truth of God? I shall pass over the idea as to whether we were passive or active; I do not understand those matters. In the new birth, I speak positively; the sinner is passive in the hands of the Holy Spirit, divine life is dropped into the heart at a particular moment, which is perhaps unknown to every creature, and that state of glory which will be consummated above, is there and then commenced. Development follows. But how have we received and heard the truth? Did we receive it as judges? sit in judgment on the preacher, or his text, or his sermon, or his method of handling his subject? No, if what he said were the Word of God, and came through him, from God, into our hearts, we did not receive the truth as so many judges. Did we receive the Word of God as critics? Did we criticise almost every sentence that we received? Oh, just as the mighty river rolls on, and carried all before it, so, when the truth of God came into your heart and mine, it carried all opposition before it, and we had neither time nor disposition to criticise any portion thereof. It came so forcibly, and was so attended by a power, we could not resist, that it carried every objection before it, and though we had vowed and vowed again that we would never make a profession of religion, nor be classed, or numbered with those "meet'ners,"—some of you know what I mean by that—yet when the truth of God came, and entered with omnipotent power into our hearts, we had no idea of criticising either the men who believed it, or the great fact itself. Did we receive it as reasoners? This is a wonderful day for reasoners; and many a one says, I will not receive what does not square with my reason, and that which is contrary to it is to be rejected and disbelieved. How do we receive it then? From necessity. Now consider the matter—at this time of day we bless the Lord we could not help receiving, for we were compelled to do so from necessity—all over guilty we knew it, we saw it, we felt it, we groaned beneath the terrible load, and we trembled in the presence of a Holy God. We said in all sincerity,

"If our souls be sent to hell,
Thy righteous law approves it well."

and when the pardon came, and the Word of Divine forgiveness proceeded from God Himself, we received it with holy pleasure and heavenly joy, the load fell from our consciences, the burden was removed at once, and no criminal doomed to death, lying in his condemned cell, could feel more deeply on receiving a pardon, than we felt on receiving an assurance from God that our sins, which were many, were all forgiven us. The criminal would not criticise the pardon, nor make remarks upon the handwriting, neither would he find fault with the messenger that brought it from Her Majesty. The thing itself would be all to the criminal, and Divine forgiveness from our God is received by the sensible sinner with the deepest wonder, love, readiness and astonishment. Lord, the sinner exclaims, I am a leper, I am loathesomely unclean, I am gradually dying, and this disease must terminate in death sooner or later, and sooner, rather than

later, I think it will be. "If Thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." Having thus presented our leprous selves before Him, and declared our faith in His ability, we knelt in his presence and watched Him, and waited for His decision, and when He looked approvingly and smilingly, and said, "I will, be thou clean;"—remember how you heard that! Remember how you received that Divine assurance from the great Healer's lips. Or, taking the sinner as a bankrupt, as poor and unspeakably needy, having nothing to pay, with eternity before him, and nothing to enter into it with but guilt and damnation, and death; then observe the Saviour meeting him, and not only healing his soul, but dropping these words into his heart, "Things present, or things to come; all are your's; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." How did you receive that? The dying sinner, the poor bankrupt sinner, the guilty sinner, the lost sinner; oh, when such persons hear the Word of God for themselves, their feelings are indescribable indeed. So that it comes to this; when the Master says, "Remember how thou hast received and heard." We received the Word from necessity, as poor sinners lost and ruined; and thankfully and adoringly we received it, feeling that our former doubts had no good ground, for they carried us so far, we feared, at one time, that we should be sent to hell. Whilst we looked for hell, He gave us heaven, and whilst we expected to be cursed, His blessing fell upon us. Now, said the church's Master, I have not found your works perfect before God. Remember, therefore, what you have received, and remember how you have received it.

A few words only on *the exhortation*—"Remember." We cannot very well afford to lose sight of our conversion. I know the future is very important; but there is a vast importance attaching to the past also. If our dying day is an important day, our birthday was also important; and although we may not be able to say where we were born, nor just when we were born again, yet it is a fact that we have been born again, and it is also true that our religion, as to our experience, had a commencement. Let us, therefore, not forget the past in this respect, nor the fact that what we received from heaven, we received as from the grace of God. We did not receive it as a debt, nor because we wanted nor desired it, nor because we worked hard for it; but because it was God's good will and pleasure that we should receive the treasure that enriched us for Himself and for heaven, for ever and ever. I had nothing but what would have sunk me to hell when I received the religion of heaven, and I would remind all of you of the fact that you had nothing but what would have sunk you into eternal despair, when God laid His hand on your heart, and communicated life thereto. Remember it, brethren! Remember, how on hearing, you received the Word of God.

In the second place, what was then received *was to be retained*. "Hold fast and repent." Hold fast! why? Because, by doing this, we shall be distinguished from our fellow creatures. All men are alike as to state and condition in respect to sin. The grace of God makes a difference for eternity, and this difference is more or less visible, as we observed a little while ago. Moreover, hold fast that which we have received, safe I had almost said, from spiritual and moral putrefaction. You have heard of

