

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.

VOL. II., No. 1.—MAY 15, 1877.

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.

THE NEXT SERMON WILL BE READY ON JUNE 15TH.

Printed and published by BRISCOE & Co., 28, Banner-street, Bunhill-row. London, E.C.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

Four copies post-free, by sending stamps to the above address.

FORSAKEN, BUT GATHERED.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, 27th MAY, 1877.

"For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee."—Isa. liv. 7.

THE matter of this chapter is very closely connected with that of the preceding one, which is one of the most important in the Word of God. We have therein a most comprehensive description of the complex person of our Lord; of his humiliation; of the depths to which he sank; of the victories he achieved, and of his resurrection from the dead; we have also the promises which his satisfied Father gave him, saying, "He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied. By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many: for he shall bear their iniquities." Our Lord said to Peter, "Upon this Rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The complex person and finished work of the Redeemer, are the everlasting rock upon which the church of the living God is built; and this rock is described in the 53rd chapter, while the church that is built thereon is set forth in that out of which I have now taken my text. Christ here appears as the risen, exalted, and enthroned Redeemer of the church, saying, "Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear;" for since your iniquities have been borne away, and your guilt has been expiated, and eternal salvation has been effectuated for you, thou shalt bear children; therefore, "break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate [that is of the Gentile church] than the children of the married wife [that is, the Jewish church,] said the Lord. Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thy habitation. Spare not, [for multitudes shall be born again, and gathered together; thousands and millions of ruined sinners shall be saved, and bought into connection with you; therefore thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left.] Thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited." In this manner the Lord comforted the church with his promises, which he himself had ratified by his blood and death. Seated on his throne, he looks down upon that church which is rising upon himself, its foundation, and says, "Fear not, for thou shalt not be ashamed; neither be thou confounded, for thou shalt not be put to shame. Thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more." And then follows one of those Scriptures which are exceedingly great and wonderful:—"For thy Maker is thy Husband; the Lord of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall he be called. For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee."

VOL. II., No. 2.—JUNE 15, 1877.

The text divides itself into two branches. In the first place there is a *mysterious fact asserted*,—"For a small moment have I forsaken thee;" and in the second place a *gracious promise is given*. "But with great mercies will I gather thee."

On each of these I will offer a few observations, observing at the outset that it is not my intention to tarry long on the first branch of the subject, viz., the mysterious fact asserted: "For a small moment have I forsaken thee." Possibly there may be some persons in the house of God this morning who would like the preacher to occupy the whole of the time in enlarging upon the first clause of the text. I do not love darkness, or what is commonly called divine desertion. I know there are times when the Lord hides his face, or seems to do so. There are periods in the experience of God's children when it is night with them, and they cannot see their signs nor discover their evidences, and they do not know what or where they are; but whilst this forms a part of the experience of the Christian, it forms, thank God, only a part thereof. Here are days as well as nights, the sun rises as well as sets; there are friends as well as foes; and joys in our holy religion as well as sorrows, and tears of pleasure as well as tears of grief and woe. I cannot, therefore, discover why ministers of the Gospel should not dwell upon the light as well as upon the darkness, why they should not try to describe the bliss experienced on the hill-top as well as the grief and sorrow experienced in the valley beneath. Some good and gracious people love to hear about the horrible pit and the miry clay; they love to hear of slavery, misery, and bondage; but I love to talk about the Rock, or that sweet state of things indicated by David: "He raised me out of the horrible pit, and out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock and established my goings." Though we sigh, and talk about our sighs, we sometimes sing also: then let us talk a little about our songs likewise. We are burdened and oppressed, and must sometimes speak of that subject; but there are moments when we mount up with wings as eagles, and lose our burdens and enter into those pure and purifying regions where the soul holds sweet intercourse and fellowship with God; and hence the peculiar phraseology of my text, "For a small moment I have forsaken thee." Now as it would be difficult to describe a moment, it is almost impossible to describe a *small* moment. A moment, you know, is the least point of time; and the Lord is pleased to say, "For a small moment." It seems to amount almost to this: "I will not leave thee nor forsake thee." It is intended, however, to denote an exceedingly brief period of time. It is not my intention to tarry here and therefore let me give you, first, some idea of the literal meaning of it. In the first place, it is thought that the Lord refers to the captivity of the children of Israel in the land of Babylon. They were there, you know, seventy years, and that is a considerable period of time to contemplate in connection with the future or the past; for when you look back and remember the way in which the Lord has led you for sixty or seventy years, you send your thoughts a considerable distance; but then let us never forget that we always have to do with an infinite Being, and that while his infinity relates to his essence, character, and power, it relates to his eternal existence also, and therefore, a thousand years in his sight are but as one day, and one day is as a thousand years. With our God there is an ineffable sense in which there is neither past nor future; but I must not be expected to explain that mystery of God's everlasting *now*. The terms past and future are for finite beings, for all creatures whose minds are limited and must be so for ever. God is in the past, in the present, and in the future, and therefore, it is said that he is, and was, and is to come, the Almighty. The seventy years, therefore, which were spent by the children of Israel in bondage, in the land of Babylon were but as a moment, and the Lord referring to them, said, "For a small moment I have forsaken thee; but with many mercies will I gather thee" from Babylon to thy native country Canaan.

In the second place, it is thought, and with some good reason, that this part of the subject refers to what the Apostle Paul called the times of Gentile ignorance. The times of this ignorance he said to the Athenians, God winked at, but now he commandeth all men everywhere to repent, not only in Canaan, but in other lands,—Gentiles as well as Jews. For generations and ages the Gentiles were passed over, and left in ignorance; but God having a people among them says—“For a small moment I have forsaken thee: but now thy time is the time of love; and, therefore, with many mercies will I gather thee.” Another idea is, this forsaking and gathering refer to the Father’s desertion of Jesus Christ on the cross. You remember there was darkness for three hours when the dear Redeemer hung suffering and bleeding on the tree, and during that period he cried, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” And, perhaps, it is doing no violence to this nor to any other portion of the word, to say that God, the Father, then forsook both Christ and his church for a small moment. The church, of course, was then in Christ, and he was dying for it; he represented it, as its great Head and Surety, and when the Father forsook him, he, so to speak, forsook, or seemed to forsake, all that were in him; and had not the dear Redeemer been infinitely great on that dreadful occasion, both himself and all that he represented must have fallen, sunk, and been ruined. However the great work was completed, and the cloud which came between the suffering Mediator, and his heavenly Father’s face having been dissipated, God reappeared to his Son, and to all that he represented, and said, “For a small moment have I forsaken thee.” By way of expressing his abhorrence of the sin that was upon Jesus, and his detestation of the crimes with which he was charged, God forsook him for a time; but now with many mercies he gathers the redeemed. Then again it is thought that the text has reference to that terrible period which elapsed between the days of the apostles and the conversion, as it is called, of the Roman Empire, under Constantine the Great. Those of my friends, and my young friends especially, who are readers of ecclesiastical history, know how terribly the saints of God suffered during that time; what streams of blood they went through; what agonies they experienced; how they were hunted from place to place, and from one nation to another. However, Constantine was raised up, and a very important change took place in relation to God’s church; for the Empire adopted the Christian religion. Then the church of God had peace and rest, and were permitted to meet together. “For a small moment I have forsaken or left thee in persecution; but now with many mercies will I gather thee.” I shall leave those points, for though I might dwell upon them yet, my hearers generally, would not think it profitable; and, therefore, take a last idea. This part of the text may indicate the general experience of God’s people. Does God ever forsake his people? He says here, he does for a small moment. I have already said that a moment is the smallest point of time, and that a small one is indescribable; and therefore the fact is, in one respect, he never leaves nor forsakes his people; whilst in another respect there are moments, minutes, hours and days, when he seems to hide his face from them; for a small moment, he says, however. And what shall we say about this? Why, the period is brief compared with the eternal desertion that we deserve; the period is brief, compared with the eternal separation from God which is experienced by the wicked; and the period is brief, compared with the eternal pleasure and bliss which await our arrival in another world. And let me say here, that if God should hide his face from us all through our life; if we should never have a glimpse of comfort; if we should always halt and fear, and suffer until we die, should the period be sixty or seventy years, it will be only a small one compared or contrasted with that illimitable eternity which lies before you yonder. I thought I would offer a remark or two upon the subject *in relation to nations, to churches, and to individuals.*

We may look at the subject, first, in relation to *nations*, and limit our attention

now to our own highly favoured land ; and ask, has God ever forsaken us ? When may he be said, in connection with spiritual matters, to forsake, or seem to forsake, a nation ? When he withholds the Gospel, or when he withdraws, or permits it to be withdrawn, from it ; when Popery increases in its strength, operations, and fruits ; when bondage and oppression prevail, and when the few dear people of God that may be in it are oppressed and threatened with destruction, and are not permitted to meet together as we are met this morning, “under their own vines and fig trees, none daring to make them afraid.” Dear Christian friends, let us never forget when at the throne of grace expressing our wants and circumstances before God, to put up petitions for the land of our nativity, and of our father’s graves. Some people may fancy that such and such circumstances would be the greatest catastrophe that could happen to England. I should say that the greatest evil that could be inflicted upon our country would be the removal of the truth of God, or the withdrawal of the glorious Gospel of the blessed God. We could as a nation work and trade among other nations with less gold and less greatness than we possess, but we could not well afford to live, even nationally, with less gospel light, and fewer saints of God.

Look at it, secondly, in connection with *Christian churches*. For a small moment have I forsaken thee. We have been favoured very greatly here for upwards of a quarter of a century. What the future may be we do not know, but prayerfully leave it in God’s hands. But some of us who are acquainted with this mighty London remember what some of its churches were many years ago. Are there no decaying or withering churches now, which, twenty or thirty years ago, were strong, vigorous, and fruitful, under whose shadow multitudes of hearers used to meet and worship from Sabbath to Sabbath. Their good and godly ministers being dead or otherwise gone, strife, division, worldliness, and error have crept into them piece by piece, little by little, until they have become enervated and feeble. Let us pray that God would revive his work in the midst of the years, and verify my text in the experience of those bodies, that they may be gathered with many mercies.

And thirdly, look at it in connection with *individuals*. I have already glanced at the subject in relation to the experience of the saints. “For a small moment have I forsaken you.” He seems to hide his face, and withhold heavenly influence from the mind, and then we have no holy pleasure in reading the word, no sweet feeling in meditating upon himself, no holy nearness to the throne of grace, and no sweet liberty in prayer. All within is hard, cold, and barren, and all without uninteresting and uninviting. We rise in the morning, hanging down our heads, because there is no spirituality within, or none that is deep ; we retire at night to bed, if not to rest, remembering the day, and what we have done, and said, and thought, and feel what a barren day it has been. Well, this state of things is experienced by the believer ; and applying the text to him, it indicates these particular features. “For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with many mercies will I gather thee.” I am said to be a little enthusiastic in connection with Christian experience, and sometimes people have thought well to call me a fanatic. If it is fanaticism to contend for sweet feeling, and that when the shower of divine grace falls the heart is moistened, fertilised, and softened, then I am a fanatic, and I shall continue to preach fanaticism. Religion is something more than notion—

“Something must be known and felt.”

Friends, there is a power in the word and a power in that which emanates from God. I do not know whether I have mentioned a certain circumstance to you that I have spoken of in other places. It is not very long since, I was sitting in this pulpit, one Sabbath morning when you were singing, with a heart full of misery and not having one pleasant thought, nor one happy feeling. This is not a pleasant state of things for one who is expected to rise, take a text,

and preach for an hour: however, two or three lines of the hymn which was being given out fell upon my mind ; my captivity was turned; my chains fell off, and I felt liberty at once, and rose with some holy hope; took my text with some confidence, and had a good time for—

“ In darkest shade, if he appear,
Our dawning is begun:
He is our soul's sweet Morning Star,
And he our rising Sun.”

Secondly, *the promise*. “ But with great mercies will I gather thee.” The first thing that claims our attention here is the Speaker; for if we contemplate his person and character, we shall have a little insight into the meaning of the promise itself, “ But with great mercies will I gather thee.” And who is he? I must ask you to refer to the 5th verse of the chapter. “ Thy Maker is thy Husband, the Lord of Hosts is his name, and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel : the God of the whole earth shall he be called.” Ministers do not often have their subjects divided and subdivided by the Holy Ghost in this way. Now, here I have all I require. The question is, “ Who is the Speaker? and the Holy Ghost says it is our Maker, our Husband, the Lord of Hosts, our Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, the God of the whole earth. Now, looking at this subject, we see first, divine sovereignty. I frequently see that, where others do not. I see it here; for is he not the God of the whole earth, and our Maker? What will he do? With great mercies he will gather men. What, all the earth? Has it ever been so? or is he gathering all the earth now? Friends, I wish with all my heart that there were perfect morality in the earth. Morality is excellent, and that preacher is a dangerous man who says a word against it. I wish the world were brimful and overflowing with it; but let all the world know that morality is not spirituality, excellent as it is. There can be no spirituality without morality; but there may be morality without spirituality. It is obvious to every one, however much the fact may be hated and kicked against, that the Lord is taking one of a city, and two of a family, and bringing them to Zion; for he is called, the God of the whole earth. Secondly.—He appears as the Husband of his people; therefore, we have the idea of matrimonial love and affection. Zion's Maker and Husband says, “ I have laid my face from you for a small moment; but that did not destroy the relation which existed between you and me, nor cool my love towards you.” When I seemed to leave you in the dark for a while, my eyes were upon you. I did not utterly forsake you, yea, my arm was underneath you; for, being your Maker and your Husband, I hate putting away. I will never do that in relation to my people which I hate in connection with my creatures. “ I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” With many mercies therefore will I, the sovereign Monarch of all,—I, thy Husband, gather thee; for I have loved thee, with an everlasting love. Thirdly, still looking at the Speaker, we observe his omnipotence and boundless resources. God has heaped these names upon one another for our help and comfort. “ The Lord of Hosts is his name.” Since you can conceive of sovereignty and conjugal affection without power, God informs you that his arm can fulfil the dictates of his heart, for the Lord of Hosts is his name, and therefore with many mercies will he gather thee. Though I should like to dwell on this, we will take another view of the subject. I ask the question for the sake of illustrating a point or two. Have Gentile sinners been saved since the ascension of Christ, and are they being saved now? If so, the following facts are clear and obvious: First, Redemption is complete and finished. If it were not, Christ could not be in heaven, the Holy Ghost could not be here, the Gospel would not have been given to us, and Christian churches could not have existed; but the glorious work of eternal redemption is done, and, therefore, the Speaker, having redeemed us, says, “ With great mercies will I gather thee.” Consequently, Gentile

sinner, (and I mention Gentiles because that is more especially the subject indicated,) are being gathered. Then their Redeemer is alive; for with great mercies he is gathering them. "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore. Amen. And I have the keys of hell and of death." If redemption were unfinished, or if the Redeemer were in the grave, or not enthroned on high, there would be no gathering of the people. Again, if sinners are being gathered, then he that is on the throne has not changed in his love; his affection is just what it was when he gave the promise. Christ never changes in his love. What he was in the Father's bosom that he was on the tree; what he was on the tree, that he is on the throne; what he is on the throne, that he is in the hearts of his dear people—Christ, in you, the hope of eternal glory. Well, then, are sinners coming? Have you and I been saved? Put your salvation side by side with my text—"With great mercies will I gather thee"—and in your own character you will not fail to see a verification and fulfilment of this interesting portion of the word of God. So much for the Speaker.

Secondly, *the act*. I will gather thee with great mercies. The term gather is applied to a shepherd collecting together his wandering and straying sheep; so the Lord says he will gather his people. We are by nature in a scattered condition, scattered morally and locally; for sin has so scattered all, that we are far from God and from one another. Sin is a scatterer, and grace is a gatherer. Sin is a destroyer, and grace is a restorer. The dear Redeemer says, "I will gather thee." David says, "When my father and mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up;" and the learned tell us that the word in the original which is there translated "take up" is precisely the word which is employed by the Holy Ghost here—"With great mercies will I gather thee, or take thee up." Here, then, we have the husband meeting the bride, or the Saviour meeting the sinner, and he does not drive him into salvation, neither does he leave any important part unsaved; He gathers all together and takes all up, and that with many mercies, and saves the whole with an everlasting salvation. But let me point out two or three facts here.

The fulfilment of this promise involves, first, the perfect knowledge of Christ. He knows where they are—hence he can gather them.

"I know my sheep, he cries;
My soul approves them well."

And whether they be in India or in Greenland, or further north still, were those parts of the world habitable, Christ knows them and where they are. It seems to me that one of the inconsistencies of the day in which we live is the fact that some of the children of God have a notion, if we may draw inferences from their conduct, that God is somewhat ignorant of the whereabouts of his people, and requires a little information and a little urging forward in the great business of salvation. I have no sympathy myself with this feeling; for God requires no information from us, and no creature-urging in connection with this great gathering work. If they will not come to the gospel, he will send the gospel to them; and if they will not come to Christ and accept salvation, he will see that Christ's Spirit shall go to them, and apprehend and gather them, and take them into a saved state; for "With many mercies will I gather thee." Christ knows where they are, if all others are ignorant of them. Then, in the next place, it implies supremacy of power and resources. "With many mercies will I gather thee." If the redeemed are far off, he can reach them. If they are in strong hands, his hands are almighty. If they are hardened by their natural enmity, he can kill, it and melt the rock; for he has done so thousands, and perhaps millions, of times. If they are bound with chains of ignorance, he can remove them and set them free; for "with many mercies he will gather thee." Christ appears,

therefore, as knowing where his people are, and as possessing all the power that is required to gather and save them. But suppose he should change! Well, then the promises would not be fulfilled, and then no part of the Bible would be trustworthy or reliable; for if one promise is unreliable, all of them are doubtful, and at once become worthless. But, blessed be his name! he is Jesus Christ—the same yesterday, to day, and for ever.

Thirdly. I notice the peculiar character of this act: “With many mercies.” First, the Gatherer; secondly, the act of gathering; and thirdly, the peculiar character of this act—“With great mercies will I gather thee.” Mercy—mercies—great mercies. Here, again, I am at a great loss for words, and even thoughts. Mercy is a wonderful blessing. This, however, is pluralised, and then all are qualified by the word *great*. “With great mercies will I gather thee.” How great? I do not know, only that they are as great as God’s love can express, for mercy comes out of love as from its source and spring. “God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us;” so that mercy is rich, because love is great. The mercy by which we are gathered is as great as Christ deserves for us, and, therefore, sufficient to meet all God’s demands, and qualify us for our glorious destiny and those high honours which we shall wear for ever, and a little mercy would not cover all this. It is all great. But to particularise a little. These great mercies may be regarded, first, in relation to what took place with us before we were called. Were any kind of mercies received by us before we were gathered? I love the poet’s words—

“Parents, native place, and time—
All appointed were by Him.”

Why, my friends, the men and women that became our fathers and our mothers were not so by fortune or chance, and the locality in which we were born was not a matter of chance, not wholly contingent, although it may seem to have been so, upon the will of any creature. No; parents, locality, home, and the social circumstances that we were surrounded by, were all prearranged by that God who says, “With many mercies will I gather thee.” When we entered the world, we fell into the arms of the special providence of our heavenly Father, and although we hated him and hated Christ, fifteen, twenty, or thirty years, less or more, he never hated us. His eye was upon us, and many mercies attended us before we knew his holy name. Secondly, look at these mercies in connection with our regeneration or conversion, if you like. We say it is interesting to remember the way in which the Lord first met our souls. Yes. That is one of the most interesting periods of your life. There were so many things that seemed to contribute to that event. One went into such a place of worship, being on a visit to a friend, who proposed that he should do so, and the Lord arrested him. Ah! that visit to your friend, and his suggestion that you should go to God’s house, were directed by the Lord of all, whose thoughts were thereby fulfilled. Sudden thoughts are ours; but God’s thoughts are eternal. By a sudden God touched your heart, and with many mercies you were gathered. The rebel became a captive; in the hands of great mercy, by which you were led to God, you were made willing, and you wept as mercy led you to the throne of grace; and the being that was previously a rebel was heard to say, “God be merciful to me, a sinner.” Great mercy led you to Jesus Christ, and into liberty and love, and salvation, and to realise and enjoy the fact, “Thy Maker is thy husband; the Lord of Hosts is his name.” Poor no more, destitute in a certain respect no longer, an outcast and a wretched rebel no more: all the days of my estrangement and alienation are gone, spent, past. Christ is mine, and I am his! “With many mercies will I gather thee.” And what shall we say about the time that has elapsed since that day? Why, my grey-headed brother and sister—and my young brethren and sisters too—I can only remind you of good

Jeremiah's words—"Thy mercies are new every morning." Ever since the moment when we lost our burden, and our hearts were healed and our souls were saved, ever since that moment great mercies have attended us. These great mercies are as two walls, one on your right hand and the other on your left, reaching to the threshold of heaven, so that you are enclosed in the mercy, the great mercies of your gathering and saving God.

Fourthly. Where are they gathered to? "With great mercies will I gather you." Shall we say, To the law, to be condemned? It is necessary to see sin, to see its nature, and to loathe ourselves on account of it. O yes, there is no coming to Calvary except by Horeb or Sinai. A sight of ourselves in the law fits us for Christ. I am a guilty sinner. "To him shall the gathering of the people be." Gathered to him for his blood, and righteousness, and life, and pardon, and peace and salvation—and where then? Why, into the church. With great mercies God gathers to Sinai, to Calvary, and then into the church: and

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

Gathered, too, to worship.

"How did my heart rejoice to hear
My friends devoutly say,—
In Zion let us all appear,
And keep the solemn day.

"I love her gates, I love the road;
The church, adorned with grace,
Stands like a palace built for God
To show his milder face."

Permit me, Lord, to have a name and place there. There is another gathering to take place, for we shall be taken up in death. Aye! and another beyond that, for it, said Christ, is the will of him that sent me that of all he has given me I should lose nothing; but should raise it up and gather all at the last day. "For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with many mercies will I gather thee." Take this last thought. If you are a gathered sinner, you are acceptable to God; for having been gathered by him, you are what he has made you: for you are his workmanship, and you stand where he has placed you, therefore you are accepted in the Beloved, and shall be approved in him for ever and ever. Amen.

THE NEXT SERMON WILL BE READY ON JULY 14TH.

Printed and published by BRISCON & Co., 28, Banner-street, Bunhill-row, London, E.C.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

Four copies post-free, by sending stamps to the above address.

THE WILLINGNESS OF CHRIST TO DIE.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, 10th JUNE, 1877.

"And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem."—Luke ix. 51.

THE prophet Isaiah was favoured with many clear and heart-elevating views of the person, work, greatness, and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ; the Holy Ghost having so filled him, that he sat down and penned that most remarkable portion of his prophecies, the 40th chapter. Christ was then in the heart, the eye, and the understanding of the prophet; and his faith embracing the Saviour of sinners, he was constrained to say, "The Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him. Behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him." One cannot but feel surprised that there should be Socinians and Unitarians in the world, and in the professing church, because here, in the 10th verse of the 40th chapter; Christ is distinctly and emphatically called, "The Lord God." "The Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him. His reward is with him, and his work before him;" and that this refers to Christ himself, is evident from what follows: "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." I have quoted those verses for the purpose of showing, that the work of Christ being before him, his sufferings were, so to speak, prospective; he saw the cross, and Gethsemane, and "the terrors of law and of God," not only when he came into the world, but when he undertook, before the foundation of the world, to save us from eternal wrath to everlasting happiness and glory. Our sufferings are not prospective. We know that we must die, and that there can be no discharge from that war; but we know nothing about the time, or the various circumstances that shall intervene between the present moment and the dying hour. The future is wisely and mercifully concealed from us; but it was not so with our great Lord; and therefore in the 22nd verse of this chapter it is said, Christ told his disciples that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day. How much appeared before him when he gave utterance to those facts! We are also informed that when he was transfigured Moses and Elias appeared and spoke of his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. And again

VOL. II., No. 3.—JULY 14, 1877.

in the 43rd verse, it is said, "They were all amazed at the mighty power of God ; but, while they wondered every one at all things which Jesus did, he said unto them, Let these sayings sink down into your ears; for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men." Now these portions of the Word serve to throw some light upon our text: "And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem," the place of suffering.

Let us direct our attention to two things : first, *Christ's readiness to suffer* : " He stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem ; and secondly, *The result and reward of his sufferings and death*. Having suffered and died, he was received up, when the time was come ; but knowing that he must previously die, and that his death must take place at Jerusalem, he stedfastly set his face to go to that city.