decay, there are such things as decays in Christians; there is such a thing as deadness in connection with the religion of heaven. Grace is salt. "Have salt in yourselves." If we hold not fast the great truths of the gospel by which we were saved, and have been saved till now, we shall become corrupt, and weak, and withered. Take the man or the woman that gives up the veritable facts of religion, the real truths of God, that denies heartily and boldly what he or she professes to have received; show me such a man or such a woman, and I will try and keep my eye upon them, and expect that sooner or later terrible, dismal, perhaps revolting effects will flow from their departure from the truth of God. There is nothing but powerful truth that will hold fast the soul. Give up this point, and that, and the other point, and you become weak in proportion as mighty truth is surrendered and given up. "But you are in the minority, sir, and your views of religion are very unpopular." So was Christ, and so was His Gospel in His day. He was always unpopular, and He always will be unpopular. Noah was an unpopular man, those that were saved with him in the ark were unpopular; but the truth of God was in them and with them. Better, better, far better be in the minority and be saved, than to follow the multitude to do evil, and to sink into evil for ever at last. Hold fast that which you have received, remembering how you have received it. It will encourage others to do so if we do so. The Lord help us therefore in this respect. I have heard young people express themselves in a very characteristic manner in relation to persons who have changed their sentiments. "They used to speak very boldly and courageously of their creed—we are not quite prepared to disbelieve them, and yet we acknowledge that what they are doing, and have done, causes us to stumble very much;" to be sure it does. The eyes of the weak are upon us, my brother and sister—bear that in mind; the younger branches of the family are following you to heaven; they are genuine, and they are trying, some of them, to imitate you,—see that you are in the right way, that you are in a proper condition; carry all that is worth carrying with you, and drop nothing. If you drop something, and take no notice of it, they will begin to wonder why you threw away something that you have been carrying days, or weeks, or years; and if you cast it away, they will be induced to fear that there is not much in religion. Oh, the eyes of the weak and of the young are upon you. "Remember, therefore, how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast and repent." How long are we to hold fast? As long as we live. Show me something better than my religion, and convince me that it is so; show me something better than the Bible, bring something that is sweeter, more ennobling, more dignifying, and more elevating to the mind than the truth of God, and I will give up the Bible. I want the best, I must have the best; and I have the best! What I, through grace believe, is the best, and what I feel is the best; therefore,

"Should all the forms that men devise,
Assault my faith with treach'rous art;
I'd call them vanity and lies,
And bind the Gospel to my heart."

"Hold fast and repent." In the parlour, hold fast there; children are

looking at you, and listening to you. In the shop, do not give it up there. In the market, hold fast there; and in just those forms should you present it in other places, and on other occasions. And hold it fast in the house. Hold it fast in solitude, and hold it fast in society. Hold it fast in health and in sickness. Some things it may be proper and advisable to surrender under certain circumstances, but buy the truth at any price, and sell it at no price whatever.

Thirdly, *repentance* is referred to, for we are so prone to backsliding. Our dear Lord said, "Hold fast and repent," for you have given up certain points, or hold them very loosely. And what is repentance? Do you know the meaning of the word? Old writers, especially the Puritans, expressed themselves in a quaint and peculiar manner. One says, Repentance is the vomit of the soul. As sinners we drink down the poison of sin, and when repentance is given us, we vomit it up. When error is imbibed, poison is received. By repentance we vomit it up, so that to depart from the truth is to turn away from God; to repent, is to return; hence the Saviour says, as it were, You have backslidden with your hearts and with your feet. Now, I counsel you, remember how you have received and heard, hold fast according to your former experience, since what I first taught you was right, and it is proper that you should hold it fast. "Hold fast and repent;" this indicates a kind of remedy mentioned by the Lord Jesus Christ: but our time is gone. May our God give us clear views of His truth, and clear views of ourselves, and if in anything we be otherwise minded than we ought to be, may the Lord reveal even this unto us, for Christ's sake. Amen.

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CHRIST EXPOUNDING THE SCRIPTURES.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,
ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, 30th JANUARY, 1887.

"And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the scriptures, the things concerning Himself." Luke xxiv. 27.

SPIRITUALITY is one of the greatest and richest glories of the gospel dispensation. No material or architectural greatness or gorgeousness is required for the kingdom of heaven. The foundation of the church is spiritual, the church itself is spiritual, the Head of the church is spiritual, and the whole is animated by one Spirit from the foundation to the top-stone, or it will be so. Acceptable worship is a spiritual exercise, and the great Object of worship is a spiritual Being, and the religion of heaven is intended to spiritualize the mind. Hence the *Christian* experience of a believer, the battles he fights, the victories he wins, and the triumph he obtains in a dying hour are spiritual. His entrance into heaven will be spiritual, and his joy there will be spiritual for ever. We are therefore to separate as well as we can, all that is sinful, fleshly, and material from the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ. "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth." May it be yours and mine to be favoured with large measures of spiritual life and power; for whilst it is exceedingly easy to be carnal, it is, if one may speak for others, difficult to be spiritual. Yet it is most important that we should be spiritual in everything connected with the service of our God.

I make these remarks because the disciples and immediate followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the days of His flesh, had very carnal views of their Master, and of that kingdom which He came to establish. They regarded Him, correctly enough, as the Son of David, for He was truly his son; and they rightly regarded Him as the heir of his throne, for Christ was the heir to the throne of David. They thought, however, that He came for the purpose of rescuing them as a nation from all foreign powers, and restoring again the kingdom to Israel. When, however, He was crucified and buried, and even after He had risen from the dead and had been seen, Peter said, "I go a-fishing," and his brethren said, "We also go with thee." Peter's idea appears to me to have been something like this. Our Master has been crucified and was buried, and while it is true He is risen again, yet we shall see no more of Him; we are poor, and notwithstanding what He said as to our becoming fishers of men, and that we should be fed, yet I fear these words will not be fulfilled. As our money is spent, and we have no bread, we must return to our work for a living, and therefore I go a-fishing," and his brethren said, "We also go with thee;" and that night they caught nothing—and no

wonder, for they went without Divine direction. Jesus stood on the shore, but they knew not that it was Jesus. "He said, Children, have ye any meat? They answered Him, No. Cast the net on the right side of the ship and ye shall find." They had not their Master's authority for fishing the first time; but now they had it, and they were successful. When they went in their own spirit, they caught nothing; but when they cast the net into the sea at the bidding of their Master, they drew it to land full of great fishes. A fire was there, and fish laid thereon and bread. Who had made the fire? Their Master. Where did the fish come from? Not from the full net which they had drawn to shore. Their Lord had provided the fire, and the fish, and the bread, and He had prepared the meal for them, and therefore He said, Come and dine. You said yesterday that you would go a fishing, for your unbelief suggested that you would see me no more, and that I should not supply your wants according to My promise. Now come and dine, but not on the food which you have procured, or even dressed or prepared. But come and dine on what I have provided. I will make you fishers of men, and as the labourer is worthy of his hire, you shall have bread to eat, and raiment to wear.

The two disciples who left Jerusalem for the village of Emmaus were perhaps animated by a similar spirit, and as they walked towards the village the theme of their conversation was the crucifixion of their Master. What were they going to Emmaus for? I imagine they were under the influence of unbelief, and thought they had seen the last of Jesus. They had lost, or almost lost, their confidence, and hence they said, "We trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel." We thought so, but our thoughts were not correct; for He was crucified, and beside all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done. The Master, who had joined them, said, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken." Our Lord did not speak in anger when He called them fools. O fools, or foolish ones, for not believing all that the prophets have spoken; "ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory. And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

I desire to call your attention this morning to the words I have read, which are very comprehensive, and let that be our first thought. *The Saviour's exposition on this occasion was a most comprehensive one.* Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. This comprehensive exposition is not recorded. Several things are mentioned in the Word of God which I have been carnal enough at times to wish had been more fully recorded; and I have sometimes heartily wished that it had pleased the Holy Ghost to record this marvellous exposition of the Scriptures by our Lord. He that writes a letter is supposed to know the meaning of its contents, and as Jesus is the great author and substance of the Word of God, He certainly understands every portion thereof, and his exposition on this occasion must have been most instructive. We are sure it was so; for, whilst it appealed to their heads and enlightened them, it appealed also to their hearts, and warmed them. He opened their

understanding and poured light into it, and He reached their hearts and warmed them with a fire which was altogether His own. Expositions of Divine truth are sometimes wonderfully dry, when given even by great expositors and learned and eloquent men. They are addressed by man to the human eye or the ear, or they may go further and reach the understanding and judgment, but the heart is so mysterious a part of our constitution that it cannot be reached for spiritual good by any power but that of grace and God. Satan cannot reach the heart unless he is permitted. God, however, can always reach it, and put into it just what He pleases. It was not necessary that our Lord should, in order to warm their hearts, be seated on His throne. He was the risen Lord of the Church ; all power was in His hands ; and whilst this marvellous exposition was proceeding their hearts were touched and held fast in a mysterious manner by His spiritual power, and, having recognized Him subsequently, they said, The mystery is cleared up now. We understand the secret well enough. "Did not our hearts burn within us, whilst He talked with us by the way, and whilst He opened to us the Scriptures ?"

Let us, however, look at the comprehensiveness of the Saviour's exposition. Although we do not know its matter, we do know what portions He expounded, and that is what I mean by comprehensiveness here. He began at Moses and then went through the prophets, and, lest there should be any misunderstanding, the Holy Ghost has been careful to inform us that He went also into all the Scriptures ; and a little lower down we are told that all things that were written in the Psalms concerning Him should be fulfilled. One thing must not be lost sight of, and that is, the Scriptures that the Saviour expounded were those of the Old Testament, for the New was not then in existence. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, had not written their gospels ; the Holy Ghost had not been given ; the Day of Pentecost had not arrived. Saul of Tarsus, who is a very large writer in the New Testament, was then a Pharisee, and had not then been called by grace ; and the Epistles of John and others, and the Book of the Revelation, were not in existence. The Scriptures, therefore, which Jesus expounded were the Old Testament. And Christ said on another occasion :—"Search the Scriptures ; for in them ye think ye have eternal life ; and they are they which testify of me. Now let us glance at a few only of the many things in the Scriptures which concern our Lord. "Beginning at Moses, He expounded unto them the things that concerned Himself." Where did Moses begin ? He began with the creation of the world ; but we will pass over that, and consider the world as having been created, and man as having fallen ; for before the fall of man there was no revelation of a Mediator, and no promise of the Messiah. Immediately, however, after the fall of man another revelation commenced ; and there, I think, the Saviour began His exposition. What is the first thing Moses records about our Lord ? "And the Lord God said unto the serpent, I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed : it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." That was done, and the enmity commenced very early, and its raging power has continued until now. It prevailed in the days of Cain and Abel, in the days of Moses, in the days of Christ, and it exists even now.

“Water and fire maintain the fight,
Until the weaker dies.”