I. In the first place a few observations on a most interesting and important theme, the readiness of our great Lord to suffer and die. I do not know whether the word "ready," or "readiness," is sufficiently strong ; for we have the word "stedfastly" in our text : "He stedfastly set his face to go to the place of suffering." Let us say, not only that Christ was ready to die, but that there was a resoluteness in his heart in relation to his sufferings : he stedfastly and determinedly set his face to go to Jerusalem.

In looking at Christ's readiness to suffer, notice, in the first place, that our text indicates *the infinite power of Immanuel's love*. He stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem. Paul says, "the love of Christ constraineth us;" and we must say, the love of Christ constrained Christ himself. He foresaw the Garden of Gethsemane, and the cup that would be in it. He foresaw the judgment hall, and the whips that would be used, and that he himself would be bound ; he foresaw the wretches that would smite him on the cheek, and pluck off his hair ; he foresaw Herod and his men of war setting him at nought, and clothing him with a gorgeous garment, sending him back again to Pilate ; yet he stedfastly set his face to go thither. He foresaw the ponderous cross, almost more than an ordinary being could bear, upon his own shoulders, and himself exhausted, as to his humanity, beneath it ; he foresaw it uplifted and fixed in its socket, and himself nailed thereto ; he foresaw the sufferings in which he would be immersed, the cloud of terrible wrath over his head, the dreadful darkness caused by the desertion of his Father, and death in ten thousand forms surrounding his celestial person ; yet he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem. My friends, we dwell upon the sufferings of our Lord, and it is well and heart-elevating to do so ; but we in a great measure lose sight of the fact that he was infinitely ready to suffer. The creatures of his power are not ready to suffer, unless they are enriched and favoured with extraordinary measures of the Spirit and grace of God ; but our dear Lord, being ever filled with love, and holy and perfect zeal, which is said to have eaten him up—was ready to go forward and meet his sorrows and death. Love constrained him to go to Jerusalem, though he was to meet his Father there, as he had never met him before, though there he was to feel the whole weight of his church's guilt, and be visited with all the punishment that was due thereto ; and therefore elsewhere he said, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened (squeezed or pressed) until it be accomplished." Again, when sitting at table with his disciples at the Passover supper, he said, "With desire have I desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer." If our dear Lord, before the world was made, rejoiced in the habitable parts of the earth, and looked with approval and delight upon particular spots where his saints should live, called the "habitable parts of the earth," surely he also then contemplated the Garden of Gethsemane with peculiar feelings, and other than those with which he contemplated Eden.

Gethsemane and Golgotha were marked in the vast map before him, the place where the cup should be presented, where the cross should stand, where he should hang and bleed away condemnation and the curse, where his grave should be, wherein he himself should lie, to destroy its terrors and prepare it for his people; and he looked at all with delight: and now there was not a long distance between him and his throne. The time having nearly come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem.

Love constrained him to go, for the objects beloved were, so to speak, on the other side of his cross; and his sufferings, ignominy and death, were between him and them, and he could not reach or embrace them without passing through the fire, hanging on the tree, and going through death and the grave; and when I say, "the objects of his love," I mean the approval of his Father, the honours of the law, the attributes of God, and his church, his mystical body. These could not be reached without suffering. The frowns of his Father appeared first, and then his smiles; the curse first, and then the blessing; the hand with the sword first, and then the hand with the well-earned crown, to crown him Lord of all; and therefore he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem. On the other side of the cross was the end of the law, and as every right mind loves the law, the infinitely righteous mind of Emmanuel loved it, and he could not reach it and give honour to it so as to render it harmless to the sinner, without bearing the curse which the sinner had incurred, and thus perfectly fulfilling it. On the other side of the cross was mercy, and she could not move—let me speak it with reverence—without the sufferings of Jesus, nor savingly touch the guilty without blood. Mercy and compassion looked upon the lost and ruined, and Christ was in sympathy with them. Justice confined them, and Jesus stedfastly set his face to go through that which restrained mercy, and so set her for ever free to work. And then again, having reached mercy, and set her hands divinely free, justice and mercy were brought together, righteousness and peace embraced, and kissed each other. Then he had to reach his beloved but fallen church who had been under curse, in condemnation, and exposed to wrathful frowns and flames. The loving and conquering Jesus, by bleeding, made his way through all to the objects of his love, and embraced them, and putting them into his bosom, they were received up with him into the realms of eternal glory.

"When the time was come that he should be received up, he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem." A change in him at that time would have involved a falsification of the whole of the Word of God. Every prophét would have appeared as untrue, and every promise as untrustworthy. The whole of the Old Testament indicated the fact that he should not fail nor be discouraged, until he had set righteousness and judgment in the world. When the time had arrived that he should suffer, had he faltered or hesitated, had there been the slightest reluctance manifested, expressed, or felt by the Lord, all heaven would have staggered; Satan would have rejoiced, Christ's Father would have been disappointed, his own character would have been dimmed, and salvation would have been impossible; but he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem. When the time came that he should be received up, love constrained him to do that which rendered it impossible that he should not first die. Have you thought of the fact that his death was as absolutely certain and necessary, through his own act and will, as that of the Father. "Who his own self bare our sins, in his own body, on the tree." I call that his own act. He would receive our sin, and have it reckoned his own; he would become sin for us; and since he would do that, he placed himself in a position in which it was impossible for him to escape the hands of death, or to avoid experiencing the wrath of his righteous Father; therefore he not only died, but resolved to die, and was ready at the appointed time, and

the readiness amounted to resoluteness. Oh how willing—how determined was the Lord of life and glory to die !

Now, secondly, let us notice that Christ's willingness and readiness to die were *essential to the acceptance of his work*. Do not say that the preacher is doctrinal, because, I am once more dwelling on the very foundation of our hope, and trying to place before you, that which I conceive to be, the bread, water, and wine of everlasting life. Having endeavoured to set forth some of the sufferings of Jesus Christ, I desire now to remind you of the fact that his willingness to bleed was essential to the acceptance of what he did. What was it in the offering of Christ that emitted a sweet smelling savour, and caused that pleasing fragrance that ascended to heaven ? We read that Christ offered himself an offering of a sweet smelling savour unto God. What was it that made the offering sweet ? His dignity ? It was the dignity of the Sufferer that made the suffering so great ; but would his sufferings have been fragrant if he had suffered reluctantly and against his will ? You say it was the purity of the Sufferer that made his sufferings so sweet. Would his purity and holiness have made his blood acceptable if it had been forced from his person against his will ? No, my friend, that which made the suffering of your Lord so sweet, and caused them to fill all heaven with fragrance was the fact that he suffered willingly, and was ready, and resolved to die. His life was not forced out of him ; he was not driven to Jerusalem, nor dragged to Calvary ; but he steadfastly, voluntarily, and resolutely, set his face to go to Jerusalem, and to endure those deep agonies and woes out of which our salvation arises : this it was that caused his sufferings to perfume the heavenly world. I grant, that had it not been for the dignity of his person his sufferings had not been fragrant ; but, beloved hearers, his willingness also is an element in his perfection. He had not been perfect had he been unwilling ; and, therefore, his willingness appears in connection with the personal perfection of the Sufferer. Having wherewithal in his person to satisfy justice, he had love enough in his heart to give all up, and surrender himself an offering for sin, and for sinners. Hence it was an offering of a sweet smelling savour. Willingness is essential to the divine acceptance of the services of all beings, and that creature that unwillingly serves God—if there be such a being, and service—is rejected by God, and so also are his services. Angels' songs would not be accepted if they were not voluntary ; if their praises and expressions of gratitude were not willingly offered to God ; and the services of saints are never acceptable if they are offered unwillingly ; and, therefore, willingness and readiness are absolutely essential to the acceptance of divine service. Apply this to God's greatest Servant, and to the greatest divine service that was ever performed. God's greatest Servant was Christ ; and anything like unwillingness in him would have displeased his Father, and caused him to reject him. And then, what service has he rendered ? Why, the greatest that ever was performed. Shall I put two or three words before you, which are descriptive of his service ? An eternal sacrifice for sin, of everlasting value. Eternal redemption, and eternal salvation. These were the deeds that Christ performed ; and as they were done willingly and perfectly, the Father accepted them ; and we are going to heaven through them, if we are going thither at all. If we are going into the presence of God, and there are seats erected in the glory world for us, we are going in this way, as the Lord liveth ; notwithstanding the fact that this way of salvation is ignored, and preachers of religion are endeavouring to conceal it from the minds of their hearers. My fellow man, the only way into God's presence, the only way to a seat in a better world, and the only method that God has devised of giving peace, solid and substantial, to the mind, is Christ's work at Jerusalem ; his agonies at that city, and his readiness and willingness to bear your sins, and all the punishment that was due to them.

Let us now pass on to another point. The willingness of Jesus Christ to suffer was *essential to the perfection of our happiness and bliss*. Why, should we not have been happy in heaven had we been taken there, if Christ had expressed or felt any reluctance or unwillingness? I will not speculate here; but I must say that our perfect bliss depended upon the perfection of Christ's sufferings and salvation. I have already shown, or tried to show, that his salvation would not, and could not, have been perfect, had he been forced against his will to save. Now, let me try to direct you to heaven, and contemplate for a minute a saved and glorified character. In the first place, there sits Jesus Christ on the throne, for we will suppose he is there, although he suffered unwillingly; but the thought of every one that beholds him is, that he did not suffer willingly. Would not this tend to dim and tarnish his character and glory? There are thousands of ransomed sinners round about the throne, and every one feels that he would love the Saviour with a more fervent love, if he had saved him willingly and cheerfully; but since justice, or some power stronger than himself, forced him to die; praise and gratitude are limited in their flow and extent. Would not this render the bliss of the glorified imperfect? But there sits the dear Redeemer, and he is in glory, because "he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem," which was the right way to the throne of honour. He was willing to die; and, therefore, there are millions round about him, not with limited affections, and joys, and praises; for all feel that had they mightier powers than they possess, he would have a claim upon them for them all; and all feel that their deepest and noblest gratitude belongs to their dear redeeming Lord. I do not think it is quite accurate to say he did all incarnate God could do, and had no strength to spare; but what he did was done willingly, readily, resolutely: for he poured out his soul unto death, and no man took his life from him; he had power to lay it down, and power to take it again. Christ's Hephzibah was ruined, and he saw her in that state; and though to reach her necessitated his going through seas of wrath, he stedfastly set his face to go towards her, and through suffering to rescue and redeem her from death, and all evil. Moreover, do you not feel that if the love of Jesus had been limited, or he had been forced against his will in suffering for you; that fact would have a somewhat chilling influence upon your hearts? I do not think that the love of Christ, in connection with his sufferings and blood, would ever melt a sinner, if he conceived a deep idea in his mind that Jesus was forced to suffer for his salvation. No; that which melts our hearts is the thought or the fact that Christ's sufferings and death were voluntarily, readily, cheerfully, and resolutely met by him.

"Determined to save,
He watched o'er my path,
When, Satan's blind slave,
I sported with death."

We did not ask him to die for us; and no creature ever asked him to do so for him. He was self-moved, and the love that first prompted him constrained him subsequently, and it constrains him now; and this thought warms our affections, and melts our hearts—

"Was it for crimes that I had done
He groaned upon the tree?
Amazing pity! grace unknown!
And love beyond degree!"

We were resolved to be damned, and determined to go to hell; and he was resolved to step in between us, and the hell that we had resolved to sin ourselves

into; and as he could not save us without pouring out his heart unto death, he said, "Justice, take my heart, and my flowing life; for I am determined to save." "He stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem."

Fourthly, I cannot dismiss this part of the subject without observing *that Christ would not have been a perfect pattern or example* had he not suffered willingly; and, hence, you perceive there is a great deal involved in his willingness to suffer. His perfection as our example is involved therein. It is human to try to avoid death, to wish to escape sufferings even when they are divinely appointed. We are sometimes unwilling to enter them, even when God says, "This way, child, through those afflictions;" even then, we shrink, and like imperfect creatures, endeavour to avoid them; and on the whole, perhaps, every child of God would say with myself, "I should like to go heaven without dying." Paul had a feeling of that kind, and said, "Not for that we would be unclothed." No, Paul himself did not love death; there was something chilling even to him in being unclothed: "Not that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon; that *mortality might be swallowed up of life*." Elijah and Enoch went to heaven that way; and the saints that shall be on the earth at the second coming of Christ will be changed as *they* were, and so go to heaven; but otherwise, "it is appointed to all men once to die, and after that the judgment." And do you stedfastly set your faces to go to death? Do you stedfastly set your faces to go to the grave, knowing that you too will be received up? No, you act like yourselves; you shrink; you are reluctant, and you falter. Look at your Saviour, and your example. When the time was come that he should be received up, he steadily and stedfastly, set his face to go to Jerusalem. There was no shrinking on the part of your Lord. My brethren, your great Lord would not be able to give you grace and strength, according to your day; neither could he give a dying saint grace to depart cheerfully and willingly, if he himself had not been perfect in his sufferings, or had he died unwillingly? Oh, he now knows what is needed in death; and by dying willingly himself, he acquired a right to give it: and he is exalted above all blessing and praise. He will give strength, according to your day, and dying grace in a dying hour. The perfection of Christ was involved in the act of steadfastly setting his face to go to Jerusalem. In that place he was to bear sin, and receive the punishment that was due to it; there all the holy hopes of millions were to centre and rest; there, the purposes of God were to receive their fulfilment; and there he was to meet three worlds, heaven, earth and hell—his offended Father, the powers of darkness, and angry men. At Jerusalem he was to accomplish the work that he came into the world to do, and from thence, or close to that city, he was to ascend to his honours and his throne. It was thus with Christ—No Jerusalem, no heaven; no cross, no crown; no death, no church, and no throne; for Heaven had not received him had he not put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Secondly and briefly, *The results and reward of his death: he was received up.* "And it came to pass, when the time was come that he should be received up." My dear brethren, God is a God of order; and everything in nature, providence, and grace is timed. I have been censured in some parts of the country for asserting this fact, and declaring my belief in it. But it seems to me unaccountable that God should have timed everything in nature, and nothing in providence and grace. The sun rises punctually every morning, and sets every night, at a given minute; and the same order may be observed of the moon and the seasons. Yes, God has timed everything in nature—the rising and the setting sun—summer, winter, autumn, and spring; but nothing is timed by him in providence and grace! Dismiss the unwarrantable thought; for God loves order, and without it salvation would not be what it is. "When the time was come," for there was a time for Christ to die, the hour having been appointed; and hence in the 17th of

John, the Lord said, "Father, the hour is come," and I am here. He was punctual. He was on the spot at the time, and, so to speak, a little before he was due, saying, "Father, the hour is come." Come and smite me, that my blood may flow. I am willing to be opened as the Rock of Salvation, that the water of eternal life may gush out, and run among the dry places like a river.

"When the time was come that he should be received up." Take this as indicating Christ's *ascension and enthronement in heaven, and first notice, his reception there was an expression of Divine approval*. The gates were thrown wide open, and holy and rejoicing angels accompanied him; for he was a glorious Victor and Conqueror; and his ascension into glory, and the fact that he proceeded to his own throne, and took his seat upon it, while his Father crowned him, should all be taken as an expression of Divine satisfaction and delight.

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

Had not sin been atoned for; had one precept of the law been unfulfilled; had the guilt of one whose name was on his breastplate been left remaining; heaven would not have received him, and he would not now be upon his throne. If you are hoping in the mercy of God, and leaning upon the dear name of Jesus Christ, remember he is now in heaven, having been received there. Cheer up, for your guilt is put away, and your salvation is an accomplished fact; for Christ loved you, and gave himself for you. His *reception was universal*—that is, he was received by all. His Father received him; angels received him, and methinks the saints that were there, and had been in heaven for ages, received him also. And we are glad that he is there; for "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go to my Father: for my Father is greater than I." Yes, he is there. Some persons have asked the question, "Would it not be a blessing if Jesus were personally here?" No; it is best as it is; and, therefore, thirdly, *We have him where we most need his presence*. He has been received up. We are going into unknown worlds. I have before quoted that solemn verse of Toplady, in the beautiful hymn, "Rock of Ages," one of the verses of which reads thus—

"While I draw this fleeting breath,
When my eyestrings break in death,
When I soar to worlds unknown,
See thee on thy judgment throne,
Rock of ages, shelter me;
Let me hide myself in thee."

The last two lines of that verse should be applied to each of the four previous ones:—While I draw this fleeting breath, Rock of Ages, shelter me; when my eyestrings break in death, shelter me; when I soar to worlds unknown, shelter me; when I see thee on thy throne, then shelter me. We need to be sheltered everywhere, and at all times. Christ has been received up, and is, therefore, where we need his sheltering and saving presence; for we are going into a world of minds, over which presides the Father of spirits; and what must it be to be there! We are going into the presence of that Being whose love peoples heaven, and whose glory fills eternity. We well know each other on earth, but we know Christ best of all. Do you not think so? I have tried to think upon this subject, and have concluded that after all the believer's knowledge of Jesus Christ is wider and deeper than his knowledge of the creature can possibly be. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire

beside thee." You have more confidence in him, more faith in him ; you tell him what you cannot tell your nearest earthly friend ; commit to him what you cannot commit to any other being. Let us bless his name, who has been received up, and is now before that God into whose presence we are going. He went to Jerusalem to make a way to heaven for himself and for us, and now he ever liveth to make intercession for all that come unto God by him.

Lastly, *we shall follow him*. Who ? Had time permitted, I would have dwelt a little upon the experience of those who shall follow the risen Saviour. Why, generally, every believer, every one that loves his dear name. Take the penitent sinner who is leaning on his blood and saying, " God be merciful to me a sinner," that man shall follow Christ. The weeper, the broken-hearted, the trembling, the faint, and the feeble ; the poor soul that feels that there is nothing between him and hell but Jesus Christ, and nothing between him and damnation but His precious blood,—that soul, like Christ, shall be received up into glory. May the Lord command his blessing, for Christ's sake. Amen.

THE NEXT SERMON WILL BE READY ON AUGUST 15TH.

Printed and published by BRISCOE & Co., 28, Banner-street, Bunhill-row, London, E.C.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

Four copies post-free, by sending stamps to the above address.

HEARING AND KEEPING THE WORD.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, 22nd JULY, 1877.

"But he said: Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it."—Luke xi. 28.

THESE words were occasioned by two or three expressions which fell from the lips of a particular woman in the congregation which Jesus Christ was addressing. It appears she became somewhat excited by the miracle she had seen, and the discourse to which she had listened. "And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked; but he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it."

Christianity may be considered as a system of heavenly doctrines, and as an experimental and vital reality, communicated by the Spirit to the hearts of sinners, by which they become meetened for the inheritance of the saints in light, and also as a public profession of religion. There are persons in connection with God's church who separate the doctrine of Christianity from the experience of a Christian, and others who separate a public profession of religion from both doctrine and experience. Our God is a God of order, and, having never been the author of confusion, it is impossible that he should countenance it. Christianity, as an experienced fact, has its source and spring in the heart of God, and those representations and declarations of eternal love which are connected with it are denominated the doctrines of saving grace, and the glorious gospel of the blessed God. These doctrines are indeed a divine system of truth which conveys to, and generates in, our minds the idea of perfect order and harmony in connection with the system of Christianity. Love, blood, and power comprehend all the purposes, plans, and designs of the Lord our God. The Father has loved his people with an everlasting love, and the Son of God has redeemed the eternally loved with his most precious blood; and all the loved and completely redeemed family shall be brought in due time to know themselves as sinners, to cast themselves as guilty and undone upon the atonement of their redeeming Lord, and by faith in that atonement they shall be carried into a realisation of their interest in God's everlasting love. The doctrines of grace are from the grace which they indicate, and that grace is communicated to the heart, which then becomes in sympathy therewith; for they are meat and drink or spiritual

VOL. II., No. 4.—AUGUST 15, 1877.

food to the soul that has been graciously saved. Hence our Lord said to Nicodemus, "Ye must be born again;" not only in order to possess a meetness for heaven; not only in order that you may possess spiritual capabilities and powers; but in order to BE, or in order to exist: for just as there can be no personal and visible existence without a natural birth, so neither can there be any spiritual being or existence in the kingdom of Jesus Christ without a spiritual birth; and therefore Jesus said, "Ye must be born again." When the new birth has taken place, a new creature is the result, and that new creature is a manifested son or daughter of the Lord God Almighty. Such a person knows somewhat of the meaning of my text: And Jesus answered the woman and said, "Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it."

My divisions this evening will be very simple. In the first place, I shall have to direct your attention to *the character indicated* in the text: "They that hear the word of God and keep it;" and, in the second place, to *the great fact asserted in relation to this character*: "Blessed are they;" and, thirdly, I will look at *the general applicability of the text*, or show that it is capable of being generally and universally applied.

I. In the first place, let us direct our attention to a few things in connection with the character indicated: "Blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it." A great deal has been said and written upon the word of God. Do we know what it is? When we mention it upon our knees, or otherwise, have we any definite idea concerning it? The word sometimes means Christ himself, sometimes it means the written declaration of Jehovah's will which we have before us to-night, and sometimes it means holy discourses preached by godly men; and hence the phrases, the Incarnate Word, the written word, and the preached word. The word incarnate, written, and preached, becomes applied to the heart, and the word applied becomes the indwelling, ruling, and governing power of the soul. Jehovah—blessed be his name!—has been pleased to speak, and when he opens his mouth it becomes the world to listen; and when he speaks in a saving manner, as he has spoken, it becomes the guilty to be attentive. The poor heart that is broken, and the spirit that is bruised, is all ear and attention when Jehovah, upon the throne of grace and majesty, stoops to speak. God has uttered his voice, and that a mighty voice; he has opened his mouth and expressed his thoughts. His grand and mighty intentions have been uttered, and we have them before us in the Bible, and especially in the complex person of his beloved Son, and therefore Jesus Christ is designated the Word of God. When one speaks, it is generally supposed and believed, that he is revealing his thoughts and expressing his feelings; and when God opened his heart, and gave his complex Christ, he uttered his mind, expressed his thoughts, and revealed his intentions and everlasting love. He, therefore, that knows Christ knows God; for he knows his Great Word. All that God has to say he has said, in and by Christ; all that he has to give he has given, in him; and all the saving secrets that he has to impart are in the person of his Son; and, therefore, "Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it." Jesus Christ is the visible image of the invisible God, and what he is, officially and personally, that the gospel is declaratively; for it sweetly reveals and manifests him. Therefore we have the heart of Christ in the written word, and in Christ himself we have the heart of the invisible God. Hence, "This is life eternal that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

But, coming a little closer to the subject, I notice in connection with this character, *the operations of the Holy Spirit*. "Hear and keep it." There is only one Being in the universe that can savingly apply the word to a sinner's heart, namely, Jehovah the Spirit. Angels have spoken for God, but they have never

impressed his words upon the hearts of their hearers. Ministers have spoken of and for him, but they have never impressed his words upon sinners' hearts. I have heard of unaccountable and strange things having been addressed to Sunday-school teachers and others, concerning their duties and responsibilities: that it was their duty to convert the children they taught, and to convey the word into their minds. My beloved friends, (and I know that I am addressing some Sunday-school teachers,) it can never be your duty to do that which only the Spirit of God can perform. If it requires an almighty and gracious God to lay the word upon a sinner's heart, then it is not your duty, neither is it the duty of any creature under heaven to apply it. The Holy Spirit brings the word into the heart, and gives it an abiding place therein. If you consider the barriers which are round about the heart of a sinner, and contemplate them in connection with your own experience, you will at once see the force, scripturalness, and propriety of these observations. There is enmity—how deep, how strong it is!—and where is the creature that can break down this barrier and put Bible truths vitally into the heart of an enemy? There is the natural ignorance of the human mind, which is dense and dark indeed, and where is the creature power, even if you think of Gabriel, that can clear it away, and put gospel light, vitally so, into the human soul? There are prejudices in the hearts of unbelievers which no human power can remove or shake; and prejudice is a strong and mighty force; but when Jehovah the Holy Spirit, who is equal with the Father and the Son—comes with the word of eternal truth, he breaks through all the enmity, through all the ignorance, and through all the prejudice, and sweeps them all away, and drops the inestimable treasures of light, life, and love, into the guilty heart and conscience, and a new creature rises up beneath his new-creating hand, and casts his newly-opened eyes up towards heaven, saying, "God, be merciful to me a sinner." He who has thus heard and received the word will be sure to keep it; and such a person is pronounced "blessed" by the Lord of life and glory: "Blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it." An inworking God is an all-important fact. He is a God without us everywhere, surrounding us at all times; but does he dwell within? Is Jehovah the Spirit the possessor of our hearts. If so, we have a God at work within; and just as he is at work in nature, in providence, and in all the elements, so is God the Spirit at work in the heart of every saved sinner. Eternal love necessitates the in-dwelling of the Spirit, and the precious redeeming blood of Jesus renders his presence and operation in the heart absolutely necessary. Blood ever flows where love has made her mark; and where love and blood appear, there power will sooner or later work. The Son follows the Father in the great scheme of salvation, and the Spirit follows the Son, and the Father, giving us a meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light. The word of God is, as we have said, his great and deep thoughts revealed in Christ, and Christ is revealed in and to the heart of a sinner by the Spirit of the Father and the Son, and blessed is that man who obtained his religion in this way, and whose knowledge of the word of God is the result of divine teaching. An indwelling and inworking God is, then, a real fact, and an all important and glorious reality. See, then, your God at work out of doors, and turn your eyes within and see him at work there also; and do not tell me, or any of your fellow-men, that you are strangers to these things. You know—and I speak strongly and confidently—that there is a God working in your breasts. You know that the Holy Ghost dwells within, and that an almighty agent is carrying on special and wonderful operations in your soul. Can you cast away your hope? You would rather cast away your natural life. Can you separate yourself from your religion? The thing is utterly impossible, for your religion and yourselves are inseparable. The roots

of a tree take firm hold of the soil in which it grows, and the soil takes firm hold of them; and the religion of heaven takes firm hold of every faculty of the mind, and every power of the soul takes firm hold of the word which is rooted in the true believer's heart; and just as you could not uproot a tree without breaking up the whole of the ground in which it stands, so neither can the plant which God's right hand has planted in the heart be rooted up, without destroying the mind in which it is rooted. "Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it." Here then, friends, we have a divine operation.