The spirit lusteth against the flesh, and the flesh against the spirit; and these are contrary the one to the other, so that we cannot do the things that we would. Well, did not our Lord touch upon the seed of the woman? If he began at Moses and pointed out the things which concerned Himself, He would say to Cleopas and his companion: Hear the word of God by Moses, for he wrote of Me. Influenced by the Spirit, Moses predicted that I should in due time appear on the earth as the seed of the woman, and that I should bruise the serpent's head, and that the serpent should bruise My heel: it was necessary that that word should be fulfilled. My heel was bruised, but the heel he wounded has bruised his head; for Christ has “destroyed principalities and powers.” We cannot tarry long in a place here. Christ, perhaps, then proceeded to the glorious ark, to righteous Noah, to the marvellous deluge, and to the miraculous salvation of an elect world. Elect! Yes; for the beasts, the birds, and the men and women were chosen, and they entered into the ark. It was a little world, a chosen world, a saved world, and a world that floated upon the bosom of the deluge in perfect safety with God. The ark had no rudder and no anchor, and it was not an open boat. No rain came through its roof, no water passed through its sides, and no one died therein; all were healthy and well. Our Lord would not tarry long, but, probably, He would refer to that matter as one of the things which concerned Himself. Then did He not discourse rapidly as no other being could possibly discourse upon the fact—“The bow shall be in the cloud, and I will look upon it;” and then, perhaps, he went from Moses to Isaiah. “For this is 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.” We cannot go further; but there are two other points in the writings of Moses on which He may have said a word. Abraham's ram, caught in a thicket by his horns, and his words to Isaac, “God will provide Himself a lamb.” As to Exodus? The paschal lamb, that wonderful ordinance of God, was most likely expounded. No doubt He showed that Christ was the antitypical Lamb, and that the cloudy pillar, the smitten rock, the falling manna concerned Him. They did all drink the same spiritual drink, for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ. Did Moses smite the Rock, and had that act no meaning? It was necessary it should be smitten, to typify the sorrows, sufferings, and wounds of Christ; and as the waters gushed from the rock when smitten, so salvation flowed from Christ's great person when He was smitten on the tree. “All things concerning Himself.” We might go further in the Book of Exodus, but time fails. In Leviticus there are shadows of priests, and altars, and a tabernacle, and sacrifices, and blood, and water, and oblations, all of which concerned our dear Lord. Coming to the Book of Numbers, and Moses is still the writer, we mention only one point, viz., the serpent of brass. “Set it upon a pole, and it shall come to pass that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.” “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up.” Perhaps these were the words he used when He

expounded that matter, which was one of the things that touched Himself; and Balaam also was led prophetically to speak of the Star which should come out of Jacob. O friends, search the Scriptures—they are mines of truth, and full of heavenly gold. We should like to have heard our Lord's exposition of those parts of the writings of Moses which represented things concerning Himself. What then about Deuteronomy? There is nothing there, or not much, containing things concerning Christ. Yes; the six cities of refuge, three on this side, and three on that side of Jordan, one of the most glorious types of our glorious Lord. We who have fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before us in the Gospel. What a flood of marvellous light came upon the minds of those two disciples as that glorious Expositor of the Word of God proceeded with his exposition. Well, I might go on to speak of Joshua leading the people over Jordan, the Ark of the Covenant carried before them, and the walls of Jericho, which fell down flat at the blast of the ram's horns. I might have spoken of Joshua as that strange person appeared to him saying, "Art thou for us or for our enemies?" who answered, "Nay, but as Captain of the host of the Lord am I now come." I might speak of Judges as containing things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ; but what do you think about Ruth? Would the Saviour touch upon Ruth, and Naomi, and Boaz, and so trace the birth of Christ's ancestor David? Well, then on through Samuel, speaking of the Stone and Shepherd of Israel. To Kings, Chronicles, and Ezra, and so on, for all the Old Testament, my brethren, is full of Christ. His eye, or His heart, or His hand appears on almost every page. "Beginning at Moses and rapidly passing through the Prophets and all the Scriptures, He expounded the things concerning Himself."

Then secondly, notice *the limitation*; for whilst the exposition was very comprehensive, it was also limited. He expounded all *things concerning Himself*. The exposition was full, but it all related to Himself. They did not then know that He was referring to Himself, but to the Messias; their eyes being holden that they should not know Him. Now as to the things concerning Himself. Would He begin with the creation? would He allude to that? Why not? In the beginning God made the heavens and the earth. Who is God? Did Christ the Son make the heavens and the earth? "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God; all things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made." Things concerning Himself. When the fall took place, perfection was lost, and man was plunged into darkness; Adam and Eve stood trembling and shaking, expecting the execution of that sentence, the meaning of which they did not understand. All at once a new scene was opened, and something else appeared in the midst of the darkness and the awful ruin; for a new state of things was revealed. God opened another door in heaven, and revealed another plan, the grand central object of which was the Messiah, the Son of God, the seed of the woman, whose name under this dispensation and in our lives and hearts is the Lord Jesus Christ. He was the grand central object after the fall. Are you afraid to sing the words of Kent:—

“Here Satan was nonpluss’d in what he had done ;
The fall wrought the channel where mercy should run.”

No thanks to sin, that we have mercy, or that we have any good whatever ; and yet our great and glorious God took advantage of the fall of man, and of the introduction of that abominable evil, sin, to reveal that greater state of things which He had in His mind, and to bring out of His bosom His everlastingly beloved Son ; and Jesus appeared amid the ruins. He expounded the things concerning Himself. The curse was over the ruined world, and Christ would say that it should in justice be so ; but look into the ruin that followed the fall, and you will see the Messiah, whose sufferings and death now astonish you. The promised One voluntarily took the sinner’s place, and engaged to bear the curse incurred by man, and “ought not Christ to have suffered these things therefore, and to enter into His glory?” The great, or rather the greatest object after the fall, bless God, was not the devil, not sin, not Adam ; but the second Adam, the Lord from heaven. Then comes redemption, and Christ is the greatest object here. Then comes another paradise, another garden, infinitely better than the former one, which was lost, and infinitely superior to the Adamic dispensation, and our dear Lord is all therein. Hence He limited His exposition to things that concerned Himself.

Let us notice in the third place, that the things the Saviour expounded *were vital to Himself, and to His people also*. If I had not found the word “ought” in connection with the suffering of incarnate God, I should never have used it. I should never have believed that it might be applied to the sufferings of Jesus. Ought not Christ,—the Christ you have known for three years, whose sermons you have listened to, and at whose feet you sat ; the Messiah, as you thought Him to be. Ought not that Messiah to have suffered what He did suffer ? Was there anything wrong in it on the part of God ? Everything was wrong on the part of the Jews, as His persecutors and murderers ; but was there anything unrighteous on the part of God or of Himself ? Were His sufferings wrong on His own part ? Was He not pure ? He was. Holy ? Yes. Then why did He suffer ? Because “the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquities of us all.” And since He agreed to bear them all, “ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory ?” You prepare a contract and bring it to me for my signature and seal : I read it, and if any parts of it are difficult, I ask for an explanation, in order that I may fully know what I am committing myself to. I read the document, all is explained to me, and I thoroughly understand it, and I sign it, and thereby bind myself to fulfil the conditions indicated therein, and ought I not to fulfil them ? Having given my name, have I not bound myself, and is not my fulfilment of the covenant a matter of vital importance to my name, and character, and reputation ? Did not Christ give His name ? and oh, let me speak with reverence and with love, did He not sign the covenant, and thereby bind himself to pay the debt ? Did He not ask in marriage union to himself, the church of God, although He knew and foresaw that she would be a poor bankrupt ? Did He do this with His eyes open ? Did He take the church which He knew would be ruined in Adam, from His Father, with the intention of

saving her, cleansing her, paying her debts, setting her free, rectifying her, and making her all she should be, and was He not bound to do it all? Thus, ought He not to have suffered? By way of leading their minds into this mystery, He, beginning at Moses and all the prophets and going through the Scriptures, said, as it were, I find, and you will find that the uniform tenor of the whole is that Christ was bound to suffer these things, and to enter into His glory. Yes, these things were vital to our Lord. He did as He pleased about giving us the promise: that was a matter of His own sovereign will. But having given us the promise, He is bound to fulfil it. He did as He pleased about entering into the council of peace and the covenant of grace, but having accepted it and pledged His word, He is bound to fulfil every part thereof; therefore,

“The weakest saint shall win the day,
Though death and hell obstruct the way.”

Fourthly, *this exposition was very suggestive.* Beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, and Scriptures. What does it suggest? Why not, only that Christ is everywhere in the Old Testament, but that Old Testament saints were just such believers as we of New Testament days are. In whom did Old Testament saints believe? In Christ. So do we. There are not two Christs, one for the old church, and another for the Gospel church. He is the corner-stone, which as you know, unites two walls together, and Jesus Christ is the corner stone that unites the Old Testament and the New. The prophets and the apostles, the Old Testament church, and the New Testament church, and thus there are not two bodies, but one. One faith, one Lord, one Spirit, one baptism, and one hope of your calling. The only difference between the two is this; they looked forward into the future by the light of the Old Testament, and saw Him coming; and we, in the light of the New Testament, look backwards, and see Him as He was when He was here on the earth.

“My faith looks back to see
The burdens Thou didst bear,
While hanging on the accursed tree;
And hopes her guilt was there.”

If old Abraham had sung those words, the alteration necessary for him would have related to time only, and would not have been great. My faith looks on to see the burden Thou shalt bear, when hanging on the accursed tree, my hopes all centre there. “Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it; and was glad. The old glorified saints of God looked right through the Old Testament into the New Testament times and saw Him coming, and the people of God of this dispensation look through the New Testament into the future and see Him coming again. By faith they saw Him in relation to His first coming, and now we see Him by faith, as to His second coming. Oh, what a glorious gospel we have! What glorious lessons we have for ourselves and our Sunday-schools! My brethren and sisters, the gospel of the blessed God is glorious indeed. We have the type in the Old Testament, and the Antitype in the New. The type beautifully sets forth the Antitype, and the Antitype explains the type. In the Old Testament we have the shadow of the Lamb, and in the New the Lamb Himself, or the Substance that

cast that shadow. Our brethren who lived thousands of years ago saw Christ in His shadow, but we see Him in substance; but the same Christ is seen by both parts of the people of God. It comes, therefore, to this, my brother, with regard to the type and the substance; here is the Rock itself, not the shadow of one; and eternal life, and not mere water flowing from the rock in the wilderness. Here is the true manna, the bread of life, which our heavenly Father has given, and which the former manna was a type of. Here is the brazen serpent lifted up, Christ the Mediator between God and man, the only saving sufferer for sin, and round about the pole of the Gospel, thousands of poor sin-bitten sinners are looking, and they feel the healing influence that emanates from the exalted Christ of God. Oh glorious exposition! May the spirit of it animate our hearts and minds all the days of our life. I wanted to have directed your attention to some other matters, but my time is gone.

As to the second coming of our Lord, just observe *that it will fulfil the New Testament as His first coming fulfilled the Old*. I am afraid my friends, we are not sufficiently earnest in our meditations upon the second coming of Jesus. His first coming was a Divine reality, an expected reality, and a reality which fulfilled the hopes of all who looked for Him. He has been the first time in accordance with Old Testament declaration. Well now, in the New Testament it is said, He will come again, and He is coming again too. And where are the things in the New Testament, which in this respect concern Him? Everywhere, but especially in the Book of the Revelation. I am getting to think that the book of the Revelation is a kind of summary of the whole. The things concerning Christ in the Old Testament and the New are all summarized here. He is the Priest and the King, and the rainbow is round about His head, and there is a river of water of life flowing from the throne of God and the Lamb. He is the Lamb who looks like one that has been slain, and here are the thousands of redeemed ones on Mount Zion. In the nineteenth chapter we read, "The Lord God omnipotent reigneth." and "the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready." Heaven and earth are passing away, and the word of the mighty angel is fulfilled that time shall be no more. Read the Revelation, it is full of things that concern the Lord Jesus Christ. And by and bye Christ will reach the last page of that book, and then the heavens will be drawn aside, the veil of the temple into which our Lord has entered, and our great High-priest will reappear and come the second time, without sin unto salvation; and as Aaron, having left the holiest of all, appeared before the congregation, lifted up his hands and blessed them, so our Lord will come forth and re-appear, and lift up His priestly hands, and finally bless all that are looking for His appearing. May you and I be looking for Him, and be found of Him in peace at last, for Christ's sake. Amen.