But let us pass on and notice, in relation to this character, that he that hears the word of God and keeps it *possesses perfect knowledge*. I do not mean in degree, but in kind. The kind of knowledge possessed by a hearer and keeper of God's word is perfect; it is growing, progressing, advancing; nevertheless it is as to its nature, quality, and properties, perfect knowledge; for "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." It seems to me that the person that knows all things may be said to possess perfect knowledge, only the "all things" mentioned by John are inseparably connected with salvation, grace, heaven, holiness, and God; and, therefore, let me express two or three thoughts on this point. He that hears and keeps the word of God knows all those things which it is essential to know in order to be saved. No man can be saved unless he knows sin, and he that has received and keeps the word knows what sin is. No man is saved unless he knows the grace of God, and he that hears the word and keeps it, knows God's grace. No man can be saved unless he knows God himself, and he that has received the word, and keeps it, has a true knowledge—limited, shallow, bounded, it may be, and is—yet he has a true, correct, and saving knowledge of the triune God of salvation: he knows all things.

And then, secondly, the person indicated in my text possesses a *sufficient knowledge* of all things connected with salvation. "Now are you not going a little too far?" No; I believe not. I do not express opinions, generally speaking, in the pulpit; for I do not believe in that kind of thing in a minister of the gospel. Peradventures are for the parlour, perhaps, but certainly they are not for the pulpit; and, therefore, I fearlessly declare that he that has the word of God, and keeps it, has a sufficient knowledge of all things in connection with salvation. This is proved in a moment, in this way: the Holy Ghost is the author of all-saving knowledge, and he never gives a poor soul too little of it. When he comes to save, he comes as an almighty Being, and it would be inconsistent with the grandeur and majesty of God to give such a measure of knowledge as would leave the soul in fatal ignorance of eternal life and salvation. No; the knowledge, as we have already said, which you possess is progressing and advancing; but the Holy Ghost having opened your eyes, touched your hearts, and given you the word, and a knowledge of eternal things, he has imparted to you really and truly a meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light; and, although you may complain of your ignorance, having had the word of God deposited in your hearts by the Spirit, should you "fall asleep" to-night upon your beds, you would die in the Lord, you would die in peace, having received the word from God, and having been constituted the temples of the Holy Ghost. And then again, on this point, not only have God's children a sufficient measure of this knowledge, or a measure sufficient for all saving purposes, they *know* all things. Now, I want my hearers and friends to lay as great a stress as possible on the word "*know*." Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye *know* all things. How is this? What is knowledge? It is not a doubtful state of mind. If you are in doubt concerning a particular point, or period, or person, you cannot be said to know. Knowledge is assured belief; and he that has received the word, having an unction from the Holy One, *knows* all things. Aye; but it would be

better to express ourselves humbly. Certainly, and you do not know all things if you express yourselves proudly; for he that expresses himself proudly does not know all things: he does not know himself. But will it not be better to tread delicately and softly here, and to speak becomingly? Certainly, but if you do not know yourselves, or if your knowledge does not amount to assurance, you have no true knowledge of yourselves. Is it a doubtful matter with you as to whether you are guilty sinners? You *know* that. But suppose men came with a multitude of peculiar arguments to reason the point with you, do you think they could reason you out of the fact that you are guilty beings? You *know* they could not. That is sufficient. And do you feel it is a doubtful matter that grace is necessary to save you? Oh, if I be saved, sovereign grace must save me; and if I go to heaven God shall have all the honour and praise for ever. You *know* then, my friends, and it is not a matter of opinion with you. Having received the holy unction, ye know all things; and let me say that your knowledge is therefore precisely like that which is possessed in heaven,—not, I say again as to its measure, but as to its kind. You know God, and know Christ, and know yourselves, and know salvation; and, oh, when you are helped to realise your interest in the doing and dying of the Son of God, and all your guilt and fears are carried away, and your heart is immersed in love divine, how exalted is the mind! How blessed, then, is your experience! And if such be the “sweetness of the streams” here on earth, “what must the fountain be!” Well, we leave that part of the subject. The character indicated is the subject of divine operations, and he possesses a perfect knowledge.

Do not the words, in the third place, indicate a *continual and glorious conquest*? “Blessed are they that hear the word of God and *keep* it.” Thousands hear it that never receive it, and some seem to receive it somehow who do not keep it; and therefore the Saviour has said, they and they only are blessed who hear it, and keep it. If I thought it were gospel, and felt it were good, I could stand a quarter or perhaps half-an-hour showing you what hard work I sometimes have to keep the word. I do not know that it would be proper or profitable to dwell upon the hellish temptations that have been hurled at my mind by the great adversary of souls. Oh, there is a devil, though some say there is no such agent or being as Satan in existence; but there is a tempter, and his power is strong, and he frequently troubles my heart and attempts to snatch the word of God therefrom. Sometimes I find it difficult work—and a word to the wise and thinking is enough—to hold fast the word of God; and, friend, I believe that if the word and Spirit did not keep me, I could not keep the word. If the Holy Ghost, who deposited the word in our hearts did not keep both our heart and the deposit, we should soon make shipwreck concerning faith and a good conscience. Have you ever had the unhallowed thought—Is the Bible true? Is it the word of God? Have you ever been tempted in relation to the person of Christ? Has a multitude of God-dishonouring, unbelieving, and infidel thoughts crowded at times into your minds concerning the Bible, and that too perhaps, when you have been upon the knee of prayer? Blessed is he that keeps the word; and he that has received it from God shall keep it, because he that gave it will keep the souls of his saints: nevertheless the struggle is great. My friends, we have been driven to this at times: suppose we surrender the word and give up the gospel, we must have something to believe in, therefore give us something better; we must have something to rest our souls upon—supply something better than the Bible; we are going into eternity, and it is a solemn thing to go thither; we want more than a rotten or an uncertain plank to carry us over into another state; we can venture our hearts on this bridge, or on the word of God, and believe that that will carry

us safely over ; if you take this away, give us a stronger and better one. Yes, my friends ; the child of God is sometimes in a state of deep and terrible conflict about holding fast or keeping the word of God, and "Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it." We can, however, sing with Watts, for after all we love the eternal truth of God,—

"Should all the forms that men devise
Assault our faith with treach'rous arts,
We'd call them vanity and lies,
And bind the Gospel to our hearts."

Although I have just mentioned some of the peculiar temptations which I have encountered, I have the most unlimited faith and confidence in the glorious gospel of the blessed God; and perhaps these temptations concerning the word are sanctified by our Lord, so that the Bible—the word of God—becomes dearer and still dearer to the hearts of his tried people, for the conflict they experience in connection therewith. Let us therefore leave that portion of the subject. Hitherto, the word has kept us, and we have kept the word, and therefore—

Lastly, this character *must be finally and completely saved*. "Blessed are they that hear the word, and keep it." If the Holy Spirit opens the ear of a sinner, and deposits the word of divine truth in his heart, something more must follow. He that does all this for the soul, will preserve it until death is reached ; and such a divinely blest mind must go victoriously through death, into the realms of eternal happiness and glory ; for the word of God abides in the hearts of God's people for ever. My friends, does the word dwell in your hearts ? Have you heard it savingly ? Do you keep or desire to keep it—for God's sake, for your own sake, for eternity's sake, for its own sake?—is this your experience ? By and bye, then, when you enter the solemnities of death, the God of the word will be with you, and the word itself shall be fulfilled to you, and a holy buoyancy of heart shall be experienced in the swellings of Jordan, such as you and I have witnessed again and again. Oh, a dying saint means what he says when he expresses himself thus—God has said so and so. On his word, I hope, on his promise I now rest. You and I may speak thoughtlessly, and have shallow feelings, while our heads do not ache, and our hearts are not conscious of death ; but when we come into dying circumstances, things are sternly real, and the soul under them truly feels that it must be sustained and supported and rendered buoyant by the word. May we confidently believe that the word received in the heart will, in connection with God, carry us into the presence of its great Author. So much for the character.

II. Just one word on the fact asserted in relation to the character indicated. "Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it. Blessedness has been pronounced by the Lord Jesus again and again. Sometimes he says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit ;" 'Blessed are the pure in heart ;' and 'Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness ;' and in my text it is, "Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it." First of all, this blessedness is *divine*. Some people bless themselves, and some are blest by their fellow-creatures, and half or three-quarters of the world believe or fancy that they are blest, and that they will be blest by and bye ; but there is only one blessing that is substantial, real and saving, and that is God's. Hear what the judge will say at the last day, addressing his people on his right hand : "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." All your own self-conferred blessings will leave you, and all those of the creature will evaporate and disappear ; but the blessing of a true God will abide with you for ever and ever. Is the word within ? Is the gospel there ?

Is eternal truth sweet and dear to your hearts? Then the Father has blessed you, the Son has blessed you, and the Spirit has blessed you; and there are in reserve for you in another state and world, joys and glories, rest and pleasures, such as mind can never conceive and tongue can never express. The blessing therefore is divine. God has blessed you.

And observe, the phraseology of the text is very peculiar; the blessedness *is a present favour*. "Blessed are they that hear the word." Some people think of religion and religious matters in connection with the hour of death, and they hope it will be this and that when they come to die; and after they are gone, they hope it will be all right. I want a *present* salvation, a present Saviour, present blessings, and all the rest I can prayerfully and confidently leave. 'Tis not enough for me to hope or know that I shall die well; for I do not know how I may die, although there may have been times when I have had a comfortable hope in relation to death. It is not enough for me to hope that I shall die in safety, and go to heaven, and be crowned with immortality and eternal glory there, for I breathe this petition—

"Yet now and then, dear Lord, bestow
A drop of heaven on worms below."

I want to talk with God before I reach him; I want to be familiar with him before I see his face; I want to receive blessings from his hands now, before I am disembodied; and the text tells me that I am thus blessed if I hear and keep the word. "Blessed are they that hear the word and keep it." And then, my friends, this blessing *is universal and eternal*. There is something very solemnly interesting in the wondrous and pleasing fact, that when our beloved friends are passing away and all their powers are fading, they are blest in their exhaustion and prostration; as they lie in the everlasting arms of their Father; their very groans, and sighs, and prostration, are all blessed. And I would rather go through the world to death with pain and sorrow, having the word in my heart, than go singing and seemingly full of joy down to the grave without a knowledge of the gospel and of God. Oh, if the truth of God is in the heart, you may sigh, and be sad, and weep; you are and shall be right with God. My fellow-sinner, my hearer who does not in a manifest way belong to the church of God; you may sing, and dance, and spend your days and nights in pleasure, being a stranger to the word of God; but a terrible awakening awaits you. They only are "Blessed that hear the word of God, and keep it:"—blessed now and when they die, and when we stand beside their graves, making a few observations on the dust that we are burying there. Their graves and their very dust are blessed, and every particle of it shall exist beneath the Saviour's eye, and he will re-call it at the last day, and re-make and re-fashion the whole; and their bodies and souls standing at the right hand of Jesus Christ shall hear the blessing pronounced again—"Come, ye blessed of my Father."

III. What shall be said on the subject, as it seems to be capable of being generally applied? Look at it, first of all, in connection with the Virgin Mary. Why, you say, do you go to her? Why, on account of what is stated in the preceding verse—"A certain woman of the company lifted up her voice and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked." Now had there been any intention on the part of the Lord Jesus to exalt the Virgin Mary, or any intention on the part of his Father to constitute her anything like a mediator, or an object of worship—and I hope I am reverent in my feelings—Jesus Christ was hardly wise, or correct, or just, on this occasion, when he interrupted the woman, and, as it were, said, Do not talk about the womb that bare me, nor the paps which I sucked, that is of little importance. "Yea,

rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it." I say, this was the place for Christ to have exalted his mother; and this was the time for him to make it appear to all the world that she was to be a kind of medium between God and sinful man, but passing Mary by, he said to the woman that was applauding and exalting her, "Yea rather, woman, blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it." This will apply to *all who are thinking of their ancestors, or attributing importance to their carnal descent*—children of Abraham, and religious fathers and mothers, or believing parents. Well, it is a mercy to have believing parents, a religious father and a praying mother; this is, no doubt, a great favour, a mercy with which some of us, it may be, were not favoured; but a good father beholds a bad son, and a gracious mother looks very often on a graceless daughter. It matters but little to me or you that our parents are going to heaven. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." He only is blessed that hears the word of God and keeps it. Have I a minister here to-night? The text, methinks, speaks to him and to me also; it shows us *what we are to preach, and the character that we are to comfort*. Oh, are you not to comfort all people? No; "Comfort ye, comfort ye *my people*, saith your God." It is our business, my brother, to pursue the sinner into all the refuges of lies to which he runs, and ministerially to drive him out of them as well as we can, and our business to lead him as far as possible to Jesus Christ; and if we know or hope he is convinced of sin, to give him no rest in any shelter but that of the dear Redeemer's person and work; and if we feel convinced that our hearers are resting in Christ, and hoping in his mercy, then let us take all the comforts of the word, and pour them liberally and profusely down upon them; for they and they only, are the persons to be comforted. Having made these few observations, and time being now gone, I will close by intreating the Lord to command his blessing upon us all, for Christ's sake. Amen.

THE NEXT SERMON WILL BE READY ON SEPTEMBER 15TH.

Printed and published by BRISCOE & Co., 28, Banner-street, Bunhill-row. London, E.C.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

Four copies post-free, by sending stamps to the above address.

JESUS ALTOGETHER LOVELY.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, 26th AUGUST, 1877.

"Yea, he is altogether lovely."—Song of Sol. v. 16.

IN the word of divine truth we have many views of the church of God, considered as the bride of Christ. "The king's daughter is all-glorious within; her clothing is of wrought gold: she shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework." And again, "Thy Maker is thy husband, the Lord of Hosts is his name: . . . the God of the whole earth shall he be called." And, again, the honours and happiness of the church are set forth in the book of the Revelation. The angel said to John, "Come hither, and I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife;" and, from a high mountain, John saw the holy Jerusalem descending from God out of heaven, having twelve foundations, and twelve gates, upon which were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. The church of God, therefore, is the bride of Christ, and this blessed fact runs very obviously through the whole of divine truth.

In reading the book from which the text is taken, it is always necessary to contemplate Christ as the heavenly Bridegroom, and his followers or true believers collectively considered as his spouse, and the river of everlasting love should be considered as flowing between them both. He loves his church, and his church loves him; he expresses his love to his people in various ways, and they express their love to their Lord and Husband according to their ability. He never leaves nor forsakes them, although at times he tries their love, and faith, and hope; for when he hides or seems to hide his face, his beloved followers are troubled. The church, in this chapter, represents herself as alone; she says, "I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer." The believer comes into the house of God to seek Christ, but he does not always find him; he opens the Bible, hoping that he may find Christ; but he does not always hear his voice therein. He goes into the holiest of all, hoping that he may find and see him, but Jesus sometimes seems to withdraw himself: hence, "I sought him; but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer." She then proceeded to state something concerning the conduct of the watchmen—that is, of ministers of the Gospel—that went about the city whilst she was endeavouring to find her Lord. They found me; and it is a very important thing to be found in the house of God, and by a Christian minister! The watchmen did not treat her, however, as she desired to be treated; for, having found her, they smote her and wounded her, and the keepers of the walls took away her veil from her. Addressing herself to the daughters of Jerusalem, she said, "If ye find my beloved, tell him I am sick of love." Having received such a charge as this from the bride, the daughters of Jerusalem are represented as saying, "What is thy beloved more than another beloved, O thou fairest among women? What is thy

VOL. II., No. 5.—SEPTEMBER 15, 1877.

beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us?" Having a very correct knowledge of her Lord, she proceeded to portray his person and character. "He is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand; his head is as the most fine gold; his locks are bushy and black as a raven; his eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk and fitly set." And, further tracing his excellencies and beauties, she said, "His mouth is most sweet; yea, he is altogether lovely;" and when you see the altogether lovely One, him whose name is Wonderful, Immanuel, who is God with us, then you will see my Lord and Husband, and tell him that I am sick of love, and am longing for a visit from him.

I desire, in calling attention to these words, in the first place, to contemplate *the fact itself* that Jesus Christ is altogether lovely; and, secondly, the *influence of this fact* upon all that know his name.

I. In the first place let us contemplate *the fact asserted* by the church, "Yea, he is altogether lovely." Preaching Christ is a very important work, and doing so with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven is very sweet and blessed employ. Sitting at his feet, and listening to his heavenly and precious words, and realising the fact stated here, that his mouth is most sweet, is indeed most blessed experience. There are not many persons in the world, comparing the number of possessors of grace with the world itself, that know the beauties of Jesus, and sit at his feet, and hear the words that fall from his sweet lips, or that can say from heartfelt experience, "He is altogether lovely."

Let us notice, first of all, that the loveliness of Jesus is said to be *universal and perfect*; he is *altogether* lovely. This was not a mere opinion on the part of the church, it was the expression of that faith which is the gift of God, and of that knowledge of which God himself is the author. The church felt what she said, and now feels what she says, when she describes her Lord as the altogether lovely one. "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee." The learned tell us that it might have been rendered, "My beloved is all desire." All desires—all that the soul can wish and want, all that an immortal mind sanctified by grace can possibly desire, is to be found in Christ; in his lovely face, in his precious person, in his glorious work, and in his overflowing fullness. "I shall be satisfied," said David, "when I awake, with thy likeness." Christ is the "desire of all nations," and every soul that knows him declares that there is none so lovely as he. Observe then, that all human beauties and all divine glories, unite and shine in the glorious person of our great Lord. Of abstract Deity I do not think it would be quite correct for the sinner to say, "He is altogether lovely." Were he a mere man, nothing more than a man, though great and high in office and glory, I do not think it would be correct to say "He is altogether lovely." No, we must have in the person that saves us, that influences, governs, and leads us, and in whose presence we hope to dwell, all the excellencies of Deity and all the perfection of humanity. Apart from the manhood of Christ, Jehovah would be too far off, and his grandeur and glories would be terrible to man as guilty; while Jesus, as a mere man, though near, would be too weak and limited to save; but the two natures are united, and their excellencies are blended in the mysterious person of God's dear Son. It therefore follows that as the whole of God and all that is essential to humanity is in Christ, he is universally amiable and altogether lovely. This is our Friend and Lord, (so we speak in this place,) O ye daughters of Jerusalem. We know nothing of abstract Deity, and nothing of mere humanity in the person of our Lord, Head, and Husband. We must have justice, righteousness, equity, holiness, eternity, independence, sovereignty, truth, grace, mercy, and love,—all these divine excellencies blended in our Christ; and at the same time we must have all natural sympathy, love, and virtue, meeting and shining in our Redeemer. Christ's manhood moderates his Deity, and his Deity elevates and dignifies his manhood. God out of man cannot do us good, and man out of God cannot do us good; having

however, God in man and man in God, we have what we require in the marvellous person of him whose name is Wonderful.

Our Lord possesses all the loveliness of *all the creatures* of God's power. Let us try to follow the church, and go a little way into this great subject. We say that all excellencies and glories that appear anywhere in the creatures of God appear in all their fulness and perfection in the person of our Lord. There is not a beauty in angels but what appears in its perfection in Christ; nor was there a beauty in Adam before he fell but what is for ever perfect in our Lord, and there is not an excellency in saints before the throne but what is in him in all its fulness, nor is there an excellency on the earth but what is perfect and complete in the person of God's Son. No creature, limiting our attention to those who are on earth, possesses all natural, moral, and spiritual excellencies; hence, one is highly intellectual, but not moral; another is truly moral, but not intellectual; another is loving and tender, but ignorant; and another has a clear understanding, but a cold heart; and, therefore, one excellency is found in one creature, and another in another, while a third possesses several; and taking all God's creatures we observe a multitude of scattered excellencies shining like glow-worms here and there. But look upwards and contemplate the great Christ of God, and you learn that all that is good on earth is in his fulness in heaven; all that shine below, like candles or glow-worms, shine like a mighty sun on high in him. All his heart is love, all his mind is wisdom, all his arm is omnipotence; every excellency that can possibly exist is in its perfection and glory in our great Lord, for he is the great embodiment and representative of all excellencies, and all are divinely full in him. We love a little, have a little knowledge and a little faith; but he from whom these graces came is infinite in his love and boundless in his knowledge, and never can be limited; for he is altogether and for ever lovely. Jesus possesses every name of majesty, and of meekness and love. Jehovah! how high, how great is that name! But blended with that great name is another, the Lamb of God! What a combination, is it not? The great and terrible God, and the harmless, amiable, and sinless Lamb! Take away the Lamb, and the very name of Jehovah alarms and repels us; but all the glory and majesty of Jehovah shine upon me through the meek and lowly Lamb of God. Thy Maker, who is he? The Lord of Hosts! How terrible is that name! but he is our Husband. The high and lofty one; he that inhabits the high and holy place. Is that too far off, and is that grandeur too dazzling? Wait a little, he is altogether lovely; for he is near at hand and his greatness cannot be too vast if he is your God. He dwells, indeed, in the high and holy place, and is the high and lofty one; but he dwells also in the human heart. "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." If you want greatness, there it is. If you want goodness, there it is. If you want majesty, in its dazzling splendour, there it is. And if you want meekness and lowliness, hear what the mighty One says: "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls." He is altogether lovely. He is so, because he is so great and so good, so high and so low. He sits on the highest throne, and he dwells in the humblest heart; and that poor soul that lies lowest in the dust has, if I may so speak, most of the presence and grace of this altogether lovely One. All the names, then, of majesty, might, power, grace, and glory, shine in our beloved Lord.

Then look at his official character and glory. All official names are in him, and he fills all important and saving offices. It was very important to fill the office of a prophet. That of a priest, under the Jewish dispensation, was also very important. David was a great man and occupied a high position as king of Israel, and so, too, did Solomon. Sometimes a prophet was a priest, for both Jeremiah and Ezekiel were priests, or belonged to the priestly tribe, and they also were prophets; but it was not usual for a priest to be a king, indeed those

offices were never united in the same person, Melchisedec excepted. The king was sometimes a prophet, but the priestly and kingly offices were not united; but Christ is seated a Priest upon his throne, and wears a regal crown; for he is not partially but altogether lovely. A Teacher, sent from God; a Prophet; an Ambassador, from the bosom of his Father, to unfold the deep mysteries of eternity; the saving Priest of his people, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; and the great King of grace, of saints, and of glory, reigning and ruling over all the universe of God. A Shepherd, Husband, Brother, Friend, Redeemer, and Surety,—and where can we end? The subject is an endless one. Every name that is connected with salvation, every office out of which the fulness of God flows, is found in this altogether lovely One. He does not depend upon angels, nor upon anything in his creatures, not even the greatest of them. He is all in all to God, and all in all to his church. Again, look at him in all possible connections, and observe that he is altogether lovely. Shall I remind you of the fact that he was, and is, our Surety; that he approached his Father in the councils of eternity, and that this was considered so marvellous and wonderful that the Father expresses himself as if he were astonished, “Who is this that engageth his heart to approach unto me, saith the Lord?” Approach unto me as a Surety, and undertake to execute this plan, and to save millions of persons! Why, that involves the bearing of the curse, the quenching of hell, and the blending and uniting of all my moral attributes and perfections, and here is a Being who engages his heart to approach unto me! Who is he? Well, he is the altogether lovely One; and having approached the Father as the Surety of his bride, what did he do? Oh here we have a Sponsor, if you will. He promised and vowed in the councils of eternity that we should be honourably, completely, and eternally saved. Bless his name! he is altogether lovely. See him, then, as putting on our nature, coming into the virgin’s womb, and dressing himself in our flesh. “The Word was made flesh;” and dwelt among us, for he could not otherwise have dwelt among us; “and we beheld his glory, (the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and full of truth.” Altogether lovely, thus. See him under the law which we had broken, and follow him, day by day, for three-and-thirty years, until he reached the end of the precept. For whom did he obey? For his bride. She could not live with him without this, and therefore he is altogether lovely thus. See him bathed in sweat, and blood, and tears, grovelling in the garden and drinking the cup of wrath which his heavenly Father had mixed, and see him emptying that cup; and although he was crucified in weakness, and the powers of darkness surrounded the dying Sufferer, yet he conquered. Faith loves to view him in connection with the accursed tree, and says he is altogether lovely there.

“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.”

See him rising from the grave, indicating the fact that his great work had been accepted. The bars of death had been broken, and the grave consecrated for his people. Oh, the consecrated grave is a pleasing thought, since we must lie therein. Who did this? Why Jesus, our dear Lord, went into it, and converted it into a bedchamber, and then ascended to heaven; and we hope to follow him, and shall not be disappointed.

“His track we see, and we’ll pursue
 The narrow way till him we view.”

Then there are the mysteries of providence, some of which are terrible, God’s ways being past finding out. The altogether lovely One is in every dark and deep providence, and that fact makes it useful and saving to his bride. Separate Christ from the mysteries of providence, and you could not bear to contemplate

them; providence would not then be fraught with saving blessings: but Christ sits on every cloud, he controls every wave, holding the winds in his fist and the waters in the hollow of his hand, and—

“Not a single shaft can hit,
Till the God of love sees fit.”

Hence, if you look at him in connection with God himself, in connection with all his offices, filling all times, places, and circumstances, there is no fault anywhere; he is altogether lovely. I must add this idea: whatever he is, he is in a superlative degree, he is always the best. Is he a tree? “As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons.” Is he water? he is the water of life. Is he bread? he is the best in God’s universe, the bread of eternal life. Is he a gift? he is God’s best. Does he bestow much upon his bride? all that he gives is worthy of himself; for in his conjugal character he expresses his affection by imparting the best he has. Does he cast a robe over his beloved church? it is the best robe. Are we walking in the way to heaven? it is the best, the only way. Oh, Christ is the best in every respect; happy is the man that is one with him. Are we lovers and followers of this altogether lovely one? It seems to me that since Jesus Christ is all this, the attention of God’s dear people will be engaged and fixed upon him for ever. If there is not another object in the universe like him, the eye will never wander from him. Go to the Museum, and see the thousands of objects that are there exposed to view, and perhaps it will take you some months to examine all. You might take a deep interest in that vast collection of curiosities, but in time you would get through the large building and want another museum and other objects. All that museums and worlds ever can contain, that is divinely excellent, is to be found in this altogether lovely One. Man, study thyself. Better still: man, study the Christ of God. Man, know thyself; a very important direction, no doubt; but it is better still to know the Lord of life and glory; for he that knows him, knows himself also. The eye, then, will always be satisfied with Jesus, and the attention will always be fixed upon him; for his dear person will answer every enquiry. Every excellency being in Christ, a vision of him will satisfy the most deep and powerful mind for ever; therefore, he is altogether lovely.

In the second place, he is the *fountain of all loveliness*; not only is he lovely in himself, he is the spring of all the loveliness of others. “Wash me, said David,” “and I shall be whiter than snow.” This moral or spiritual whiteness is a mercy and a blessing. Who removes guilt and filth so deep and dark as yours and mine? This altogether lovely One. It is his blood that removes sin and makes the sinner whiter than snow. “He shall beautify the meek with salvation.” Who will do this? Christ does this, and the church comes out with her wedding dress—wearing all the best that Jesus Christ has made—and she says, he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation and covered me with the robe of righteousness, and I am adorned as a bride for her husband. The garments of salvation always beautify their wearers.

“And lest the shadow of a spot
Should on my soul be found,
He took the robe the Saviour wrought,
And cast it all around.”

And then, listen: “Thou art comely through the comeliness which I have put upon thee.” You have not a beauty but what came from your lovely Lord, nor a spiritual excellency but what came from him who is the fountain of all grace, and therefore, the fountain of all moral and spiritual loveliness. Is a repenting sinner a lovely sight? Yes, for angels sing over him. Repentance comes from this lovely One. Is a believing soul, clinging to Jesus, a lovely sight? Yes, for God cannot lift his hand against such a person. That clinging faith and love came from this lovely One. And is practical godliness or obedience lovely?

They are all from his grace and Spirit. Is a saint lying calmly and smilingly in the cold arms of death, when the clammy sweat is on the face, a lovely sight? The lovely Immanuel produces this. All come from this altogether lovely One. By-and-bye, friends, the general assembly, and the whole church of the First-born written in heaven shall go into glory covered with these beautifying robes of salvation; and he will present the whole without spot, or wrinkle, or blemish, or any such thing. Sir! who are these, and whence came they, and how came they to be so lovely and so beautiful? Collectively considered, they are the bride, the Lamb's wife. Whence came they? Out of great tribulation. But there are no scars nor flaws upon them? No; the altogether lovely One is their Husband, and his loveliness is the fountain of their beauty; therefore are they without spot before the throne of God.

We notice, thirdly, that the loveliness of Jesus is the ground of divine acceptance. It is the ground on which both himself and sinners are accepted by God. The ground on which he was accepted. When he came to do his work, truth and holiness expressed their confidence in him, and followed him everywhere; for he is an attractive object to the Father himself. And when, having completed his work, he returned from the field of battle, the gates of heaven flew open to receive this lovely One. Heaven received him joyfully; all the angels of God sang his well-deserved praises. And then this universal loveliness of his is the ground and spring of his own felicity and rest. If there were a flaw in his character, or he were morally or mediatorially imperfect, he himself would be unhappy; for a consciousness of fault, and of the fact that it is known, make some minds unhappy; and if Christ were conscious of a defect, he would be unhappy; but he, knowing he is the perfection of beauty, is the God of peace in all respects. Again, his universal loveliness is the ground of your acceptance also. Separation from him is deformity. Union to him secures beauty. You cannot be wanting if you are in him. Out of Christ, God sees no sinner lovely. In Christ, no one is otherwise than lovely. Therefore your persons are accepted and approved in the Beloved—and what then? Why, because you are thus lovely, God opens his almighty wings and says, child, creep under them, for you are accepted, and shall dwell under the shadow of the Almighty. Accepted in him; and then, wilt thou not put my tears into thy bottle? for their tears are accepted also! Surely the divine acceptance of the sinner is wonderful, for if so much importance be attributed to their tears, what must their persons be in God's estimation! Their thoughts, too, are deemed important, for a book of remembrance is written before him, for those that fear the Lord, and think upon his name. A bottle for their tears, a book for their thoughts, a refuge under his wings for their souls; the favour of asking what they will; the privilege of gliding safely through death into eternity, and in eternity nothing less than mansions, thrones, crowns, and robes of eternal honour! All this is owing to the worth, merit, and glory of the altogether lovely Jesus. O that we may know more and yet more of him!

Fourthly, it is a *realised fact*. He is lovely in the estimation of the Father and the Spirit, and of every angel, and of the spirits of just men made perfect. What the glorified whispered here, they sing in heaven. He is altogether lovely. Have you realised this in the liberty of pardon? Oh then your chains fell off, and you leaped over every barrier into a large and wealthy place; you felt and realised the loveliness of Christ. You enter your closets, have intercourse with God, and forget the world; you ascend the mount of meditation and holy prospect, and see that goodly land that flows with milk and honey; you put the hand of faith upon your title, and believe it is good, and thank Christ for all—and he is worthy. This is Christianity, spiritual love, and spiritual power. Let me die the death of the righteous, but let me live his life also—losing my fears in him when they rise, and having my faith, hope, and love deeply rooted in his superlative excellencies, for this is living Christianity indeed.

II. *The influence of this fact.* It is an *attractive* or a drawing influence, therefore it is said, "Because of the savour of thy good ointments thy name is as ointment poured forth; therefore do the virgins love thee." "Draw me; we will run after thee." And the church, having breathed a prayer, received at once an answer; for immediately she says, "The king hath brought me into his chambers; we will be glad, and rejoice in thee." The name of Jesus and his beauties are truly attractive, and the whole work of salvation is inseparable from them. He never drives sinners into heaven, nor into acceptable obedience. Persons are drawn to particular places and objects, according to their tastes and wants: hence a lover of art visits the museum; the learned inquiries for the intellectual, and a lover of flowers is attracted to the garden or conservatory. So the well attracts the thirsty; bread the hungry; and gold the miser. But an awakened sinner does not ask for gold, or works of art, or learned men. What he wants is Christ, the lovely One: "They shall ask the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward." You may know your spiritual condition by asking yourselves honestly this question—What is Jesus Christ to me? because, if anything is more precious to you than Christ, you do not yet know his name; but if there is no being in the universe so precious and lovely to you as Jesus is, you know something of his name, and have been saved by him. "Unto him shall the gathering of the people be." There is no uncertainty here; for when the Holy Spirit gives a spiritual taste, opens the eye of the mind, and reveals this altogether lovely Jesus, the sinner runs, being drawn to him. His righteousness and salvation are admired by such an one, and therefore he runs, and falls at his feet, crying, "Wash me, Saviour, or I die." Jesus is surrounded by a great variety of characters. One group of sinners are looking at the Saviour, and trying to rest in his salvation. Another group has been led into liberty. Their guilt has been removed; pardon has been sealed upon their consciences, and they are shouting—"Yea, he is altogether lovely." "This is our Beloved, and this is our Friend." Another group are sorely tempted, but they cannot however be forced away from this lovely One. The devil's arrows are sharp and poisonous. They want to have them extracted, and they know there is no place but Calvary, and no being but the Saviour that can extract the venom, heal their wounds, and help them in the hour of trouble. This influence of Immanuel, having drawn the soul, will hold it fast. There will be times, alas! (would it were not so); when our affections drop down from him into the dust—times when our love will be

"So faint, so cold to thee,
And thine to us so great."

Nevertheless, having seen the beauties of Jesus whatever our feelings may be, the judgment is fixed, and the understanding is settled as to the infinite beauties and importance of God's dear Son, and hence the believer sighs—

"Oh for a closer walk with God,
A calm and heavenly frame!"

Then, secondly, this influence is *transforming*. Jesus not only draws sinners, he changes them also; and hence "We all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." When a deformed person looks at an individual who is naturally beautiful, the sight does not change him. He remains what he was before; but when a deformed sinner is brought face to face with Jesus, and his affections are fixed upon him, the very sight transforms the heart, and makes the soul lovely, and hence Christ's beauties convert the slave into a son, the sinner into a saint, and the enemy into a friend; and we may apply this to principles and places as well as persons, for they convert night into day, duty into privilege, the curse into a blessing, and the bitterest sorrows into the greatest mercies. And then this influence is *deadening* in relation to self, and sin, and the world. In proportion as Christ is exalted in one's heart, self sinks, the world

recedes, and sin becomes hateful. Whilst Christ is seen, other influences have no effect upon the heart, and the mind is completely carried beyond all that glitters here below. Let us pray for a larger outpouring of the Spirit that God's children may have more to do with this lovely Christ, and see more of his beauties, and we shall not be required to use the whip. The people will turn their backs upon the world, rise above it, and be dead to it; for it is impossible to stand and gaze by faith upon the lovely Christ, and love the world also.

In the last place, this influence is *elevating* and *refining*: for as Solomon says, "He that walks with wise men shall be wise," so he that walks with Christ becomes christianized; for it is impossible to have much to do with him without becoming like him. They only that are thus elevated are able to form a proper judgment of this world, of sin, and of creatures generally. He that does not know the altogether lovely One does not know God's standard of eternal excellence. The contrast between Christ and sin is perfect, and the blackness of sin can be seen only in the clear light of the altogether lovely One. This influence raises the mind above the reach of Satan also; for while one holds communion with Jesus and the whole soul is absorbed, Satan's temptations do not reach us, and vile thoughts pass not through the mind. "The fear of man brings a snare." Some persons are so weak as to fear coming before God's people to tell them what he has done for their souls. But if the lovely Jesus appears, and one has holy communion with him, although he cannot put half-a-dozen words together correctly, he will say, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul." Oh there is nothing like this influence to elevate the mind above the fear of man! Death is a reality, the passage through it is very solemn, and we shall want a sight of this lovely Jesus therein. I feel as if I could not die unless my eye were fixed on this lovely One; and if, on the other hand, my eye be fixed upon Jesus, it will not be death to die. Good old Simeon could say, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." The good old man wanted to see nothing else, having seen the babe Jesus, and having had him in his arms. Now, he says, let me die; now let me "depart in peace, according to thy word."

By way of concluding, let me just say this influence is *absolutely saving*. Is he precious to you? Does the text express your experience? If so, you are going to heaven; for a poor soul that realises the loveliness of Jesus cannot be sent to hell. No, your tastes are spiritual; your sympathies are with him, and the Holy Ghost is within you. If he is altogether lovely to you, you are saved, and your salvation must be consummated and perfected in a better world. Amen.

THE NEXT SERMON WILL BE READY ON OCTOBER 15TH.

Printed and published by BRISCOE & Co., 28, Banner-street, Bunhill-row, London, E.C.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

Four copies post-free, by sending stamps to the above address,

Parcels of back numbers, not fewer than 12, may be had from the Printers, at half-price, (viz. 6d., post free.)

CHRIST'S PROMISE TO HIS TROUBLED FOLLOWERS.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, 2nd SEPTEMBER, 1877.

"I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."—John xiv. 3.

THE Saviour, addressing his disciples said, "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." The person of our Lord is infinitely great, and if we were capable of receiving infinity into our minds, I should say that he was infinitely precious to all his people; but as we are incapable of comprehending the infinite, a thousandth part of his intrinsic and personal preciousness can never be experienced by his saints. He is precious, not only in his person; but in all his offices, characters, and titles. He is precious on the cross, in the grave, as rising from the dead, ascending to heaven, and as enthroned at the right hand of divine Majesty. "Unto you which believe, he is precious" in all respects; as the great revealer of the saving secrets and purposes of God, as the great interpreter of the Father's grace, as the great channel in which eternal love for ever flows, and as the great purifying and perfecting medium through which all the services of his people are presented to his heavenly Father. Jesus is precious to all that know him. I have said that he is the great Interpreter of the Father, for he opens his heart to guilty men. It is impossible for creatures to know what is in the heart of God, without the mediation and official work of Jesus Christ, by which he opens the mind of the Father and bids the believer look into it, at times enabling him to say, "He hath loved me with an everlasting love, and with lovingkindness hath he drawn me to himself." Our Lord is the opener of human hearts as well as of that which is divine. He opened the heart of Lydia to receive the things which were spoken, and he opens the hearts of all his people in regeneration to deposit therein inestimable and heavenly treasure. Having opened a heart, he fixes his eye, which is as a flame of fire, upon it, and the sinner trembles in his sight. He conveys saving grace into it, roots godly fear therein, and constitutes the person thus dealt with a saint and a sacred one, having communicated to him a meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light. He opened the Scriptures to his disciples, that they might understand them. Ministers open the Word of God, but they cannot reveal eternal things to their hearers; when, however, the great Author of the Bible unseals the Book and removes the covering from our minds—one text after another, one doctrine after another, and one promise after another—it is as if we had never seen or read the Gospel before; for Jesus Christ is an all-sufficient and saving Interpreter of the Word of God. And Christ has opened heaven, according to the word spoken to Nathaniel, "Hereafter thou shalt see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man;" and I have thought in connection with this service this evening, that in the 14th chapter of John we have the heavens opened for us by our dear

VOL. II., No. 6.—OCTOBER 15, 1877.

Redeemer. "Let not your heart be troubled." The infidel, or at least the deist, tells us that although there is a God, he does not trouble himself about the affairs of this world, or that state of things or those operations which we call providence. But God, however, having made the world, owns and rules it also, and providence is therefore presided over by him; and not only so, he notices the wounded heart and the sorrow that is in the human soul. Our Redeemer is a Saviour of the suffering and the sorrowing, and the tears of his people, being expressions of spiritual sentiments, are put into his bottle. "Put thou my tears into thy bottle; are they not written in thy book?" I cannot think that anything insignificant or unimportant is admitted into the book of God's remembrance; and, therefore, if thoughts are registered in heaven, and tears are bottled there, there is a special importance in them. "Let not your heart be troubled." Notwithstanding what the infidel sneeringly says, our Christ manages worlds by his will and power, and that same Being that made the sun, and this and all other systems in the universe, looks upon a trembling human heart and says, "Let not your heart be troubled." "Ye believe in God." This he knew, for he is the searcher of the hearts and the trier of the reins of the children of men. I know it; for I am the Author and the Finisher of your faith, and he added, "believe also in me." In different respects, but with the same faith. You believe in God, the great Majesty of heaven and earth; believe also in me as the only Mediator between you and God. It would have been—and I speak it with reverence—inconsistent on the part of Christ to say, "Believe in me," had he not been a divine person. "Ye believe in God; believe also in me." And then he proceeded to open heaven, telling his disciples to look up and to look into that glory-world. "In my father's house are many mansions." Here are places of rest and liberty, and places of toil and bondage; but there are no scenes of bondage or poverty there. In my Father's house are mansions—many mansions of love, and grace, and glory; and all shall be occupied. If it were not so, I would have told you; for not only do I speak the truth, I am the Truth itself. I am the way to those mansions, and the distance between them and you is not great, I go to prepare a place for you. My Father has prepared heaven, and the kingdom for you; but you would not be at home therein without me, and therefore I will go first and prepare a place for you. As heaven was prepared before Christ went, what are we to understand by his words, "I go to prepare a place for you?" Yonder is a beautiful mansion, situated in the midst of extensive grounds, surrounded by all possible conveniences and accommodations, and with many servants in attendance. A couple have just been married, and that mansion and those grounds are the property of that newly-married pair. The wife goes home without her husband, but she is not at home, notwithstanding the excellence of the mansion, the costly character of the furniture, the vastness of the grounds, and the number of the servants. What she wants is the presence of her husband to prepare it all for her. Yonder is heaven, prepared for the family of God by the Father; but the family fell, became sinful and guilty; they cannot appear with comfort in the presence of Deity without their dear Redeemer. Therefore, let not your hearts be troubled; I must go, and you shall follow me by-and-bye, and appear with me before my Father. I go first to prepare a place for you, and then I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

Some of my hearers may wonder why I have not read the whole of the verse for my text. I have preached from the first clause before, and I do not know that I should have taken these words to-night, had it not been for the fact that our beloved sister H.,* whose ransomed spirit is in heaven, repeated them a short time before God called her away, and I have been informed that they were the last words she was ever heard to utter. "I will come again,"—and, unable through prostration and weakness to finish the sentence, it was finished for her—"I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

* A funeral sermon for a member.

In looking at our text we notice that it is a very sweet and precious promise: "I will come again, and I will receive you to myself; for where I am, there ye shall be also." Let us look at this promise in three relations: first, in relation to *Christ himself*; secondly, in relation to *his believing followers*; and, thirdly, in relation to *the existing state of things*.

First, then, in relation to Jesus Christ himself. "Where I am, there ye shall be also." We shall pass over the spiritual coming of Jesus; for, bless his name, he comes in spiritual influences to our hearts in this world, and we love his appearing, do we not? and we esteem no visits, however much we may esteem one another, as we esteem those of our dear Lord. We love that religion which is connected with visits from heaven. The Lord hath visited his people and he continues to visit them; and though we may be laughed and sneered at for talking about experimental matters and holy and heavenly feeling, when he comes down like rain, the heart receives some blessings from him, and holy feeling is certainly the result. We must, however, pass over that, and also over the fact that he will come by-and-bye, when the clock of time is down, and wind up all the affairs of his mediatorial kingdom, to gather up all the purchase of his blood, and to exert an almighty power in a very marvellous manner, by which countless millions of perfected beings shall be caught up to meet him in the air, to be for ever with the Lord. It would be exceedingly pleasant, and perhaps profitable, to dwell upon the second coming of our great Lord. Well, we shall surely see him; for "every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him." Our minds may now be feeble, and our physical powers may be nearly wasted away; but we shall see the last day, and the heavens part, and the great white throne descend, and he that groaned away his precious life on Calvary's tree seated thereon; and before his glorious presence devils shall shake, and mountains and hills shall flee away. His glorious presence shall set fire to the world and burn it up and all things therein, whilst we and our beloved sister, with all the millions of the redeemed, beholding our great Lord, shall say, "Lo! this is our God, we have waited for him." "This is the Lord, and he will save us." It would indeed be pleasant to dwell on that theme, but I want to take another course to-night.

Looking, then, at the subject in relation to Christ, I notice, first, that it involves the *perpetuity of his love*. "I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am there ye may be also." Oh, sweet theme, the love of our bleeding and risen Lord; and sweet indeed is the fact that his love is perpetual and eternal. I wish I could impress the fact upon your minds, that your presence in heaven will not intensify or increase the great Emanuel's love, and that if he were personally present with you on the earth, and personally with you in your residences, his love would not even then be greater than it is now. His love is unchangeably the same, and cannot be influenced by his own state, and we may say that he has been in two states; passing over the period when he was in the bosom of Love eternal, we may regard him in his deep humiliation and in his high exaltation. We may look at him as blood and sweat flowed from his celestial person, and as grace and glory now flow out of that same dear Lord. His love is the same in both states. See him with his thorny crown, and see him with his glory crown. It was a loving Saviour that was crowned with thorns; but his love was not then less than now, it was not greater then than now. Circumstances sometimes cool the affections of the creature. A loving person, elevated by providence, or exalted by change, sometimes ceases to love those whom he had loved, or he loves them less fervently and intensely. Jesus is incapable of change,—the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Do not think, he says, that because I am going away and shall cease to be personally with you, that I can forget you. No; I will come again, and until then you will be in my eye, in my heart, in my bosom, and in my hands. I will come again, and receive you to myself. Time does not affect the love of our Lord. Sometimes it increases, and sometimes it diminishes the love of the creature; but time, and even eternity itself, with all its endlessly revolving ages, can never affect or influence the love of the dear Redeemer. He loved when he was here, he loves now he is in heaven. He loved the first moment of time, and

he will love with the same love until time's last moment ; and when time is swallowed up in vast eternity, his love will be what it is now, and what it has for ever been. Therefore it is not affected by time, nor can it be said to be affected by the condition of his people, by the position they occupy or the places they are in. Do you think you will be better loved when you are in heaven ? Dear friends, you do not think that your departed wife, and sister, and daughter is more deeply and intensely loved now that she is glorified than she was when she was a sore sufferer here on the earth ? Occasionally there may have seemed to you some mysteries connected with the fact that she, being an object of love, should have suffered so severely and intensely ; but now she is glorified, and beyond all suffering and woe, she is enjoying in full perfection that very love—and not a greater one—whose almighty arms were underneath her decaying body and her ransomed and believing soul ; and, therefore, places make no difference to the love of the dear Redeemer. He loves you now as he will love you when you are with him in the place prepared for you, and his love will be sure to bring him to you again, for he cannot live in heaven without you ; and, therefore, as he has prepared the place for you, and you for the place, he will come again and receive you unto himself. Sweet love of God ! and sweet, and precious, and bleeding love of Jesus ! Oh that it might now be shed abroad in each poor stony heart ! And then, my friends, Christ's reasons for ever loving you are abiding reasons ! He will love you for ever, for the very same reasons for which he fixed his love upon you. He never did love you because of your excellencies ; he never did love you because of your faith ; he never did love you because of your works, nor because of your worthiness : he loved you because he would, because it pleased him to do so. As he originally found the motive in his own bosom, and is Jesus, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, that motive is an abiding one. And if the Bible is true, and Christ is incapable of change, his love must be perpetual and everlasting. Love brought him out of heaven ; for that world could not hold him because he loved us ; love carried him to Gethsemane and Calvary, and it burned, and flamed, and triumphed gloriously there. Love took him back again to heaven, love animates him now he is on the throne, and therefore our sufferings and all that leads to our dissolution are not penal evils ; they are not curses, for our dear Lord could not sit upon his throne and rest or be happy if there were such a thing in existence as a curse for one of his beloved people. No, there is not a penal bitter nor a drop of poison to be poured into your cup ; he loves you too well. Therefore curses can never be mixed with your blessings, for he could not bear the sight, he could not sit in heaven and see you unblessed, unhelped, and unprotected or exposed to curse. "I will come again, and receive you unto myself ; that where I am, there ye may be also."