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THE SALT OF THE EARTH.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON SUNDAY EVENING, 12th JULY, 1874.

"Ye are the salt of the earth."—Matthew v. 13.

THE words of my text might be read in connection with the preceding verses of the chapter, in which we have a description of those characters which are truly blessed. Our dear Lord ascended the mountain, and said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven:" the "poor in spirit" are the salt of the earth. "Blessed are they that mourn:"—every spiritual mourner is a grain of salt upon the earth. "Blessed are the meek:"—the meek are the salt of the earth. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness:"—every one that thirsts after righteousness is a grain of spiritual and heavenly salt. "Blessed are the merciful:"—this character is a grain of heavenly salt. "Blessed are the pure in heart;" and "peacemakers" also are blessed men and women: and they are the salt of the earth. "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake;" for though the world heaps indignities upon believers, they are its subordinate preservers, and therefore the salt of the earth. "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake: rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you:"—ye are the salt of the earth.

Now I say my text might be read in connection with these facts; for the character of the people of God is described in the preceding verses, and made very prominent there by our Lord; and therefore, when it is asked, Who are the salt of the earth? let us answer, "The poor in spirit, holy mourners, the meek, the humble, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and the persecuted for righteousness' sake"—these, and these only, are the salt of the earth.

In looking at our text for a few minutes this evening, I purpose calling attention to it in the following order :—*First*, consider it relation to the saints of God themselves ; *secondly*, contemplate it relation to the world ; and *thirdly*, make one or two observations in relation to God himself, for if the people of God are the preservers of the world, they are a very peculiar people, and their peculiarities must have their source in God.

I.—In the first place, in relation to God's people, the saints of the most High are the salt of the world ; that is to say, they are the means of preserving the world from putrefaction, death, ruin, and destruction. The world will be preserved from destruction as long as there are saints therein, and when the Lord has fulfilled his purposes in relation to his saints, it will be destroyed ; but whilst the people of God are in the world, they fulfil a very important purpose, and amid all your doubts and fears, do not forget the important fact, that you are grains of heavenly salt in this poor, dying world.

I want to show in what respects the people of God are the salt of the earth. In the first place, they are so with respect to their life and presence here. God could, if he pleased, regenerate the heart and translate the person the very next minute into heaven. He could, if he pleased, give a meetness for glory, and the very next minute or hour, take him into his presence and eternal rest ; but our Lord said to his Father, in the seventeenth chapter of John, "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil." The world could not afford to lose the church ; for sinners could not live here without the saints. I do not know how many I have before me who are strangers to the things of God—there are some, I doubt not—and I am sure you are wondering what I mean. Well, I am simply expounding the word of God. You could not live in this poor dying world without the church of God, for although you heap contempt upon it, the church of God is the salt of the earth, and the world would fall into ruin and destruction, if the Lord were to remove all his children from it. The world could not afford to lose the saints of God, for it could not exist without the presence of God's dear people.

Let us tarry here a minute, and observe that this world is preserved because, in the first place, God is preparing his people for a better world. This world is the platform upon which God is proceeding with the great business of meetening sinners for heaven, of communicating his Spirit to men, and of training them for his presence in a better world ; and therefore, it is obvious that the platform must remain as long as divine grace has a purpose to accomplish thereon. When all the purposes of grace are accomplished, and all the salvation work of God is done, then the same word that spoke the world into existence, will declare that time shall be no more. This earth is the temporary abode of the people of God, and Jacob's ladder, that connects heaven and earth together, will stand as long as saints are in the world. The world is a heap of moral ruins, but it

will continue for the sake of God's jewels that are in them, and the jewels are the cause of the temporary preservation of the ruins. In the ruins are the objects of God's love. In the ruins are men and women of whom God has said, "They shall be mine in the day when I make up my jewels." Every place derives importance from its connection with Christ. What is it that makes this world important to God? It is the work of his hands—it is one of the wondrous creatures of his power; but that which makes it specially important, is the fact that God is doing a gracious and saving work here, and therefore the earth will remain for the sake of the saints,—the world will stand till every ransomed soul is in heaven. The tares grow in the field with the wheat, and will not be finally rooted up before the last day, in consequence of the fact that God's wheat grows there also; therefore the Saviour said, in answer to the question in the parable, "Shall we root up the tares? Not so, lest ye root up the wheat with them: let both grow together until the harvest." Therefore, the ungodly and the rebel owe much to the presence of God's people in this dying world. A saint of God is of very much importance to a place, to a city, and to a family. A saint of God is of great importance to a city. When Abraham pleaded with God for Sodom, he said, "Wilt thou destroy the city if ten righteous are found there?" If ten righteous had been in the city, it would not have been burned; but there was not sufficient spiritual salt to preserve Sodom and Gomorrah from destruction and death. Then a child of God may be very important to a family. I am thinking now of the influence of Jacob upon the house of Laban, and of Joseph's influence on the house of Potiphar, and also in the prison in which he was confined. These two grains of heavenly salt had a very powerful influence, and exerted it in a very silent manner. Hear what Laban said to Jacob: "I have learned by experience that the Lord hath blessed me for thy sake." There were several grains of heavenly salt in the royal palace of the Roman Emperor, Nero; and there was also one grain of heavenly salt in the palace of Ahab, King of Israel. We are not told how much influence Obadiah had on the court of Ahab and Jezebel; but the court and Israel were rotting in idolatry, cruelty, and sin, and had it not been for some grains of salt as Obadiah, Elijah, and seven thousand men, they might have been destroyed long before they were; and therefore, saints may be a very great blessing in a house or family.