Let us, however, notice, secondly, that this promise considered in relation to Christ, involves, not only the perpetuity of his love, but *the perpetuity of his operations* : "I will come again and receive you." He will not be disappointed when he comes, for he can always put his hand upon any saint ; his eyes are as a flame of fire, and they run to and fro through the earth. Many a mother, having a large family, is frequently obliged to say, Where is that and the other child ? The Lord knoweth them that are his, his eye being always on every one of his people. Whenever he wants a soul redeemed by blood, he knows where it is, and can put his hand on Peter in prison, Daniel in the den of lions, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fire, or David in the rock, or surrounded by Saul's army. Now, you know, my hearers, the words of my text are a promise, and that the promises of Christ must be fulfilled. The word of God must be verified. I have the most unbounded faith and confidence in this fact. The Bible must be fulfilled, from Genesis to the Revelation. Much of the Old Testament, and much of the New has been fulfilled, and part of the book of the Revelation has come to pass ; but the whole must be made good, down to the closing the final Amen. The word of God cannot be broken ; therefore the promise which forms the text to-night must be fulfilled. "I will come again

and receive you to myself." But if Jesus Christ should not continue to work, and that everywhere and in every connection, he would be disappointed. These words cannot be verified, unless he who made the promise continues his operations on behalf of his people. "I will come again," and how disappointing, and terribly disappointing, it would be, if when Jesus comes for a saint he could not find him, or if he discovered that Satan had got full possession of him, and that he had relapsed, as we are told is the case, from a state of life into a state of death, and that he had been dragged back again into Egypt. Oh, blessed be the name of God, this can never happen ! He knew where our beloved sister lived, and when he came for her he went to the right house, the right room, and to the suffering one, and dropped all-sustaining grace and mercy into the proper mind. He makes no mistakes, and he continues to bless ; for the fulfilment of his own word requires the perpetuity of his operations.

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

I believe, my friends, that the cause of Christ on the earth goes on in as satisfactory and successful a manner as his cause in heaven does. "Have you not gone a little too far ?" I do not think so. What is the reason our exalted Lord cannot do as he pleases down here ? And what is the reason he is not executing with satisfaction to himself his own will down here ? Is he incompetent ? Is his arm short ? Is his eye dim ? Is there the possibility of a change, or of weakness and weariness in him ? Oh he is doing as he pleases, in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth. None can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou ? Observe, if you please, and do so for your own sakes, what solemn, heavenly order prevailed at the Red Sea. The confusion to Egypt and to Pharaoh was terrible ; but what order prevailed in relation to the children of Israel. Not one was lame or feeble among the people, all reached the shore of the sea. "Stretch out thy rod, and the sea shall be divided," and divided it was, in an orderly manner. The sea saw thee, the waters saw thee, O God, and stood on heaps. The very depths saw thee, the depths of the sea which had never seen or been exposed to heaven before. Was the Lord angry with the sea ? Was he angry with the rivers ? No ; he was not angry with the sea, but he was with Pharaoh and with the rest of the Egyptians, and he loved his Israel. Hence the order that prevailed, and the people went into the depths of the sea, and walked over dry-shod, and came out a saved nation on the other side. Observe what beautiful and unceasing order prevailed everywhere in the wilderness during the forty years the children of Israel were there. Although the Bible does not tell us this, yet I have no doubt that at a certain hour every morning the manna fell. There was no omission. Every day, except the seventh, it fell from heaven, from the same source, and upon the same people ; beautiful order prevailed for forty years, and that for the purpose of fulfilling the word of God. Look at the order that prevailed at Jordan. On the other side of the river were the noisy Canaanites, the riotous, the bloody, the barbarous Amorites and Hivites, whose iniquity was now full. On this side Jordan were the sacred Israel of God. The ark was carried into the stream, the waters were divided, the people went over dry-shod again. Oh, God is a God of order, and a God of power. Do you think that the order which prevailed in that temporal salvation was greater than that which prevails in yours and mine ? Brethren and sisters, we lose our wives, or our husbands, or our children, or our ministers, or our deacons, we lose beloved friends ; but there is, strictly speaking, no disorder or confusion in the Divine arrangements, or in the government of Jesus Christ. "I will come again, and receive you unto myself." There is a great deal that intervenes between the saint and his inheritance that would crush and destroy him were it not for the almighty and dear Friend, who has said : "I will come again, and receive you unto myself." How shall I stand the trying day ? You

will stand it very well, because Jesus has bound himself to see you through. How shall I die at last? You will die right, because "He will come again and receive you unto himself; that where he is, there ye may be also." Notice, again, the interval between the new birth and death, or regeneration and glorification is filled with special mercies. A most important period, my brother, is that which elapses between the first operations of the Spirit and the coming of Jesus to receive the sanctified spirit. The distance between the two points is with some very considerable; while in the experience of our departed sister it was short. Some of you have known the Lord for sixty years, others fifty, and others for forty years. Well, brethren, here are the two most important points of our being—our new birth and our dissolution, when Jesus will receive us to himself. Between those points there is a multitude of special mercies, favours, and blessings, special providences, and special interpositions, all arranged and rendered certain by the heavenly Friend who has given you this promise: "I will come again and receive you unto myself." The experience of a child of God is very varied; his new life changes, not as to its nature, but as to its depth and operations; it changes according to his position, his condition, and his circumstances. You remember that when you were first convinced of sin your experience was new, that when you were brought into the liberty of the Gospel it was very pleasurable, and that when you have been in trial and trouble sustained and supported by God, it was peculiar to that position; and when you come to die, experience will change again. You can form no idea of that. No, not now, that is impossible; and hence, if young persons plunge down ever so far into the experience of old saints, it is very evident that they theorise; for the experience of an aged saint is what no younger child of God can possibly possess. However, we are dying, and shall soon be in death's deep solemnities, and how shall we feel then? We have got through our conviction, with all the darkness and terror connected therewith; and our souls still remember the wormwood and the gall. We have got through this, and that, and the other terrible affliction; and we remember what our experience in them was, and we shall get through death, having a peculiar experience then. How do you know? "I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

Then, again, in relation to Christ, the text involves the *completeness and perfection of his mystical body*. "I will come again and receive you to myself." Many of the members of the body of Jesus Christ are scattered, and they must be gathered just as we are taught to believe that the members of our bodies, however scattered they may be, after death shall be collected together, and the whole body of every saint shall appear in its full perfection before God for ever. Christ must gather together all the members, scattered though they are, of his mystical body. He cannot be perfect, heaven cannot be full, and glorified saints cannot be complete until all the members of Christ's body are in glory; and therefore he says, "I will come again." I must do it in order to complete my engagements, fulfil my promises, fill up these mansions, and make myself and my people completely happy and glorious. Jesus cannot remain in heaven without you. He must keep his eye upon you as long as you are here; and when you are ripe for glory, he will come and gather you, and receive you unto himself.

And then, lastly, the text implies *the certainty of Christ's presence with his people in death*: "I will come." There is his bond, and it bears his signature: "I will come again." Hold it fast, my friends. Let us pray for grace to do so. Hold fast this inviolable promise and bond, often read it, and look at the signature of Christ. "Ah! but I cannot hold it fast; I let it go, and sink into gloomy doubts and fears, and wonder whether he will come when I die. What then, sir?" Well, bless his name, I will tell you what then. "If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself. The fact that he will come when we die does not depend upon our believing; if it did, I do not think there are many saints who would meet him; for most of us are sometimes afraid that we shall not enter the promised glory. However, here is the bond signed and

recorded in the gospel. At times we hold it fast, and feel that all will be well in death ; but if we drop it and lose our faith therein, and are filled with doubts and fears, yet even then the word has fallen from his loving lips. The utterance has been heard and recorded: "I will come again and receive you unto myself." The devil may be at the bedside, but Christ will be there also. Doubts, fears, and darkness may for a time shake the poor departing mind ; but Christ will be there, and he will take care not to lose the departing and the ransomed spirit. "I will be with you, and receive you unto myself ; that where I am, there ye may be also." Brethren and sisters, the personal presence of Christ in eternity is heaven. This is involved in the text: "I will receive you to myself ; that where I am, there ye may be also." Do you ask where heaven is located ? I tell you I do not know. Some persons have placed it in the sun ; others in some distant sphere or world. I do not know where it is ; and if I did, and stood an hour describing the locality of heaven, I do not think you would be profited. It is where Jesus Christ is ; and wherever he is, and his presence is enjoyed, there the saint finds heaven. "Ye shall be where I am." That is enough, O Lord. We do not mind whether it be in the air, or above the visible and starry heavens, or in some distant wondrous sphere. Heaven is where Christ is, and we are to be with him. "Where I am, there ye shall be." We cannot go beyond that point ; to be with Christ is all, and we cannot afford to stop short of that goal. No ; we must be where he is ; for this, dear brethren and sisters, is the very climax of your religion, of your faith, and of the graces of the Spirit. Higher and higher, and still higher you must ascend, until you see him face to face without a veil between.

Now the text involves certain things *in relation to his followers*, which I can only just mention. A work of grace in the heart. An unsanctified heart is unmoved by such a promise as this, and if Christ took an unsanctified soul into his presence, and smiled upon it in that unsanctified condition, it would experience no pleasure, and enjoy no heaven whatever. The presence of Jesus can never constitute heaven a garden of delight, a paradise, to an unsaved and unholy heart. Our dear friend had been regenerated and quickened into spiritual life, and was therefore capable of living in the light of God's countenance, and in the sunshine of his presence. The work of grace in the heart involves a good hope. This is worth more than all the world, founded as it is on Christ's promises and his atoning blood. "I will come and receive you." A hope that is not bounded by the grave, nor by death. The hope of the wicked runs all round the world, but never gets out of it ; and they wonder what there is beyond death, and fear there is a hell and a hereafter ; but while their hope is bounded by the world, the true believer sings—

"From thee, my God, my joys shall rise,
And runs eternal rounds,
Beyond the limits of the skies,
And all created bounds."

And this hope is what the world can neither limit nor destroy—

"Anticipate heaven, 'twill sweeten those hours
When sorrows all round you appear ;
Will strew all the road to mount Sion with flowers,
And smooth the rough pathway of care."

Lastly, on the part of his followers it involves death and the last day. Some are afraid of both. Whatever may be involved in death, we must meet it, and pass beyond it too. However cold the river may be, we must go through it ; however deep and dense the shadow of death may be, we must pass under it, and beyond it, for "I will receive you unto myself." Some of us may have thought with Paul, that we should like to be taken to heaven without dying, as Elijah or Enoch was ; but that shall not be ; for Christ's rule is that we shall die, and pass through all the solemn secrets of that unknown event. Whoever may then be present, he will be there ; however difficult may be the passage,

he will help us ; and whatever hands may be there, he will receive us. My dear friends, I cannot tell you all that is connected with this great matter. I do, however, believe there are sights, and scenes, and feelings, and experiences in death which you and I have now no conception of. When the soul is on the very lip of life, and just before it flies into the bosom of Jesus Christ, who knows what it hears ? who knows what it sees ? who knows what it feels ? and, so near to glory, there being only a step between the soul and paradise, is not heaven then seen ? Does not eternal day dawn on the happy departing mind ? It is not a little that induces the happy soul to say in death—Farewell ! all is well. Bid all good-bye. I am on the Rock. Come, Lord Jesus ; come quickly. Oh the world could not produce an experience like this. What is it ? “I will come again, and receive you unto myself ; that where I am, ye may be also.”

Well, I must now leave the subject, or I had thought I would look at it *in relation to the existing state of things*. The nation suffers when Jesus removes one of his saints to himself ; for saints are the pillars of the world, the bulwarks of a nation, the salt of the earth, and the horsemen and the chariots of a kingdom ; and, therefore, without knowing it, or caring for it, nations sustain a loss when Christ takes his people to himself. And we might have looked at it in connection with social matters. In connection with the church, by our sister's death we have lost her presence and her prayers, and perhaps her prayers were of more importance in certain respects than her presence. We were not favoured with her presence here for five or six months, but I am sure we had her prayers ; and the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous person availeth much. Prayer is over with her. We shall never receive another benefit in answer to her prayers ; unless some of them remain unanswered ; and therefore the church sustains a loss when Christ calls away his own. “My beloved is gone into his garden to gather lilies,” and we miss the gathered lilies. There are empty and waste places in Zion ; when Jesus comes and receives them to himself ; when he comes into the family, what a gap death makes ! What ties it breaks, what wounds very frequently it inflicts, and what streams of sorrow flow ! But whoever here on earth may lose by the removal of a saint, our loss, and that of others, is eternal gain to the removed one. Thus Christ is coming, preparing and removing persons from the world into the church, and then from the church on earth to heaven. These changes are constantly going on, and the present generation will soon be wasted all away, and another will take its place. Thus heaven is being filled, and Christ's purposes are being fulfilled. The Lord grant that we may die the death of the righteous, having lived his life, and that our last end may be like his. I have refrained from making many remarks upon our beloved friend's experience and departure, because our beloved brother, her husband, has prepared a short paper, which he thought some, if not all the friends, would like to hear.

The statement detailed the physical sufferings, spiritual experience, gradual dissolution, and peaceful departure of our sister ; her last words being : “I will come again, and receive you unto myself ; that where I am, there ye may be also.” Amen.

THE NEXT SERMON WILL BE READY ON NOVEMBER 15TH.

Printed and published by BRISCOE & Co., 28, Banner-street, Bunhill-row, London, E.C.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

Four copies post-free, by sending stamps to the above address.

Parcels of back numbers, not fewer than 12, may be had from the Printers, at half-price, (viz. 6d., post free.)

THE HIDDEN MANNA.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, 14th OCTOBER, 1877.

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna."—Rev. ii. 17.

THE term "church" in the word of Divine truth is sometimes applied to the whole election of grace, to the redeemed family of God, to all those millions that shall ultimately and eternally appear in perfect bliss before the throne of God; and sometimes it is used to designate a body of believers gathered together under the reign of grace for Divine worship, mutual edification, and the conservation and dissemination of gospel truth and ordinances. Concerning the church of the Firstborn which is written in heaven, Christ said to Peter: "I say unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this Rock will I build *my* church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." All the objects of God's love are in Christ, and all their hopes are built upon his person and work; and this one church is eternally secure. Christ is the Rock of ages upon which it is built, and he bears the whole weight of all the persons that compose it, and all their grace and salvation also. This church, therefore, can never be destroyed; but it shall live as long as its Head lives, or as long as Jehovah has power to preserve it; for God "is in one mind, and who can turn him? and whatsoever his soul desireth, (and he desireth the salvation of his people,) even that he doeth." The enemies of this church shall be disappointed and defeated. God's people are even now surrounded by hostile powers which are numerous and strong; but God himself says, I will keep my vineyard, and watch over it, and water it every moment, night and day, lest any hurt it. The heavenly hopes of the true believer shall be fulfilled. All those God-created desires that spring up in the heart of a saint shall also be realised, for

"Christ's honour is engaged to save
The meanest of his sheep;
All that his heavenly Father gave,
His hands securely keep."

But whilst this one church of Christ shall endure for ever, Christian churches, or bodies found in different localities do not endure perpetually; hence the question, Where is the church of Christ that was at Rome? I do not say, Where is the church of Rome? We know where that is, and *what* it is, and what it *would* be if it could? I ask, however, Where is the church of Christ which was in the city of Rome? There was one there, and it was a Christian church, and its members were, I think, well instructed in the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. I think so, because Paul's Epistle to the Romans is a marvellously comprehensive one, and it was not the intention of the apostle when he wrote, to soar above the heads of the people; therefore if they spiritually comprehended the matter, say, for instance, of the 8th chapter of the Epistle, they must have been intelligent persons, and well-instructed in the mysteries of the kingdom. Where is that church now?

Where, again, is the church that was at Ephesus? There was a flourishing

VOL. II., No. 7.—NOVEMBER 15, 1877.

church in that city, and its members were true believers, and the minds of many of them were, I should think, extraordinary as to their depth and powers, or they could not have understood the great and deep letter which Paul penned to them. Where is the church that was at Ephesus? and where is that which was at Smyrna? and that which was at Pergamos? and that which was at Sardis? and that which was at Philadelphia? The one church of Christ is indestructible and imperishable, but Christian churches formed and worshipping here and there are frequently scattered and lost; and I am free and bold to say that *error* has had a great deal to do with the scattering and disappearance of them in many places in the world. What was it that ate into the vitals of the church of Christ at Rome, and resulted in the ultimate scattering and destruction of that organized body of Christian people? They departed from the Gospel. This also brought about the destruction of the church that was at Ephesus. Read what is written here. Christ says to that church: "These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. I know thy works and thy labours, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil, and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars. Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. If the members of a Christian church cleave closely to one another, and by faith cleave closely to the truth, and all of them cleave closely to Jesus Christ, through his truth, we may believe that the Lord will perpetuate the existence of such a body. When however the first love is left, and the door is opened by members, ministers or deacons, and error gets in among the people, it will most certainly operate, and its influence will spread; and just as eternal truth, like salt, is saving and preserving, so error produces disease and decay. A church having admitted error soon begins to decay, and the work of destruction spreads rapidly; one member after another falls away from the truth, an erroneous ministry is set up in the place, deacons become lax, the place soon becomes empty or nearly so, and in the course of a few months or years, it may be, the people have altogether disappeared, and the place has either become closed, or it has passed into other hands. May the Lord grant that we in this place may cleave to our first love, abide by the truth, and in it, never forgetting the fact that the everlasting truth of God is the salt of Christian churches. The church at Rome is destroyed, and that at Ephesus has disappeared, and we know little or nothing about the churches at Smyrna and Pergamos; they as Christian bodies have ceased to exist. The promise which I have read to you this morning was given to the church at Pergamos, which also was, through error, in an unhealthy state. "Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna."

We have a spiritual blessing before us this morning, and we should contemplate it in three relations—first, as *prepared*; secondly, as *concealed*; and, thirdly, as *promised*. In the first place it is divinely prepared—manna which was prepared by God. This blessing is said to be hidden, for there is a mysteriousness about it. Thirdly, it is promised to conflicting and overcoming saints: "I will give to him to eat of the hidden manna."

I. First let us contemplate the spiritual blessing *prepared*, or spiritual heavenly manna. I need not go fully into that part of the history of the children of Israel in the wilderness which relates to God's method of feeding them. You remember correctly that when the people were in the wilderness they murmured against Moses and Aaron because they had no food. Their dough having been spent, and the people being in a destitute condition, the Lord promised to work a perpetual miracle for them, extending over as long a period as they were travelling in the wilderness; and, as they were there forty years, the miracle was, if I may so speak, forty years long; for he fed them from heaven during that period. Every morning, and perhaps at a certain hour, except the morning of the Sabbath-day, manna copiously fell from the clouds round about their tents.

We are told that first the dew fell ; the manna then fell upon the dew ; another dew then fell upon the manna and covered it. The children of Israel went out and gathered it every day, and lived upon that bread until Canaan was reached. "Moses gave you not that bread from heaven," said the Redeemer ; "but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven." "To him that overcometh will I give to eat, not of the manna which the children of Israel received, but, of the hidden manna." The word hidden here used is in allusion to the fact that a golden pot holding an omer was prepared by Moses, and filled with this manna, and deposited in the ark of the covenant. Having been deposited there, with the tables of the law, and Aaron's rod that budded, and a copy of the ceremonial law, the whole was covered with the mercy-seat, and hence the pot of manna was concealed or hidden. Now all this is highly and beautifully figurative of spiritual, heavenly and divine things. "It hath pleased the Father that in him all fulness should dwell ;" and as an omer of manna was the daily supply of every Israelite, so there is a daily supply for every believer, in the person and fulness of the dear Redeemer, who therefore says, "I will give him to eat of the hidden manna." But let us try to particularise for a few minutes, for the purpose of assisting our thoughts and memories, and notice—1. That this hidden manna is a *Divine preparation*—prepared by God himself, as the manna which fell for Israel was a Divine preparation. I am not going to enter into any speculations in connection with this matter. Jewish writers say a great many foolish things about the various points of their history. They tell us the manna was formed in the clouds by the angels of God. I do not know whether it was so or not. If God commanded a number of angels to descend every morning and produce the manna, I do not think that the knowledge of this would very much profit or benefit my heart, and therefore let us take the word of God rather than that of Jewish historians. The word of God indeed tells us that man did eat angels' food ; but it says also that God gave them bread from heaven to eat. However the manna as to instrumentality may have been produced, we are quite sure that God was its Author and Giver ; and we apply this fact to the hidden manna before us this morning. What shall we say about this hidden manna ? Why, just what we say about everything else in connection with Christ, that he is the manna, his person and his fulness is that with which God feeds, nourishes and strengthens the souls of his dear people. Some of you are ready to say, Ought you not to say that the manna is in Christ, and that Christ *contains* the supplies of grace ? Well, he is the manna and its repository also. Just as he is priest, sacrifice, altar, and salvation ; so, I take it, our Lord is both the manna, and the repository in which it is laid up, and likewise the great authoritative Giver of it. "I will give him to eat of the hidden manna." Now this being a divine preparation, let us look at Christ as having been divinely prepared by his Father. What do you think of his incarnation ? and of the two natures that constitute the one person of the great Son of God ? I take it that the constitution of the person of Christ is the masterpiece of God's work. The water from the rock, and falling of the manna, were marvellous in the wilderness ; so these two things in your Lord are wonderful ; his flesh his meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed. Here is the mightiest of all the works of God.

"For in his looks a glory stands,
The noblest labour of thine hands ;
The pleasing lustre of his eyes
Outshines the wonders of the skies."

The sun is glorious, and the moon and stars are great, but—

"Nor earth, nor seas, nor sun, nor stars,
Nor heaven, his full resemblance bears,
His beauties we can never trace,
Till we behold him face to face."

Here is a perfect man and a perfect God also ; and hence Christ is at once the

wisdom of God and the power of God. In the glory-world there will be enough in the person of Christ to engage our eyes, our ears, and all our thoughts and faculties for ever and ever. Some people have spoken, and continue to speak, in a very childish manner concerning the employment and the glories of heaven. "Oh," says one, "when I reach heaven I shall look for my mother, for my husband, for my daughter, or for my son." My beloved friend, when you enter heaven, one grand Object will immediately appear to you, seated upon the highest throne in that glory, and you will see at once and for ever in his dear, lovely face that which will for ever satisfy your soul. Oh, no; you will not be looking about for departed friends and glorified brethren; and if you should know your friends in heaven, for I will not speak positively on these points, their presence will not give you greater satisfaction than will the presence of good old Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Peter and Paul. The fact is, we shall be pleased with every one there, and every one there will be pleased with us; and Christ will be pleased with the vast assembly, all of which will drink in their heaven from him. The constitution of the person of Jesus Christ is a marvellous production of love, wisdom, and power.