I would just speak a word to those who are servants, it may be, serving in ungodly families. Remember, you are the salt of the earth, and that you may, through your presence, word, or example, have a very considerable influence upon the families in which the providence of God has placed you. Jacob was a blessing to wicked Laban; Joseph was a blessing even in the prison and to Potiphar's house.

Then again, with regard to nations. The people of God have been the salt of nations, and if I mistake not, the people of God are the salt of England, and the salt of this modern Sodom and Gomorrah of ours—this

London in which we live. Look for a minute at Egypt, and you will see as soon as God removed his salt out of the land, (and he did it in a night,) its army and glory were drowned in the Red Sea. When the salt was gone, the nation was, so to speak, destroyed. Babylon was preserved for years and generations, but as soon as the seventy years' captivity of Israel had expired, and God had removed his salt from the country, the Babylonian empire was destroyed. The Lord's dear people are the salt of the earth, and if I were asked what I attribute England's greatness, glory and prosperity to, I would say,—not to its intellectuality, or military or naval power, but to the fact that there are thousands and thousands of God's dear people here. Victoria owes the brightness of her crown and the stability of her throne to the children of God in the country; for they are the salt of the earth: and according to the number and purity of God's people in the land, England will have more or less stability and prosperity; but if God should gather up all the grains of salt and take them away, then woe to England with all its greatness: and therefore the presence of the people of God in the world preserves it from putrefaction and destruction. I use strong language; but that which preserves the world from generation to generation, and from age to age, is the church and people of God. "Ye are the salt of the earth."

Then in the second place, the people of God are salt with respect to their doctrines. When I say their doctrines, I mean the glorious doctrines of divine grace, the blessed doctrines of the everlasting gospel, and the holding fast of those doctrines. The people of God are salt; and if they should give up God's truth, they themselves would lose their power and savour: for it is the doctrines of grace, and especially the grace of the doctrines, that sustain and perpetuate, and render savoury the profession of God's people.

My dear friends, I have been called hard names for holding high doctrines. Men who profess to hold the truth, have sometimes said hard things against me because I hold fast the doctrines of divine grace. Your profession will rot without them. I have seen profession become rotten, and so have you, and the church will rot and decay without the doctrines of grace and the grace of the doctrines, and Christian churches will lose their savour and usefulness.

What was it that converted the Church of Rome into what it is? and what is it that is converting the Church of England into Popery? Nothing but the surrendering of the gospel, the giving up of the truth of God. If the truth is given up, life is gone, the salt is gone, and the mass must decay and become offensive to Almighty God; therefore, if the professor be always seasoned with salt, his profession is kept sweet by the salt of grace.

A Christian church and its services are savoury to God as they are salted with divine grace; but "Can that which is unsavoury be eaten without salt, and is there any taste in the white of an egg?" (See Job.) Well, then, if the

salt of grace and of the doctrines of grace is so essential to the church, if they quicken life and perpetuate that life, and render the saint's services savoury, then every believer is, doctrinally considered, a portion of the salt of the earth.

Let me illustrate this with regard to doctrine. Where would the world be without your men who set their faces like a flint and hold fast the principles of truth? There come thousands of men with the idol of *free-will*; and free-will, depend upon it, will weaken and corrupt profession, and produce shallow and unspiritual professors; and here come a few ministers of the gospel and oppose man's *free-will* by preaching *God's free grace*—they oppose *God's free grace* to *man's free-will*, and so check the doctrines of man. Then there come a host of men proclaiming justification by works; their human excellencies and creature doings occupy a most important position in salvation, and here comes a minister like myself, together with men and women who love the truth of God, and proclaim with all our little powers the God-like fact that Christ, and Christ only, is the “end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” Justification by works is proclaimed, and but for the fact that gracious souls check it in the world, that doctrine would inundate the whole of Christendom, and how it would end we well know. In the course of a few short years, these doings of man will cease. I do not know, however, what God may permit; but I have confidence in the everlasting gospel, and full confidence that it will check the degrading, corrupting influence of the doctrines of the day. “Ye are the salt of the earth.” There comes Popery! If you do not like free-will and justification by works, what think you of the Man of Sin? What is it that checks his progress in this country? I do not know how many things check him; but we believe it is a solemn fact that, but for God's people and their prayers, and the great truths they hold, Popery would swallow up England next week; and therefore, God's people are the salt of the earth doctrinally.