That is not all; having constituted Christ what he is, it pleased the Father that in him all fulness should dwell. Here is a second point then, the *impletion of Christ*; for the Father hath filled him—filled this great Christ, and with what? "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Here is manna, and hidden manna too! here is something for thought to live upon; for faith and hope to feed upon; and something to sustain a perishing soul in in this waste, howling wilderness. A Christ that is unequalled, and that will be so for ever; and this unequalled person filled with all the fulness of God! Now, having advanced thus far, we must go a step further, for at present we cannot touch him. A complex person, and filled with all blessings, yet we cannot get at him; he must somehow be brought down to us. Well, look further at the preparation of this manna; it pleased God to bruise him. God hath "put him to grief. When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." Here is the greatest Being in the universe filled with all God's greatest blessings, taking the guilty sinner's place, and bruised by the arm of Almighty justice (and the manna in the wilderness was bruised,) who for sinners becomes heavenly food; and he himself says, "Except ye eat the flesh, and drink the blood of the Son of God, ye have no life in you: but he that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day." Well, here we have the manna brought down, if I may so speak, brought down into the wilderness, and we have it bruised to death, and the precious blood of the Lamb flowing, and removing guilt, transgression, and sin. This is what all the consciously guilty want, for this is heavenly manna. Well, he goes into the grave, and he rises therefrom, and ascends to heaven; and what then? He shall come down: for, having atoned for sin, he returned to heaven; and now he shall come as rain upon the mown grass, and as showers that water the earth. This is heavenly manna prepared by the Father in his own bosom,—in the virgin's womb,—by filling him with spiritual blessings,—by raising him from the dead,—and by receiving him into heaven: in all these respects the Father prepared food for immortal minds, and he was in every way qualified to do so, for he is the Maker of mind, and he knows what the mind is naturally, intellectually, and morally, and what he requires it to be spiritually. Just as the manna that fell for Israel was admirably suited to the requirements of the people, and they lived upon it—so God's provision for his sinful people is admirably suited to the requirements and necessities of their minds. I say that the mind of man was considered by God when he prepared this manna; for Jesus Christ is precisely what the human mind needs, considered as the creature of God. He that made it knew what sin had done; how utterly prostrate and ruined, morally so, it was, and when he pre-

pared manna and medicine for it, all his wisdom was employed in the operation. He produced just what was required to fulfil his own demands and purposes. He resolved to reform the mind, to renew it, or to produce therein excellent qualities and powers, such as were not natural to it, constituting it holy. He prepared bread for the new creatures that he resolved to bring into existence, so that we have in the Lord Jesus Christ a divine preparation for the mind of man considered as a creature, as a sinful creature, as a new creature, as a son of God, and as an heir of heaven. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna."

Let us, secondly, notice another point, that this manna *is a wilderness mercy and blessing*. It is prepared by God, and showered down upon the earth; Jesus Christ is a wilderness Saviour; a wilderness mercy and blessing to his conflicting people. There is something amazing—I use the word advisedly—something amazing to my mind in the fact that we have an everlasting home in another world. Do we speak flippantly when we talk on this and kindred themes? and when we speak of a mansion in heaven, and a home in another world is there always correspondent thought in our minds, and feeling in our hearts? Is there a home for us in heaven, an endless rest there? Then this is not your rest. Here we have no continuing city; for we are going home, and shall continue on the journey until death is passed through, and a better world is reached; but whilst we are on the way, and during the whole of our pilgrimage, we need divine provision, and we want food from our God. Here we have it: "I will give you to eat of the hidden manna; so that Christ, and grace, and salvation, are wilderness mercies. And let me say in addition to this, that having a home in heaven, our title to it is good, indisputable, and inalienable. What we had in Eden we lost, and what the children of Israel had in Canaan they lost; but what we have in Jesus Christ is inalienable and unloseable, and in him we have an inheritance—being predestinated, according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. Here then, we see a home in heaven, and that man that has a title to it possesses a meetness for it too. "Giving thanks to the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." He is, therefore, in sympathy with heaven, and with God's resolutions and determinations concerning himself. God says, This is his home, and I will bring him hither; and the consequence of this is, he feels that this world is not his rest. He is looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and his Saviour, Jesus Christ; and the world that he is passing through, not being his inheritance or his home, is a wilderness to him; and what the desert was to Israel, this world is to him; for heaven has spoiled him for the world, and the world for him. There was a time when it was not a wilderness, but a garden to him; but then he did not know the Lord. Now, knowing the Lord, and that heaven is his final rest, it is as if the world had changed; at all events, having been changed himself, the world is to him now a desert place—a waste, howling wilderness. I do not mean that it is so physically; for so considered our world is a beautiful one, a godlike production, a marvellous creature of divine power. He is insane who would represent the world, considered as the workmanship of God, as a wilderness deformed and empty. No; physically, it is lovely and beautiful, but morally and spiritually considered the present state of things is a wilderness to the child of God. It cannot yield him supplies, any more than the wilderness yielded them to Israel, when they were there. There were no fields, and no corn; they were in a desert, an unproductive and barren land. They were fed, but all their supplies came from heaven, and from the rock. And so it is with the child of God; the world cannot satisfy his spiritual requirements, nor meet his necessities. Shoot gold down at the feet of a spiritual person; he would, if he were poor and needy, look up to heaven, and thank God for appearing for him in forms of temporal mercy; but he would, at the same time, say, "Give me Christ, or else I die. I thank my God for meaner things, but they are not my God." I would not say a word, nor hear anyone say a word, against the good-

ness and mercy of God in temporal things. I deem it a great mercy to be comfortably clothed; a mercy to have a competency here in this desert land, and a mercy to be surrounded by temporal favours and comforts; and the man does not know himself nor God, who opens his mouth against these matters. But there is something else in a good man's mind—there is a new life there, and powers which nothing but that which is heavenly can satisfy. Therefore, the text says, "I will give him to eat of the hidden manna." It is a wilderness mercy.

And then, in the next place, it is *universally suitable*. There was only one kind of bread—to be sure the people lusted for flesh, and God sent the quails; but manna was their principal food, and that on which they lived. It suited the whole congregation, and, perhaps, there were two or three millions. A marvellous supply fell every morning, and the manna suited them all. There were babes, young men, and fathers. How much sickness there was in the camp of Israel at different times, I do not know; it is, however, very certain that there was sickness among them; for a whole generation died in the desert. Well, this food, with water from the rock, sustained them; and as it was with them in relation to those temporal supplies so it is with the child of God in relation to spiritual manna. There is only one Christ for all that know him, want him, and love him. There is a new-born child of God just beginning to cry for mercy—this manna suits him. There is the old saint of ninety years on his dying bed; he has lived upon his Lord, and leaned on his arm, and now he is going to heaven; and this same manna suits him well, and enables him to die satisfied. Therefore, as the manna suited both the princes of Israel and the poor people, so Christ is a Christ for the prince and for the peasant; for the great and the small, and for all conditions. Are you in doubt and fear, and darkness? Are you overwhelmed with affliction? The bread of heaven, this hidden manna, is sure to meet your requirements; and if Christ gives it, your soul will be benefited and blessed. It is universally suitable. And then, lastly, it is *freely given*. Nothing could prevent the falling of the manna. "*I will give*." I beg attention to this point for a moment—the people murmured, but the manna fell; many of them were unbelieving, but the manna fell; and, therefore, it seems that the falling of the manna was unconditional. It was. It did not depend upon the state of the people's mind, nor were their daily supplies governed by their faith or unbelief; it fell according to the will, and word, and faithfulness of God. "If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself." O, if we had no manna until we believed very confidently, until we were deeply and generally holy, we should be starved. No; "I will give him to eat of the hidden manna." If all the Amorites, and Hittites, and others, had gone into the wilderness in the morning, their presence could not have prevented the blessing from descending. God's word had been pledged; his promise had been given to the people, and every morning manna freely fell.

II. Secondly, the blessing *concealed*. "I will give him to eat of the hidden manna." The fact is, almost all things connected with the people of God are said to be hidden. First, the people themselves are said to be hidden. "Thy hidden ones." And where, and how, are God's people concealed? Under the shadow of his wings, under the feathers of the Almighty. Their life is concealed. "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." The people of God are said to be God's hidden ones, because they are in his thoughts before he is in theirs. They are in his mind before he is in theirs, and he knows them. They are concealed in the bosom of his love—hence they are said to be hidden. Thus the people are hidden ones, and the food they live upon is hidden also. And then the acts of giving and receiving are both hidden. You sit in the pew, with your heart wounded; the spirit bleeding, and as full of sorrow as possible. This, your neighbour does not know; and as the service proceeds, the blessing descends, no one sees it, and no one hears it except one person, and that is yourself. The blessing is sent; it drops into the wound, and heals and helps you, and all becomes transformed and well at once, and you sing—

“If such the sweetness of the streams,
What must the fountain be!”

The reception of the blessing into the heart is a hidden favour and a hidden operation. “I will give him to eat of the hidden manna.” But, first, it may be said to be *concealed in God*. God has revealed himself in nature very widely and copiously; he has also revealed himself in providence; but I see nothing like spiritual manna in all the realm of nature. Creation is glorious, as we have said, but there is no Christ, no blood, no mercy, no salvation therein: the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handywork, but they do not declare the pardoning mercy of God. They declare his glory, not his mercy; the glory of his wisdom, the glory of his power, the glory of his greatness is declared, but not the glory of his grace; and as we are guilty sinners, though we are amazed at the greatness of the Creator of the heavens, we feel that we must have something more from him than appears in the works of creation and nature. Therefore the manna is hidden; one cannot find it in nature, nor always in connection with the operations of providence. Hid in God before Adam fell. He did not want it; and had a little of it been put before him, he would not have known what to do with it, for this manna is for sinners, and not for unfallen man, nor for angels; it was prepared by God for the guilty and lost; and, therefore, it was hid in God before man fell. And it was, in a measure, hid in God, under the Old Testament dispensation. But when Jesus Christ himself appeared upon the scene he said, “I am the Bread of life.” “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.” “I am the Vine, ye are the branches.” Hid in God. But we pass on to notice that it is concealed in the Gospel. You say, I ought to have used the word “revealed.” No, I say, it is *concealed* in the Word of God. The Word of God is as a vessel, which is full of Christ. Who sees him in this golden vessel? Who sees the manna here? The conflicting soul, the spiritual mind, the godly man and woman, see Christ herein, and see him, too, in almost every page. Here is the golden pot that has manna, and I hold it up to the ungodly world, and say, Did you ever see so lovely a Being? Here is the Father, here is Christ, here is grace. The world reply, We cannot see manna, or Christ, or God; we can only see the book. Here is the pot that has the manna, but the manna is hidden. You may take this truth in other forms, and regard the pot that contains this manna as figures, parables, metaphors, history and doctrines. Here is a figure—the world stops at it, and does not see the sweet person or fact that it sets forth. The world stops at the parable; and although manna, the bread of life, Christ, is therein, the world sees it not. The child of God puts the hand, if I may so speak, of his holy knowledge and heavenly faith into the parable and finds Christ therein, and it is the joy and rejoicing of his heart. Oh what an instructive history is that of Joseph! There is something beneath that history; besides an account of Joseph himself, hidden and heavenly manna is there. The manna, then, is hidden in the Word of God. David knew that manna was in the word, and that he could not see it without divine illumination, and he said, “Open thou mine eyes, that I may see wondrous things out of thy law.” See the two disciples going to Emmaus. “Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures.” Oh, he opened the pot of manna, he brought it out; for he expounded the things that concerned himself; he brought the manna out, and communicated it to their hearts, which then burned within them. “These things,” said the Saviour, “are spoken in parables, that they which see and hear might not perceive nor understand; but to you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom.” You do not stay outside the parable, nor look at the mere exterior of the word; but you go into the interior for the manna that is hidden therein. Thus it is manna hidden in God, and hidden also in the Word of God. “Thou hast concealed these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.” I will tell you another place in which manna is sometimes concealed. I will only mention it, and that is *in trials and troubles*. You dread some coming trial, but perhaps it is full of blessings. I think Cowper took the same view of the matter, when he said—

“Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
The clouds ye so much dread,
Are big with mercies, and shall break
With blessings on your head.”

As the manna was in the cloud that was over Israel, so there are blessings in the clouds of sorrow and trouble that threaten to break upon you. Some of your losses, crosses, bereavements, conflicts, and sorrows, have been filled with the blessings of God. “Hidden manna.” And then, lastly, *the eating itself is concealed*, not only what we eat, but the act of eating. For instance, the operation of faith on and in Jesus Christ, who sees it? And then the operation of the manna in the soul—who sees that? And, then, the joy that springs up occasionally in the heart of a child of God, a stranger intermeddles not with it. One says, “I never saw so strange a person; he is composed, and calm, and serene, and talks about his trials as though they were real mercies and blessings. I cannot understand it. If I had been in what he has passed through, I should have died there. I cannot understand him.” No, the Saviour had meat to eat, which the world knew nothing of; and the child of God has manna to eat, which others cannot understand, for it is hidden manna.

III. And, then, lastly, the *promise*. And I will give it. *The manna itself is given*. First, Christ gave himself for us; then, secondly, he gave himself to us. He gave himself for us, to redeem; and, to us, as the life and food of our souls. *And then power to eat* is a gift. “I will give him to eat.” Now, here is the bread, and here is the man. Let him eat and drink, and bless the name of the Lord. No; he that gives the manna must give the appetite, and the power to eat also. Therefore, faith is the gift of God, and we are dependent upon Christ for all. Mark, Christ is always the Giver. Whatever the medium may be, whoever the minister may be. Sometimes we attribute considerable importance to a particular medium. How wonderfully blessed I was then and there; and that minister—I always hear him so profitably. Have a care! the man may be placed too high, and be thought too much of. Whoever may be the medium or the minister, Jesus Christ is the giver of the manna. “I will give to eat of the hidden manna:” and bless his name he can do it. Wherever we may be, he does this. His children in prison shall receive it; in caves and dens of the earth, he has reached them and fed them with heavenly manna. In the public means of grace. Unjust laws have been enacted against the family of God, but oh, they could not prevent the manna from falling upon them, though they were not permitted to meet in the house of God. Is the child of God on a sick bed? Has he been confined there for months, longing for the courts of the Lord’s house? I will give him in the chamber of affliction to eat of the hidden manna. Let me close by observing, the valley of the shadow of death is covered with this manna. Oh, yes, it has been rained down from heaven in that valley everywhere, and you and I shall eat, I hope, in death, and be strengthened to go through the river into the land of pure delight at the appointed moment; for as thy days, so shall thy strength be. The Lord command his blessing, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

THE NEXT SERMON WILL BE READY ON DECEMBER 15TH.

Printed and published by BRISCOE & Co., 28, Banner-street, Bunhill-row, London, E.C.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

Four copies post-free, by sending stamps to the above address.

Parcels of back numbers, not fewer than 12, may be had from the Printers, at half-price,
(viz. 6d., post free.)

THE SAVIOUR ARMED.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, 2nd DECEMBER, 1877.

"Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty."
—Psa. xlv. 3.

It may have occurred to some of my hearers, that the feelings of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, concerning the Lord Jesus, must have been at times peculiar; and also that the meditations of David, "the man after God's own heart," concerning the Messiah must occasionally have been exalted and ineffable. Immediately after the fall, God met Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, and gave them a precious promise, but it was expressed in somewhat general terms: The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head. That was a promise of salvation by the seed of the woman, and that when he appeared he should conquer the powers of darkness, and fulfil the deep purposes of God. There was something special, and much that was most precious, in the matter of that promise; but the terms in which it was couched were general. In the days of Abraham, therefore, the Lord favoured his church with a more definite, and, if possible, a more satisfactory view of his beloved Son, the Messiah; for, making a peculiar covenant with the father of the faithful, he told him that the Messiah should descend from himself, and that all kindreds of the earth should be blessed in his seed. Views somewhat wider, and more enlarged than these were probably given to Isaac, but, certainly larger views were occasionally given to Jacob; and, therefore, on his dying bed, having called together the representatives of the twelve tribes of Israel, he pronounced predictive or prophetic blessings upon them. Concerning the tribe of Judah, he said, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." The first promise informed Adam that the Messiah should be the seed of the woman; the second informed Abraham that Christ should be his descendant; and Jacob, in the third place, was instructed to say that he should proceed from the tribe of Judah. The light in connection with the promises of salvation grew clearer and clearer, and in due time Moses and many judges, having lived and laboured, David appeared upon the scene. He knew that the Messiah was to descend from Judah, but nothing until his time had been said respecting the particular family of which the promised Messiah should be a member. Now, however, the Lord met that king of Israel, and gave him several clear and definite promises, concerning the coming Christ, the Saviour of guilty men; and that good old man, seventy years of age, on his dying bed said, "Although my house be not so with God; I see no tokens at present of the promised Messiah; I have a son, Solomon, and several other sons, but I cannot see that any one of them is the promised Messiah, therefore, although my house at present be not so with God, 'yet he hath made with me an

VOL. II., No. 8.—DECEMBER 15, 1877.

everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure. This is all my salvation and all my desire, although [at present] he maketh it not to grow." David knew that the Messiah was to be his Son and branch, and belong to his royal house. Therefore, I say, it may have occurred to some of you that the feelings of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David and others, may at times have been very peculiar, seeing they were to be the progenitors of the Lord of life and glory.

David was favoured to hold much fellowship and communion with his coming Son and Lord. He had clear and comprehensive views of his eternal power and Godhead, and also soul-comforting apprehensions of his perfect and glorious humanity; and, probably, sitting in his palace, on a particular occasion, and his heart being filled with light divine, and his mind pervaded with the influence of God and of heaven, he took his pen and wrote his grace-created thoughts, saying, "My heart is inditing a good matter, or as it is in the margin, it is boiling or bubbling up a good matter. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh; and a good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things. There were, then, good things in the heart of David; it was surrounded by the fire of divine love, which caused it to boil, and the blessed things therein to bubble up, and he could no longer refrain from expressing them. He saw such beauties, glories, and excellencies in his coming Son and Root, that he was obliged to communicate to others some of the feelings of his own bosom, and therefore, his heart boiling up a good matter, he said, "I speak of the things which I have made touching the King: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer. Elsewhere, for instance, in Psa. cx., speaking of the things which he had made touching the priest, he said, "Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." Here in Psa. xlv. he speaks of the things which he had made touching Christ, the King, and his tongue was as the pen of a ready writer. There is a close connection between the heart and the tongue, and between the heart and the hand of a writer. Sometimes the heart is empty, or it seems to be so; and then if a multitude of words fall from the lips, most likely they will be very light and empty. When, however, the heart is empty, the tongue frequently moves slowly, and therefore God creates the fruit of the lip by filling the heart with good things. This was the case with David on this interesting occasion. My tongue is the pen of a ready writer, and looking at his dear Redeemer and Lord as his son, his feelings must have been almost peculiar to himself. His son was his Lord, his Saviour, and his King. Looking at him by faith he said, "Thou art fairer than the children of men." He is of the children of men; bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, and mystically we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. But of all the children of men, he is the fairest; of all the beings that ever appeared before the face of Jehovah, he is the most lovely; and of all the blessed attractions that ever existed, influenced, and drew human minds, he is the most powerful and excellent. Thou art fairer than the children of men. The most beautiful will have admirers, and the most attractive will draw multitudes. Christ is all this, and all that know him follow him. I am not an Arminian, yet I may ask, What is the reason every son and daughter of Adam do not follow and run after him? Why, they do not know him; for all by nature are blind, and dark, and dead. If the world knew him, it would unite with David, in saying, "Thou art fairer than the children of men. Grace is poured into thy lips." We have drops of it now and then; a trace of grace here and there; but Christ is all grace, all excellency, and all loveliness. There is nothing wanting; his countenance is altogether lovely. "Grace is poured into thy lips." Let him kiss me, therefore, with the kisses of his lips; for his love is sweeter than wine. Grace is poured into his lips also in another respect; he is filled with it; and he pours out of himself into the hearts of his dear people, and thus there is a mysterious communication going on between God and the saved sinner. It pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell in him. The Holy

Ghost without measure was given to him, and he imparts by measure, at various times and under various circumstances, portions of his heavenly grace. Well, grace is poured into thy lips; therefore, God hath blessed thee for ever, not because grace is poured into his lips, and not because he is fairer than the children of men. It is not so to be understood; but God having constituted him what he is, and filled him with all fulness, it appears that God hath blessed him. Grace is poured into thy lips; therefore, God hath evidently blessed thee for ever. "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty." I have, perhaps, tarried a little too long on what is commonly called the introduction. The whole of the Psalm, however, is so inviting and interesting that one can scarcely help dwelling for a few minutes on its verses.

Looking at our subject to-night, I shall call attention, first, to *the Saviour's sword*; and, secondly, to *the church's prayer*.

I shall not enter into any definition or description of Immanuel's sword, nor make any *critical* observations upon the fact that he is armed for war, or that he appears here in a military, as well as in a royal character. Perhaps the sword here indicated is his word, elsewhere called the sword of his mouth, and a two-edged sword. Christ is represented as wearing a sword, and also as using it; and I want to take advantage of this fact to-night, and point out a few things which I hope may be comforting and encouraging to my hearers in relation to it. Your saving Lord on his throne, wears a sword, which is said to be girded upon his thigh.

In the first place, he wears a sword, because it is his fixed intention *to guard and defend his beloved church and people*. Do you say, That is nothing very great? I never can introduce anything very great into my sermons, having only limited powers. Let it, therefore, be sufficient for me to say, and having said it, to dwell upon it, that Jesus wears a sword to guard and defend his dear people. He has bled for them, but having done this and taken his seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high, none of his ransomed people would ever reach their home did he not wear a sword and use it also: therefore, your salvation, or one branch of it, is due as much to his sword, as another branch is due to his precious flowing blood. My brother, while you view Christ by faith on the cross with feelings of unspeakable pleasure and wonder, do not forget to view him on his throne also; and whilst you see the thorny crown on his head, and behold the blood streaming from his celestial temples, and rejoice that your salvation flows from all that, do not forget that you could not take another step towards him or towards heaven, if he did not wear a sword on his thigh. It was necessary that he should die on the tree; equally necessary that he should sit on his throne, and equally necessary that he should gird his sword on his thigh, to guard, protect, and defend you, his ransomed ones, on your journey; therefore the church comes forward in the person of David, and says, The sword, Lord, is thine own; gird it upon thy thigh, O most mighty.

Let us look at this great sight. It appears that everything, or almost everything, in the government of God requires this particular interposition of our Lord. He wears a sword, and uses it, because *he loves his people*, and therefore his sword is one of love, or, in other words, his love has constrained him to gird this weapon upon his thigh. Love! how is that? Why, he has a church. And what is the church to him? I cannot fully tell you. I wish I could. I have some idea of the high position she occupies, and of the infinite love wherewith she is loved; but I cannot tell you all that she is to Jesus. She is, however, Immanuel's bride and queen; for elsewhere, it is said, "On thy right hand did stand the queen, in gold of Ophir." Therefore, the church of Christ is Immanuel's bride and queen; he loves her with all his heart. He has not two objects of love in this respect, but one only, and she has his whole heart, and all his affections. Oh what a blessing it is to be interested in this love, and to form a vital part of this vast body! Having the whole of Im-

manuel's love, her royal Husband looks abroad, and seeing ten thousand foes looking at her, and ten thousand forms of hostility opposed to her, and knowing all their plans and schemes formed against her, he grasps the sword and from love divine he resolves to guard and defend her for ever. And, then again, this is a *sword of justice*, for he wears and uses it in the interests of eternal righteousness and truth. If a wife has matrimonial rights, the church of Jesus Christ has claims and rights which will be honoured by heaven for ever. I have not time to set them forth, or even to mention them to night, but the bride of Jesus, having rights, justice demands her possession, use, and eternal enjoyment of them. Those rights are threatened as well as the bride herself. She is threatened and surrounded by dangers; her rights are assailed; litigation, deep and bitter, concerning them is going on; an infernal thief and robber, and many enemies are abroad, and determined to defraud the church of God, and to injure and wrong her if possible; and it is her heavenly Husband's principle to fight for her in the interests of righteousness and truth, and to demand that she possess for ever all that he has acquired for her, and therefore he wears a sword to maintain the interests of love; for he loves his church, and the interests of justice too. Thus he fights for the purpose of vindicating his own name, and guarding the stainless and dimless glory of divine righteousness and truth. We may not know who is right and who is wrong, or whether both the nations now at war with each other be wrong. We hear much about wars that are righteous, and about those that are unrighteous; but "the Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace;" and in righteousness he judges and makes war. Oh, he would never embrace the purchase of his blood if he did not fight for them with the sword of his love and justice; therefore, having bought them, he takes the sword, and says, I will defend and guard them through all dangers to my eternal home. And again, our dear Lord wears a sword for the purpose of *fulfilling his own engagements and the commandments and word of his heavenly Father*. If our Lord did not wear and use this sword, the Bible would be falsified; for events, and persons, and circumstances would render its verification utterly impossible; but Jesus is armed, and every blow he strikes, every enemy he destroys, every interest he defends fulfils some promise, and verifies some portion of the Word of God. Your Lord will fight for his people until the last chapter of the Book of the Revelation is fulfilled, until the last verse, and the last clause thereof, is verified; and until heaven and earth shall shout the very last word, "Amen!" so let it be. Well, he wears a sword to guard his people, because he loves them; to guard them, because it is right and just to defend them; and because the word of God and his own covenant engagements could not be fulfilled without this branch of his work. The sword is used here on the earth, and not in heaven; for there is no hostility there. The work he carries on in heaven is pacific; for he ever liveth there to intercede for all that come unto God by him; but that is not all he does; if it were, methinks, they would never reach the world of happiness, which has been prepared for them. "Father," he says, "I will that they be with me here;" and the Father says, "They shall." "Gird thy sword on thy thigh," and fight for them from day to day. Where thou art they shall be. I hold you responsible for their preservation, their salvation, and their glorification. Therefore Jesus uses the sword here, where the danger and the devil and the hostility are. All in heaven are in holy harmony with the Saviour. Neither the Father nor angels oppose him there. Nothing clashes with his interests or claims in heaven. Here only he uses his sword; and he will use it here, till the heavens are filled with his people.

Let me notice, secondly, that Christ wears the sword *for the purpose of enforcing his own claims*. The children of Israel were in or under the hands of Pharaoh, king of Egypt—a powerful, unjust, tyrannical, and cruel monarch, and a sword called God's great and sore sword, was required to release them from his grasp

Pharaoh was a type of the devil, and Egypt was a type of that state in which God's people are found by nature; and as the Lord took his sword and destroyed Pharaoh, that Leviathan, that dragon of the sea, and all his host, and thus delivered his people Israel; so your Lord Christ has girded his sword on his thigh, and is smiting the devil again and again, and taking the prey out of the hands of the mighty. Israel as they appeared in the wilderness were delivered by God's sword and by his bow; and the home-going church of God, that sacred and sanctified host, have all of them been taken out of the hands of the mystical Pharaoh by the sword, and the bow of this most mighty Jesus. Every convert, or saved sinner, is a gracious and glorious conquest gained by the dear Immanuel. Christ did not shed his blood for the purpose of delivering his people from the devil. If the devil's hands had been the only hands that held them fast, the sword would have been sufficient to deliver them. They were in the hands of justice, however. Moral evil was in existence, and blood was required to set them free from punitive justice; that having been done by the Prince of peace, that great Prince girds on the sword to meet Satan; and he says, Deliver to me those captives, and let those souls go free, for they are mine. I bought them with my blood, and the time is come to regenerate, convert, and save them. And be sure, my friends, the devil holds fast his prey. As a hungry lion having caught a sheep will hold it fast, so Satan holds fast his prey. If Gabriel met him carrying a soul down to hell, and demanded that soul, the devil would still hold it fast. But Christ rides forth prosperously, conquering and to conquer. Immanuel meets the usurper with the purchase of his blood, and he stops him, and takes the prey out of the hands of the mighty, and delivers the captive, and sets him free; and thus every penitent sinner with the tears of godly sorrow streaming from his eyes, and his heart broken and bruised, is a trophy of Divine grace, and a conquest gained by Immanuel. But when Jesus has taken the prey out of the hands of the mighty, the mighty one having lost it, follows the rescued one. All the powers of darkness follow him; and, lest it should be said I am not experimental to-night, let us now have a piece of experience. What is the result of all this? Christ has smitten the powers of darkness, and delivered the ransomed soul, and holds the sword over him to guard him, for he means to take him safely to heaven. The devil now shoots his fiery darts into the saved mind, and that poor soul feels as he never felt before. What temptations, what doubts, what fears, what strange apprehensions now fill his mind! Can it be possible, he says, that I can be a saved man? The thing seems to be impossible. My brother, the great redeeming Saviour has taken you out of Satan's hand with his sword and his bow, and because the devil has lost you he is following you, and is permitted to cast his arrows at you, and many of them enter your mind; and if you had not been delivered by the Saviour, you would not thus be assailed by the powers of darkness. Well, the fiend follows you, but you are now going to heaven under the guardian care of Jesus Christ; and he having saved you will fight for you. Hell would overtake and overwhelm you again, were it not for the presence of your victorious Lord; and Satan even now opposes you. As he followed you when you were first called by grace, so he now meets you in the way. It is terrible to meet the roaring lion; a terrible thing to meet the tempter, whether he comes with frowns or smiles. Hell is a mighty power. I cannot speak flippantly of the devil; he is a dreadful enemy. Woe betide the man whom he meets alone, even though that man be a David, or a Peter. He meets the home-going child of God, and opposes him every day and every hour; and for myself I must say that, were it not for my Saviour's sword, were it not for Immanuel's conquering power, I should fall away from my profession, and concerning faith and a good conscience I should make shipwreck. We seem to escape now only with the skin of our teeth; for sometimes we are carried away into desolation, temptation, and

darkness in an extraordinary manner. Something, however, holds us fast, and we are helped to maintain our hold on that which we love, and we hope that after all we shall be saved at last. But, Lord, gird on thy sword, enforce thy claims, and fight for us all the days of our life.

In the third place, he wears and uses a sword *to destroy his enemies*. He guards his church and his friends ; he enforces his own claims, and he destroys his enemies. What are they ? The day in which we live is an extraordinary one. We are told, however, by the wise man, that it is not wise to ask the question. How is it that the former days were better than the present ? Well, notwithstanding that question, it may be said that we live in very strange and extraordinary times, do you think there ever were so many *terrible forms of infidelity* in our country as exist therein to-day ? Infidelity—sometimes its forms are somewhat taking and attractive ; at other times they are most forbidding, monstrous and repulsive ; but there it is, dangerous, slippery, filthy, and hellish, and its influence is very great ; for the devil is a cunning and mighty foe, as a rule, it is not the ignorant, the unlearned, or persons incapable of reasoning that are infidels. The devil's arrows are sharp, and they enter minds instantaneously, and ever carry poison with them, doing more mischief in a minute than tongue can tell. Christ, however, has a sword, and the day is fast coming when the monster infidelity shall wholly disappear ; for there will be no infidels in hell, and none in heaven. The sharp and mighty sword which Jesus wears will strike that monster dead ; and then there is *antichrist*, with its numerous, revolting, dangerous, and soul-destroying abominations. Antichrist—against Christ—opposed to him, as its name indicates. Well, the Lord seeth that his day is coming. I am not a prophet, nor the son of a prophet. I leave the unfulfilled prophecies of the word of God for God himself to explain and fulfil. I know, however, that the prediction has been heard, and the prophecy has been uttered. Babylon shall fall. That is sufficient for me ; and, therefore, Christ will, sooner or later, draw his sword, and destroy that terrible system. For ages it has damaged the nations and the world, and still its insidious, vile, and diabolical influence is spreading on the right hand and on the left ; but at some future day, unknown to us, Christ will consider the due time as having come, and he will with his sword perform an act, or strike a blow that will astonish all the earth, and Babylon the great shall sink, to rise no more. “Gird thy sword on thy thigh, O most mighty,” to destroy infidelity, and to destroy popery, and to destroy idolatry, and superstition, and error, and will-worship. Oh, Christ will sweep them all away.

But more experimentally, again, for a minute. There is *indwelling sin*. Christ will give a blow, the *last* blow, to that by and by. It is doomed to death, and to destruction. Until its dying day shall come, may the Lord fight for us against that internal and abominable evil. Well, he will strike it dead when we come to die. He will defend us when we die, and use his sword should enemies in force be there, and he will smite victoriously too. All inbred corruptions shall be smitten by the Lord Jesus, and smitten down into death and annihilation. Christ will ultimately clear the heart, and the church, and even the whole earth of everything that he himself is not the author of. There are proper places prepared for principles and persons. Hell is prepared for the devil and his angels, and heaven for the objects of eternal love. Gird on thy sword therefore, for there is a marvellous work to be done. Well, it appears from this, and from other portions of the word of God, that Jesus will, by-and-bye be a *universal conqueror* ; that he will conquer, overcome, and subject, or subjugate all unto himself. Every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess, to the glory of God the Father. This shall be willingly or unwillingly done ; for all shall confess that he is Lord of all. And what a grand sight it will be when this **King Jesus** shall sit on his great throne in the midst of the worlds of angels, good

and bad, and worlds of men, good and bad, and every one shall be on his knees ! The sceptre of grace shall sway the minds of all the saints, and they shall bow willingly and adoringly, and the sword of truth and power shall be felt by every devil, and every enemy, and the blow will bring down every one on his knees to acknowledge Immanuel, and not a single being shall stand on his feet ; for every knee shall bow, and Christ will draw or force the confession from every lip, that he is Lord of all. Satan and hell shall say, He has overcome us ; he is the universal victor, the everlasting conqueror, and therefore he is Lord of all. " Gird thy sword upon thy thigh."

A word only on the *church's prayer*. May we take the words as a Divine command ? the Father's command to Jesus ? if so, then Jesus is to be considered as having done his work, and ascended to heaven, and taken his seat at the Father's right hand, and the Father is to be considered as expressing his approval and acceptance of him, saying, Now, son, gird thy sword on thy thigh, and guard thy ransomed people. It appears, however, that the language of the text is to be taken as the language of the church. David represented the church and people of God, and expressed their desires ; therefore the words may be regarded as the prayer of God's people. " Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty." It is an *avowal of the worthiness of Jesus*. It is " thy sword." Thy interests and thy cause are most important. Thou art worthy to reign, and since there must be a conflict, and the results and consequences are truly important and solemn, thou art worthy to place thyself at the head of the whole warfare ; and therefore take the sword, and use it, we beseech thee. Angels could not take that sword and gird it on ; it would be presumption on their part ; and if they could take it and use it, they might commit errors here and there. Some might die that ought to live, and some might live that ought to die ; blows might be struck that ought not to fall—gird it therefore, dear Jesus, on thy own thigh. I love the people at Mount Zion, and I hope I love my Master, and I wish I loved my work more deeply and dearly than I do ; but it is good for you that I do not wear the sword. I do not feel as if I would destroy or injure one of you ; but it is your mercy that a minister does not wear the sword ; your favour and your blessedness that he who wears it is the most mighty Immanuel and the loving Saviour. Here, then, is an avowal of Christ's worthiness to defend and guard his people.

Secondly, it indicates the *church's sympathy with Jesus*. His name is dear to every Christian fighting for his honour and glory. The cause of Jesus is dear to every saint. Arise, O Lord, and plead thine own cause. The returning penitent is dear to every minister, or if there are ministers to whom such persons are not dear, the sooner they are out of the pulpit the better. Oh the returning penitent with a broken heart is dear, and ought to be dear, to every man of God. I love to see you miserable, when I can feel sure that your misery is the result of a true knowledge of sin. I love to see you weep when I know that your tears are expressions of godly sorrow. 'Tis a mercy to be miserable in this respect. We sympathise with the cause of Immanuel, and with the returning prodigal and penitent ; for

" We long to see thy churches full ;
That all the chosen race,
May with one heart, and voice, and soul,
Sing thy redeeming grace."

Oh, to be in sympathy with Christ is salvation ; to sympathise with his cause is an honour. For the sake of this cause Jesus came from heaven, and lived three-and-thirty years here. Make me then, if thou wilt, as one of thy hired servants ; only be my Master and Lord. To have our sympathies where the sympathies of God are, is a favour, a privilege, and an honour which thousands of the sons

and daughters of Adam do not possess. Well, we sympathise with thee Almighty Lord, and say, "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh."

It indicates, thirdly, *a correct knowledge of the enemies of Christ*, otherwise the church would not pray that he would dress himself in arms, and appear in a military character. Lord, sin can never be improved; it can never lose its virulence, or have its implacable enmity mitigated. It will ever be opposed to thee, and to thy grace and reign. We do not ask thee to change it, but to take thy sword and annihilate the evil that dwells within. And it indicates *a true knowledge* of Satan. No peace, say Protestants, with Rome; and no peace say Christians with hell. Satan is implacable, and can never be friendly to grace, or if he seems to be so it is the friendliness of the old serpent, and its object is mischief; and therefore gird on thy sword, and defend us from the tempter. We might pursue this subject further, but the time is gone. Here is no free-will surrender of the sinner to God. No, the prey is taken from the mighty by the conquering Saviour, with his sword; and his victories are progressive, certain, and beneficial. Bless his name, he owns and has no slaves. He finds us slaves, and takes us captives, and binds us to himself with the silken cords of love, and his service is perfect freedom, and the very reverse of bondage. His victories are beneficial and saving. When his victories are complete, and the world is burning, and the heavens are open to receive his people, may you and I be found somewhere in the throng of redeemed millions led into heaven by the conquering Immanuel; and then we shall, with more pleasure than tongue can now tell, unite in ascribing honour, praise, power and glory to him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb for ever. Amen.

THE NEXT SERMON WILL BE READY ON JANUARY 15TH.

Printed and published by BRISCOE & Co., 28, Banner-street, Bunhill-row, London, E.C.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

Four copies post-free, by sending stamps to the above address.

Parcels of back numbers, not fewer than 12, may be had from the Printers, at half-price, (viz. 6d., post free.)

CHRIST AND HIS PEOPLE FOR EVER ONE.

A Sermon.

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, 23rd DECEMBER, 1877.

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?"—Romans viii. 35.

WE are assured by the Holy Ghost, through David, that the Lord trieth the righteous, and by the same Spirit God's purpose is revealed, that our strength shall be according to our day. These two declarations have been verified in the experience of God's people in all ages of the world, and in all the generations of men. The saints of God have always been a tried people, and they are so now; and, whatever the future may be, we believe that trials, tribulations, and afflictions await them, until the Lord comes again. Here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come. "In the world," said the Master, "ye shall have tribulation." In me only ye shall have peace; "but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." Brighter days, and more glorious times than any that have ever passed over the people of God, may be in reserve for his church, for aught I know; nevertheless, we are taught to believe that sin will dwell in the saint as long as he is here, that Satan will go about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour until the end, and that there will be an abiding difference between the church and the world, until the dissolution of all things; and, therefore, I imagine that the people of God will have tribulation on the earth until the last day. The gracious promises of God, however, have been fulfilled in the experience of all his people, and that without a single exception. Behind us are many generations of men and many ages of time, all of which are marked with sorrow, affliction, and trial; but Christ, the Shepherd, has never yet lost a sheep; the eternal God, the gracious Father of his people, has never yet lost a child; and the great Saviour of sinners has never yet lost a ransomed soul; for though the redeemed have been in deep waters, in fierce fires, and in terrible conflicts with this world and hell, yet the Lord has never left them. God's people, therefore, have hitherto been overcomers and conquerors, and the word has been verified and fulfilled: "As thy days, so shall thy strength be." Great faith has always been tried; deep religion has always been strained, and great grace has always been put into the furnace; and, therefore, when we pray for greater faith than we at present possess, we indirectly pray for more trial; for "as thy days, so shall thy strength be." If, therefore, the Lord gives us greater faith, he will find greater work for us to do, and if he communicates greater strength than we at present possess, there will be more trials and afflictions sent to test that greater measure of strength. The prophets were great men, great as saints and great as divinely inspired, and every one of them was a sufferer. Every prophet had as a saint a measure of the Holy Ghost, and every one had also another portion of the Spirit for official purposes as a prophet of the living God. They knew much of God, and their knowledge was tried. They knew more of God than ordinary

VOL. II., No 9.—JANUARY 15, 1878.

saints, because they were inspired in an extraordinary manner. Having been favoured with visions of God, and with revelations of his will, they were directed to go and tell the people what they had heard and seen, or what they had felt. This inspiration of the Spirit of God greatly strengthened their minds; and therefore, after they had delivered their messages, we almost invariably find that the people turned against them and bitterly persecuted them.

These observations will apply with equal propriety and force to the apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul, for instance, was great as a saint, as a Christian, or as a saved sinner; he never indeed thought so himself, but then true greatness consists in humility. A person who is really and truly great does not know it himself, he never thinks himself a great one; therefore, being a great saint and a great believer, Paul was constrained to say, I am "less than the least of all saints." In this fact true greatness appeared. The greatness of the saint shone, and the reigning glory of triumphant grace manifested itself. The great apostle was also divinely inspired for official purposes,—to preach, to work miracles, and to write portions of the divine Word of God; and surely when he penned the chapter out of which I have taken my text to-night, he must have been in an extraordinary frame of mind. Oh what glories passed before him,—glories which shedding their influence upon his ransomed and regenerated mind, gave a holy buoyancy to his soul, and carried him above the fogs and the clouds of the present state of things, and placed him as it were immediately before the throne of his exalted and crowned Lord, for there surely he must have stood when he said, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Having announced that great and glorious fact, he passed on to other objects as they were presented to his mind. He sets forth the sufferings of Jesus, the atonement resulting therefrom, the certainty of his second coming, and the resurrection of the bodies of his saved and ransomed people. He then proceeded to the grace of relationship. "The Spirit beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with the Lord Jesus Christ. Onward he passed, to contemplate the people of God as new creatures, and then he exclaimed, "Ye are saved by hope; but hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth why doth he yet hope for?" Then, turning his thoughts upon himself and his brethren, he said, "The Spirit himself also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought;" and having touched upon that point, and looked at another glorious fact that "All things work together for good to them that are the called according to his purpose," he soared again into the predestinating heights of the everlasting Father, and then concluded the chapter with the triumphant challenge, "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?"

Our text this evening presents two facts,—first *Emmanuel's love*, and secondly *the apostle's great challenge*.

I. In the first place let us look at *the love of Christ*. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" We find ourselves at once in a very large field, or more properly, upon the bosom of a bottomless and shoreless ocean—the everlasting love of Jesus Christ. Its depths can never be fathomed, its heights can never be reached, and its lengths and breadths can never be measured. Its preciousness can never be adequately or properly set forth, and its power is altogether mysterious, and therefore the minister must say, as godly people sometimes express themselves at church meetings, "these matters are better felt than described." Oh the pleasure of bathing in this ocean of eternal love! Oh what beauty is conveyed to the soul by the influence of this love! Oh what buoyancy the heart experiences when this love is shed abroad therein! Then the earth

and the world are seen in their true position, colours, and worth. The man that knows the love of Christ, and whose heart is filled therewith, is the most highly favoured individual under the heavens of the Lord our God. If these things are so, what shall the poor preacher before you to-night say about the everlasting love of Christ? He hardly knows how or where to begin. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? The love of Jesus Christ has always been satisfying to the Father, and it will satisfy him for ever. The love of God's dear Son was so deep and so satisfactory to the Father, that he committed all his beloved people into his hands; and he would not have entrusted so great a treasure to him had he not had the utmost confidence in his heart. The infinite and eternal love of Christ being fixed upon the persons that the Father himself loved, he brought the whole family to his Son and constituted them his care and his charge, and the dear Redeemer received them into the arms of his everlasting love and embraced the chosen seed, and Paul says that since they are now in the bosom of the great Emmanuel, let the sword do its worst, let distress, and famine, and nakedness, and peril, and tribulation all come,—who shall separate us from the love of Christ? and, again, who shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord? Again, my friends, the Holy Spirit is never ashamed to shed abroad the love of Christ in the hearts of God's people; whereas, if the Holy Spirit is a person, and if he is Jehovah, he would not delight to perform this operation in the heart if that love were not immutable and eternal. The Holy Spirit, however, is as satisfied with the love of Christ as the Father is, and, therefore, opening the hearts of sinners, he directs a stream of that love into them, and is never ashamed to work in this manner in their minds.

Let us look at the subject, first, in relation to *Christ himself, the great Lover*. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Now I would tarry here awhile, although I cannot comprehend this great Person, or get round either his cross or his throne. No minister of the gospel can ever explore the cross of Jesus, nor the high and glorious throne on which he sits. I want, however, to conduct you for a few minutes, first to his cross, and then to his throne. Who is it that loves us? Jesus. Who and what is he? Let me say that since Christ loves us, we are loved with a *love* which is both *human* and *divine*, and therefore with the *affections of a complex Being*. A word or two on each of these shall be offered. The love of Christ is *the love of God*. If Christ is God, and as a divine person is equal with the Father and the Spirit, his love is as large as that of the Father, and therefore he is love. God is love: Christ is God; therefore Christ is everlasting love. Now where does this take us but back to the birth of time, and even beyond it into vast eternity; it takes us beyond the world, and circumstances, and all creatures, and it induces us to contemplate the Deity or Jehovah when he lived alone in his own eternity, before he came forth into manifestation. Before he made worlds and gave birth to time, then Christ loved us with all the love of God. Do not ask me to explain this; for it is a mystery, and a mystery which must remain inexplicable. Some of the preciousness, however, of this fact is felt when souls are brought to say, "He hath loved us with an everlasting love, and with lovingkindness has he drawn us." Not only is this love the love of God, it is *the love of a man*. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" The Father's love, or the love of the Spirit, is not particularly mentioned here, but that of Christ; and therefore we have a lover who is human as well as divine. Do not, my hearers, confound the humanity and the divinity of Christ; do not allow, if you can help it, confused thoughts concerning the two natures of the Lord Jesus Christ to spring up in your minds. You must not separate his two natures, but you may distinguish between them. If Christ is a man, he is a perfect man; and if he is a perfect man, all his human affections are perfect. and, therefore, whilst he loves you with all the love of Deity, for he is God, he loves you with all the perfect love of humanity also. Do you say, that is not

much? My beloved friends, it is a wondrous part of this great mysterious whole. It is much for us to know and to feel that our God is man, that he is in the man, and that he is God-man; and that whilst we have all God's love on the throne, we have all the human affections of the dear Christ of God also. It seems that if he were not a man he would not be able to sympathize with us, but being bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, he has human sympathies and human feelings and human affections too. He is a true and perfect man, but he is infinitely more than a man; and therefore we have in his love all the love of a God and all the love of a man also. But what is very mysterious and wonderful is the fact that Christ loves as a *complex person*, and to use a word not generally employed, this constitutes his love *unique*. There is nothing like it anywhere; it stands alone. Here is a complex person, and he loves his people with all his affections as a complex being. The Father's love differs from the love of Christ in this respect: he is not a man, he is not clothed with our nature. The love of the Spirit also differs from that of Christ in this respect: the Spirit is not incarnate, he does not wear our nature. There is only one person in the adorable Trinity that is a man, and that wears our nature, and that person is the Lord Jesus Christ. He being at once human and divine, all human affection, and all divine and everlasting love, meet and unite in this dear and blest Redeemer. The love of an angel, or of angels, is a simple love. They love with angelic affection, and a saint loves his fellow-saint and his God with a love that is simple—there is nothing complex about it; but Christ loves the church with all the sympathies of a man, and with all the infinite affection of a God. He is near to us, and we are near to and even in him. The Father, apart from him, is too far off; but God was manifest in the flesh, and all the tender affections of Deity and humanity unite in this glorious Christ of God.