Thirdly. They are the salt of the earth with respect to their prayers. “Ye are the salt of the earth,” first, by your presence in it; secondly, by the doctrines you have been taught to hold; and thirdly, by your prayers; for said God to Israel concerning Babylon, “Seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it; for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.” Strange language that. I suppose some of the people must have fared better for the prayers of Israel. The day of Babylon's destruction was put off owing to the presence and prayers of God's people in the land. Every child of God is a patriot. I think it is Cowper who says, “England, with all thy faults, I love thee still,” and so do I. I will pray for home, and are there not others of the same mind as myself in relation to this matter? I think the people of God can pray for their native land. There are thousands of good men and women who are offering up prayers for their country; thus the people of God are the salt of the earth by their prayers. Sennacherib,

with his hundred and eighty thousand men were before Jerusalem, blaspheming the name of the Lord, and he sends to Hezekiah a blasphemous letter, which he received of the hands of the messengers, and having read it, what did he do? He took it, and spread it before the Lord, and prayed; and God said to him, "The daughter of Zion hath laughed thee to scorn," &c. "He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shields; I will put my bridle in his lips, and turn him back by the way by which he came." Oh! there is power in prayer, and it has saved a country before now. Men have told me that it was idle to pray for a change of weather. If that be correct, how foolish Elijah was when he prayed that it might not rain; but he prayed, and it rained not for the space of three years and six months, and again he prayed, and in answer to his prayer, God sent rain. There is no knowing what the world would become, if there were not such grains of salt as Elijah was; for prayer like his has brought down abundance from the throne of God. Ye are the salt of the earth by your presence, doctrines, grace, and by your prayers.

I will just add a fourth idea. Ye are the salt of the earth with respect to the fact that God's people contend for the rights of God and man. What do you mean by that? I mean, who would contend for the Bible if the church of God were translated from the earth to heaven? Where would the Bible Society be? Why, if priests, cardinals, and the Pope had their way, what would become of the Bible? It would be cast away, or concealed, or interpreted in a pernicious way. We hold it fast; we have a right to preach the gospel of God everywhere, and God's people are contending for that right. Glorious old Bunyan said, as it were, "I will rot in prison rather than surrender my right to preach the gospel of Christ;" and do not the writings of that man exert an influence upon the world in the day in which we live? "Ye are the salt of the earth." I would ask, where would our Lord's-day be but for God's people, for the men and women who know its worth, and prize it in their hearts for the sake of God, and Christ, and salvation, and eternity? Where would the Sabbath be,—what would become of it in the course of a very short time, were it not for the salt of the earth? Do you mean to say that the church is the salt of the word? No. I did not say so; neither do I say that it is the salt of the Sabbath: but I say that were it not for the few that love the things of God and eternity, England would soon be swamped, and the Sabbath would be a continental Sunday in a very short time; therefore, with respect to the fact that you contend for the rights of God and man, ye are the salt of the earth.

Then again, ye are the salt of the earth with respect to your example. A good example is important, and a child of God in the church is an example of brotherly union. A child of God living near his God, is an example of heavenly morality and holiness. Morality in a Christian is intensified and rendered natural and necessary by the grace that is in him,

—it is the natural outcome of the grace of God in his heart, and therefore he has the salt in himself. If a tree is dead, it will do to burn and make a fire, and serve to warm one's person ; if gold is battered and worn, still it is gold, and may be melted down, and is precious ; but if salt has lost its savour, wherewith can it be salted ? it must be "cast out and trodden under the feet of men." Take a professor of religion that damages the cause of God, and leaves us to conclude that he never had the grace of God in his heart, what shall be done with him ? We see here an illustration of the meaning of our Lord's words,—what is he fit for but to be "cast out" ? The world does not care for him ; the church has lost confidence in him, and he is an outcast. May we never lose our savour, but always have salt in ourselves.

I want to say a word or two with regard to divine institutions. I believe I have had a little experience in that direction. The gospel ministry in a country village is a great blessing. I know there are churches in which the worship is ritualistic, the music attractive, and the proceedings are imposing ; but a small chapel in a country village, where the simple truth is preached, is one of the greatest blessings that God could send to that locality. May God send more labourers into his vineyard, and increase the salt of the earth.

Then we were to contemplate secondly, the text in relation to the world ; and thirdly, make a few observations in relation to God himself. I will make but one or two remarks on these two points, and then I will close. Ye are the salt of the earth in relation to the world. Now the state of the world confirms this fact. Just contemplate those parts of the world in which there are no Christians, and no godliness, where there is no Bible, and no heavenly religion. Look for a moment or two at some parts of Africa ; the people there are all idolatrous, corrupt, filthy, offensive, and savage. Take Spain ; there may be some salt there, but what generally prevails in that land ? *Popery* ! And what is the state of that country ? The people are immersed in ignorance, ruin, and wretchedness. Oh, if God would be pleased to make bare his holy arm, and sweep the Man of Sin away, what a decided change there would be in that place ! The death of a saint is a loss to the world ; for the influence of the people of God on the earth is a silent and preserving one. Ye are the salt, but not the soldiers of the earth, saving by a secret influence, and not by fighting and bloodshed.

Thirdly. Look at the subject in relation to God himself. God places his people in his Son, Christ saves and preserves them, and they, through him, become the preservers of the world from immediate ruin and destruction. God blesses his people, and then makes them to be blessings, for this salt is distributed by God in the earth. Christians here and there, and yonder, are a great mercy for the world. Greece used to say boastingly, that she was the salt of all nations, and that what other nations were intellectually, they were through her. Well, where is Greece now ?

Athens with all its learning, where is it now? You may have a thousand schemes of human origin, but nothing can work effectually for any lengthened period, to preserve nations from moral decay, without the presence, prayers, and power of the excellent—the salt of the earth. May the Lord grant that ye who are the salt of the earth, may have much to do with sacred things, and be very savoury in your life, walk, and conversation. Amen.

One-half of the Surplus, if any, arising from the sale of this Sermon, will be given in aid of the Aged Pilgrims' Friend Society, and the other half to the Benevolent Society of Mount Zion Chapel, Chadwell-street.