We might trace his love to his *offices*. Love induced him to take office in the economy of mercy, and it constrained and still constrains him to execute those offices. There is no coldness in his heart, neither does he perform his work in a mechanical manner. Love brought him into the *Prophet's* chair, and love sits therein. Love brought him into the *Priest's* position against the altar, and love holds him there. Love took him to the throne as *King*, and love reigns there and sways the sceptre. It was love that consented to be bruised and to die as a victim, and love now leads him to teach, to influence, and to rule, the beloved family of heaven. I might notice his love further in connection with the *various relations in which he stands to his people*. He is their *Head*, and "No man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as Christ the church; for the church is his own flesh." You are not your own, nor Satan's, nor the subjects of sin: you are Christ's, his flesh and bones. "We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." As the head provides for the body, so the Lord Jesus loves his mystical body; and from himself, its head, he pours the love of his heart upon all his members. Is he a *Husband*? A man is not worthy of the name or the position of a husband unless he loves his wife. Love, warm, strong, perpetual, and life-long, ought to exist between husband and wife. Christ is the best Husband in the universe, unequalled and incomparable; and he loves his wife with all the love of God and man, with all the love of the great God-man. Is he the *Saviour* of the body? He was not forced or driven to save against his will. His love flowed with his blood, it flowed with his tears, and it was heard in the groans he uttered when suffering in the garden and on the tree. There was no reluctance on the part of the Saviour of sinners. And the love of Christ is the *medium, too, in or through which we see the Father's love*. How much is said about the universal fatherhood of God! Look at the starry heavens, what is there that satisfactorily proclaims the fatherhood of God? Look at the law, and at nature generally, and tell me if you can see the Father's love there: The love of the Father—for this let me direct you to the love of Christ Jesus the Lord. There you see God as a Father, and there you may see his heart. In

Christ you may see men, not merely as creatures, but as the sons of the living God. Look at one out of Christ, and you see a creature, a sinner, an insignificant mortal, a worm. Look at one in this loving Christ, and he is still a creature and a sinner, but he is more ; in the love of this loving Christ the being is a child of God, and God is its Father and gracious and covenant God. The Father rests in his loving Son and says, I have loved thee with an everlasting love ; and we rest in our loving elder Brother and embrace our covenant gracious God and Father. The love of Christ is a *generative love*. It generates love in angels and in men. When this love breaks forth and arrests a guilty sinner in his career of sin and folly, the eyes of angels are fixed upon that man ; and when the first cry for mercy is heard, and perhaps as angels listen they rejoice ; for Christ says, "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." There was Saul of Tarsus lying outside the gates of the city of Damascus ; and hear him say, "Lord, who art thou ?" and again, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do ?" Perhaps Gabriel looked at Saul, when he sat on his horse boiling over with rage, and expressing his feelings against the people of God in fearful language ; but he did not love him as he poured out threatenings and breathed slaughter against the people of God. Gabriel looked, and perhaps he heard ; but he did not love that enemy of the Lord and his cross and cause ; but when grace divine smote him and threw him down from his high Pharisaic position, and broke his heart, and brought him to ask, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do ?" then the love of Christ to Paul kindled love in the heart of Gabriel, and angels looked at and loved the fallen man ; so that the love of Jesus Christ is a generative love. And then, this will apply also to all saved sinners. We love him ; that is much to say, and happy is the person that can use these words justly and scripturally before Emmanuel. We love him. Well, there are millions who do not love the Lord, and there was a time when we did not. Yes ; but we love him now. How is that ? We love him *because he first loved us*. Thus much for the Lover. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ?"

A word or two in the second place on *the acts of this love*. Christ has expressed, and he is still expressing his love. His love is most attractive, most comprehensive, and most expressive too. It covers all the ground ; there is not a single spot but what is covered with the everlasting love of the Redeemer. With respect to the acts of Christ's love, let us go back again for a moment into eternity and contemplate the *eternal* acts there. I have already said that he received the church from his Father. The Father loved the people, and so did Christ ; and I am not going too far when I thus represent eternal things. The great Redeemer pledged himself to a certain course of proceeding ; having approached his Father, and signed the bond, he put it into the hand of justice and surrendered himself to the truth, the righteousness, and the equity of God. I will die for them, I will pay their debts, I will redeem them from all evil ; therefore, Justice, as four thousand years of time are to elapse before I enter the world to die, admit departing saints to heaven before I pay their debts. Here is my word, my signature, and myself, hold me responsible for them all. The eternal acts of the love of Christ. Let us look at his *time* acts, or the deeds which he has performed and is performing. Now contemplate our dear Lord as taking a kind of journey when he left the Father's bosom and came here to die for his loved people. Oh, what marvellous extremes we behold in the work of Emmanuel ! God's darling Son was in the Father's bosom, and down low in the depths of degradation and woe were the people to be redeemed. Christ leaves his Father's bosom and descends lower and lower, and continues his downward journey until he reaches the bottom of the hell of all his people. I do not think he descended into hell as a *place*, and hell must be considered as a state and as a place. Considered as a place, Jesus did not enter it ; but hell, considered as a state of wrath and the manifested anger of God, the great Redeemer entered and

went to its bottom and quenched its flames, and sustained and exhausted all the curse which you and I as transgressors had incurred. When he reached the bottom, which was the end of his downward journey, he shouted Victory! Victory! for at the very bottom of his suffering work he cried with a loud voice, "It is finished!" and bowed his head and gave up the ghost. Love flowed from his eyes, and his heart, and his hands, and his feet, and his side, and from every pore of his dear, celestial, and precious person. It was all love, the love of Christ, and who shall separate us therefrom? Look at the upward journey of every ransomed one. Christ came that we might go, he descended that we might ascend; and, therefore, the Spirit comes into the world where the ransomed but unregenerated person lies; he enters the heart, opens the eyes, and circumcises the spirit, and then the beloved one begins his march towards heaven; he begins to go upwards, if I may so speak. First, he is in conviction and bondage, then he rises into hope, hope rises into the enjoyment of liberty; he then goes into the enjoyment of holy enlargedness of heart and mind, and then he goes on from victory to victory, from one triumph to another, from one field of conflict to another, until he reaches the confines of eternal glory, and there Christ his loving Saviour meets him; the tie that unites soul and body together is broken, not vindictively or angrily, but lovingly and tenderly, the soul is separated from the body, and the ransomed and beloved one enters into all the bliss and blessedness of being. And then, Christ's love will always be active love, it will never be stationary. Revelation will proceed for ever, manifestation will proceed for ever, new discoveries of God and of his greatness will be made by Christ for ever. Oh, the beauties of his face can never be exhausted, the depths of his love can never be fathomed.

"There shall I bathe my weary soul
In seas of heavenly rest,
And not a wave of trouble roll
Across my peaceful breast."

The Lover, Christ, and the acts of his love. Christ now is influenced by his love. Having looked at this for a minute, I will dismiss this part of the subject. The love of Christ constraineth us; and it also constraineth Christ himself. The object that is beloved is received into all the thoughts of the lover, and they surround the being beloved, and it cannot be forgotten. Love holds the lover's thoughts, and it unites them to the person that is beloved. All this will apply to the blessed Redeemer. The love of Christ has given you a place in all his thoughts, and you are surrounded by them; and hear what he says—A mother may forget her sucking child that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb; yet will I not forget thee, for I have graven thee on the palms of my hands, and thy walls are continually before me; and Israel, thou shalt never be forgotten of me. Why, I had almost said that if Jesus Christ should cease to love he even then could not forget his people. A person whose love is changed, and who has cast off a beloved one, cannot quite forget that being if he would; and if Christ should cast away his people—which is, however, impossible—methinks he would never cease to think about them. O Israel, thou shalt never be forgotten of me. No separation from his thoughts, but surrounded by them, and that for ever. That is not all. The love of Christ has placed his dear people in his hands. My sheep are in my Father's hands, and they are also in mine, and no man shall pluck them out of my hand. Your dear child is embraced by you; and if danger threatens it, you press it closely to your bosom; and if an enemy thrusts out his hand to tear it from you, you hold it as fast as you can, because it is your child. And Jesus loves his people; his arms are underneath and round about them. Hell watches, and Rome watches, and, for aught I know, Mahometanism watches, and a thousand vigilant eyes and spirits are looking on; but in the bosom of Christ's love his people shall for ever rest. In his eye, too;

for love influences his eye. You cannot always follow with your eye the object of your love, but he can and he does. The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous; his ear is open to their prayers. Ah ! love influences the whole of Christ; it keeps his ear open and his eye open, and it induces him to hold them fast in his arms, for they are the objects of his tender thoughts. All these things are facts; therefore, Paul says, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Love fulfils her own purposes and decrees, and that with all the infinite ease of omnipotence. Love will swallow up all that is offensive to itself, and, ere long, all that is offensive to you also. There is sin, and you hate it. Wait awhile. Your persons are loved, and all that is offensive shall be removed, for

"Sin, my worst enemy before,
Shall vex my eyes and ears no more;
My inward foes shall all be slain,
Nor Satan break my peace again."

Sing on, for you are in the love of Christ, and the very ocean in which you bathe shall wash you perfectly clean and make you whiter than snow. Love, too, we may say in relation to Christ, will bring all God's dear people to glory. He loves his people out of nature into grace, out of bondage into liberty, out of uncleanness into holiness, out of distance into nearness, and out of deformity into beauty. He loves them into the very shape he requires them to wear. Love transforms them within and without, and constitutes them all he requires them to be. Go and do that for your child, or for any other being that you love, if you can. You love this and the other person; but there are things which you wish were slightly different here and there. Your love is finite, but here is the love of an infinite Being, who will love away all that he hates and love into you all that he requires you to possess.

Now *the challenge*. Here, then, we have a great fact; and Paul standing before Christ's throne contemplates the love of his heart, the crown on his head and the sceptre in his hand, and he says, There is Christ, our heavenly Lover, and here are his people—Christ and Christians, and who shall separate us from his love? Who are the "us." Well, a few poor, feeble folk. Their poverty and weakness, however, do not matter. Here is their great loving Christ, and the cords of his love are about them, and they can never perish. Therefore, Paul says, Let the sword come, and all other evils. The cord of everlasting love is strong, and Christ holds it in his own hand. No, we are bound tightly and closely to Jesus, and therefore we challenge the world, and defy all hostile power; for as there is no condemnation in him, so there shall be no separation from him.

"*Tribulation*," and that is affliction, that cannot separate us from his love, because our afflictions are felt and borne by us in the arms of God. The everlasting arms are underneath us, and we suffer doubt, fear, and have many unhappy apprehensions in them. He will never cast us out of his bosom, nor withdraw his everlasting love; and therefore trial and affliction cannot separate us from him. "*Or distress*"—of body—distress of mind—straitened circumstances, or sorrow in the holiest of all, or on other occasions, because that which we would we do not, and that which we would not that we do. Are you afraid, therefore, that you will be separated from the love of Christ? No, that can never be, for "if we believe not, yet he abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself."

"*Persecution*"—this has raged, and had it been possible for persecution to separate souls from the love of Christ, thousands of God's people would now be in hell; but persecution has never separated from Jesus. The body only has been touched, not the soul. The mind has been guarded in the bosom of eternal friendship, and persecutors have lost their aim.

"*Famine*"—want of necessary food. Take this to indicate the want of the necessities of life. David on one occasion was very hungry, and so also were the men that were with him, but the Lord appeared for him. And what would the

great and good prophet Elijah have done without the God of Providence and Grace. He was about to go into the wilderness, where there was neither food nor human sympathy, nor friends to supply his wants. Go, said his Lord, fear not the want of outward good, for I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. Well, famine cannot separate from love divine.

"*Nakedness.*" I may touch on a tender point here. Some say they have not garments sufficiently good and decent in which to appear in the house of God. I have known some of God's people who have been tried in this way. I could go a little further here were it discreet and prudent so to do. Members of Christian churches have been absent from the sanctuary because they were needy in this respect. A word will be sufficient on this point. What, then, shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or *nakedness*, separate from the love of God? God help my dear brethren and sisters who may be occasionally tried in this manner, if there should be any of them in God's house to-night. No man can tell either love or hatred by all that is before him. 'Tis false and dangerous reasoning to conclude that because a member of the church, a saint of God, has not that in which he can comfortably appear in the house of God, therefore he is not beloved, is not a child of God. Many are the afflictions of the righteous. Famine, nakedness, and sword leave the soul in the hands of eternal love. And "*peril*" from all quarters and from all persons; "*or sword*"—no, if they cut off the head, separate it from the body, or separate men from men, and members of churches from the church of God on the earth, the sword cannot reach Christ, nor his heart, nor the hearts of his dear people, nor their faith. Therefore, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. May the Lord command his blessing, for Christ's sake. Amen.

THE NEXT SERMON WILL BE READY ON FEBRUARY 15TH.

Printed and published by BRISCON & Co., 28, Banner-street, Bunhill-row, London, E.C.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

Four copies post-free, by sending stamps to the above address.

Parcels of back numbers, not fewer than 12, may be had from the Printers, at half-price,
(viz. 6d., post free.)

THE CITIZENS OF HEAVEN A NATION'S STRENGTH.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, 27th JANUARY, 1878.

"And the governors of Judah shall say in their heart, The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength in the Lord of hosts their God."—Zech. xii. 5.

WE are said to be saved according to the eternal purpose and grace of God, which were given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. God's purposes of life and love are for the most part embodied in the promises of his Word, and from them we understand in some measure their nature and importance. The promises of God, being expressions of his saving purposes, are exceedingly precious to the believer. If the purpose of God is unchangeable, the promises of his heart are so also. He is in one mind, and none can turn him; and whatsoever his soul desireth, even that he doeth; and, therefore, we are expecting, and believing, that all the promises recorded in his Divine book will be perfectly and eternally fulfilled.

The promises are threefold:—A large number of them were made by the Father to Christ himself; others are given to the church collectively; and others are addressed to individuals as believers. Many promises, in the first place, given by the Father, relate to Jesus Christ; such as this, "He shall see the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied," and "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many," and "The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands." These promises are for Christ, the great Head and Saviour of the church. Others are addressed to God's family, and to individual saints: "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee. When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." God's beloved people on the earth are numerous, and so are their necessities; but the promises cover all their wants. All their necessities, therefore, shall be met, and all their requirements shall be ministered unto by God's own hand; for he will verify every word that has fallen from his lips.

Two or three important promises are recorded in the chapter out of which we have now taken our text. In the second verse we read, "Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people;" and, therefore the people of God are safe, and their enemies—whoever they may be, wherever they may come from, however numerous they may be—shall be defeated and crushed; for "Jerusalem shall become a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, although all the people of

VOL. II., No. 10.—FEBRUARY 15, 1878.

the earth be gathered together against it." These words, in one respect, shine very graciously upon the church, whilst in another respect they contain a threatening to all enemies. Then what a terrible state of things follows! Enemies gathered together about Jerusalem, multitudes of horses and horsemen, and "every horse shall be smitten with astonishment, and every rider with madness; and I will open mine eyes upon the house of Judah, and will smite every horse of the people with blindness," and then "the governors of Judah shall say in their hearts, The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength in the Lord of hosts their God."

Let us look at the two branches into which our subject divides itself. First, *we have an interesting and important fact. The inhabitants of Jerusalem are the strength of rulers and kingdoms; and, secondly, This fact is recognised and appreciated, "The governors of Judah shall say in their heart, The inhabitants of Jerusalem are my strength."*

I. In the first place, *let us consider the interesting fact indicated in the text.* "The inhabitants of Jerusalem are the strength of the rulers of Judah." Strength may not be due to large numbers; for God can save if he will by many or by few, and the strength of a church is not always to be estimated by its numbers. God can cause a few to be very strong; yea, a single individual has been made stronger than Satan, and all the powers of darkness combined. Indeed, every saint is opposed by the world, and the flesh, and the devil, and sin; but God's gracious promise is always fulfilled; thou shalt be "more than conqueror" through my everlasting love. Neither does the strength of a country always consist in its military proficiency, skill, and power. Great importance is attached to armies and navies, and particularly so if they are composed of veterans—of men who have been in many battles, who have endured hardness, and who have been led on from one victory to another; the strength of a country is said to consist in a multitude of men such as these; whereas the Lord says in the preceding verse: "I will smite every horse with astonishment, and every rider with madness;" for Jehovah is the Lord of hosts, and the God of battles; and, therefore, strength should not always be looked for in large and well-trained armies. Was the strength of Jerusalem in its wealth? Sometimes it is said that a city is strong on account of its trade and commerce, the wealth of its merchants, and the riches treasured up therein. All this may go for nothing. The might of the inhabitants of Jerusalem consisted, not in their numbers, their military greatness, nor their wealth,—they were strong in the strength of the Lord of hosts, who was their Governor and their God.

Now let us show the grounds on which God's people may be said to be the strength of the nation of which they form a part. Not frequently is attention directed to this branch of Divine truth; and I am not certain that I shall offer anything new upon the subject; it is, however, important to turn our minds now and then to the fact that the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and that he hath set the world upon them. The child of God is a most important character. He is so to every angel, and to God, and to the world, and also to Satan; and, therefore, the existence of a number of saints in a nation cannot but be a great boon and blessing to that nation.

Let us notice, in the first place, that the strength of the inhabitants of Jerusalem is *owing to their relation to God himself.* What is God to them, and what are they to him? Well, let us keep within the covers of this Book, and point out two or three interesting facts in connection with this theme. "This people have I formed for myself, and they shall show forth my praise." We read of the works of the devil, and we read also of the glorious works of God. Where there are no saints there is no gracious work of God; and where there

is no gracious work going on, the works of the devil abound ; and if he reigns, and nothing but his works occupy a nation, or a country, or a town, or a village, surely there is nothing but moral weakness in that place. Where saints, however, are found, and true religion abounds, and the truth of God is known, and its sacred and saving power is felt, there the blessing of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, more or less, copiously falls. God forms his people for communion with himself ; and if there is in a place an individual holding daily communion with God, that person must surely be a blessing and a strength to the town or the village wherein he lives. One cannot have to do with God without being godly ; and one cannot possibly be godly without exerting some useful influence upon the locality in which his lot is cast. Saints are formed to receive special and spiritual blessings from heaven ; and he that is formed by God for such a purpose is an important being, and he sustains an influential character. If there be a man of vast wealth, an enemy to Divine things, living in a village, and you ask me which is the more important character—the wealthy sinner in his mansion, with his little world of wealth, or the poor saint in his cottage,—I tell you at once that the vessel of mercy formed by God to receive supplies from heaven, is unspeakably more important than the other with all his riches and general influence. The rulers of Judah shall say, The inhabitants of Jerusalem are our strength in the Lord of hosts our God. And not only so, the people so formed for communion with God, and formed to receive mercies from him, make use of the mercies they receive. They possess them, enjoy them, and make use of them where they are received: the grace they receive, and the privileges conferred upon them they, more or less, usefully employ ; and surely such a person must be a blessing to the locality wherein he resides. The saint is God's workmanship, his new creature, and a vessel of his mercy fitted and prepared for the Divine Master's use ; and such a person having such a character is certainly, though he may not be appreciated as such, a useful being in his day, and to his generation. Again, they are the strengtheners of kingdoms in consequence of the fact that they are God's family. They are not only God's workmanship, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and true believers ; but the sons and the daughters of the Lord God Almighty. They may be peasants in a country village, sowers, thatchers, shepherds, and so on, and they may be exceedingly poor ; they are, notwithstanding, related to God ; and all the holy beings in heaven are their spiritual and celestial relations. Every angel is related to all the saints on earth, and related to them as he is not to the ungodly as such. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are the brethren of every saint on earth ; and hence, there is but one family, having one name: "Of whom the whole family in heaven and in earth is named." I suppose that places occasionally or permanently occupied by royal personages, fare all the better, temporally and circumstantially, for their presence. The palace of royalty is sometimes a centre of useful influence ; and if this is true of earthly princes, what shall we say of the royal family of heaven ? Every saint, though he be only a babe, is a royal child of God ; he is descended from the King of kings, and his royalty and greatness cannot be lost ; he is going into the presence of his royal Father, and there is an inheritance prepared for him lasting as eternity and perfect as the God of glory could constitute it. God's dear family are born again in this world: here they are brought up ; here they are educated ; here they are attended here by guardian angels ; here their heavenly Father visits them, and here they receive supplies from above ; and if the rulers of Judah were wise men, as some of them were in the earlier ages of the church, they would say, The inhabitants of Jerusalem being God's workmanship and the family of God, they, and not merely the mighty armies and navies of the kingdom,

are our strength in the Lord of hosts, their covenant and gracious God. Another thought before we dismiss this part of the subject, and that relates to the *character of their God*. "The inhabitants of Jerusalem shall be my strength in the Lord of hosts, their God." This is his name, and every name of God is indicative of what he is, or of what he has done or intends doing. He is here called "the Lord of hosts," because his throne is the highest of all thrones, and all beings sit or stand at the foot thereof. God looks downwards to see his creatures, while they look upwards to see him. There are hosts of angels and of glorified saints around his throne, and hosts of unglorified saints at a greater distance therefrom, while hosts of wicked men and devils constitute the outermost circle; and the Lord, Jehovah, reigns over them all. That Supreme One, that infinitely exalted being is the God of the Christian; and, therefore, were rulers wise, they would, taking these facts into consideration, looking at the inhabitants of Jerusalem, say, "They are our strength in the Lord of hosts their God." "I will be a wall of fire," says God. That must be a daring foe that attempts to venture through, or scale, or quench this almighty fire. Mark the phraseology: he does not say, I will *build* a wall, or I will bring fire to the place and surround the city of Jerusalem with it; God says, but I myself will be a wall of fire round about her, and the glory in the midst of her. "Happy art thou, O Israel; who is like unto thee, O people, saved by the Lord?"

Now we must look at another point or two here before we dismiss this part of the subject. God's people are the strength of cities and kingdoms, we have said, owing to the fact that they are his workmanship, his children; he is their God, and he is the Lord of hosts. But more than this, and let us not forget it, he is with his workmanship and his family. The Lord of hosts is really present with the inhabitants of Jerusalem. "God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved. God shall help her, and that right early." Now, if a saint constitutes a place somewhat sacred, what shall we say about the presence of his God? If a Christian imparts an importance to a locality, what shall we say about that locality when we consider the fact that Christ is with the Christian and is inseparable from him? Oh, the Lord is with his people, and this gives a sacredness to the place or places wherein they live; hence said God to Moses, at the burning bush, "Put thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground;" not that the ground differed in itself from other ground, but God was there just then, and the place was filled just then with his presence, and therefore a temporary sacredness and holiness were connected with the spot. You have been in your closet, and God has been with you, and you have said with Jacob, How solemn is this place! You have been in the house of God, and he has been with you, and you have left the place saying, It is none other than the house of God, and it is the gate of heaven. Places are blessed for the sake of some men and women that occupy them, and places are more or less sacred owing to the fact that God is in them with his people. There are degrees of blessing in relation to places. "The Lord loveth the gates of Zion." How much? Well, "more than all the dwellings of Jacob." That implies that he loves the dwellings of Jacob, but he loves the gates of Zion more. If, therefore, he loves the tents of Jacob, and dwells in them with Jacob, the localities in which those tents are placed are more or less important; and if he loves the gates of Zion more than Jacob's tents, then churches and chapels devoted to his service, and built for his glory, and having his truth proclaimed in them, are the glory of a land, the bulwark of a nation, and we see in their existence an illustration of my text, "The inhabitants of Jerusalem" are the strength of a people and of a country. Places are blessed for the sake of the church, and for the sake of the fact that God is with them. Now let me illustrate this by a reference to one or two Bible

facts. Jacob went down to Padan-aram and became the servant, and eventually the son-in-law, of Laban; and when he manifested signs of impatience, and Laban feared he was about to leave him, the wicked man said, "Leave me not, for I have learned by experience that the Lord hath blessed me for thy sake. He would not have favoured me for my own sake, but you are a godly man and the God of heaven loves you, and I have benefited and profited by your presence in my house. Do not leave me." He did not care for Jacob's God, nor for Jacob's religion, otherwise than that Jacob was the secondary and subordinate cause of the increase of his flocks and of his riches. Yes; God blesses persons and places for the sake of his people. Then look at Joseph who was sold as a slave into Egypt, and finds a home for a time in the house of Potiphar, a captain of the guard. The circumstances connected with that peculiar trial I need not narrate. You know what took place. One thing is said concerning Joseph there: "The Lord blessed the house of Potiphar for the sake of Joseph." A wicked wretch indeed was his mistress, and perhaps his master also was wicked—of that we know little or nothing—but Joseph's governor or master said, "Joseph is the strength of my house," for the Lord blessed the house of Potiphar for his sake. Then he was taken to prison, the jailer treated him mercifully and kindly, and every prisoner in the prison fared better for the presence of Joseph there; and therefore God blesses persons and places for the sake of his saints. In fact, I take it that the church of God is the subordinate saviour of nations, and kingdoms, and the world. You know what I mean by the word "subordinate." God blesses the world for the church's sake, and he blesses the church for the sake of his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Take the wheat away and the tares will be burned. Let the wheat stand, and the tares stand with it. Shall we go and pluck up the tares now? No; let them both grow together until the harvest. The tares stand for the sake of the wheat. The goats are preserved and protected for the sake of the sheep, and bastards for the sake of the legitimate children and family of God. When all the church of God, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, shall have been taken to the Jerusalem which is above, then shall the mighty angel declare that time shall be no more; and, therefore, looking at the relation in which the church stands to God, we learn how it is that the governors of Judah said, "The inhabitants of Jerusalem are our strength in the Lord of hosts, their God."

We leave that point, and notice secondly, They are the strength of places and kingdoms because *they have a marvellous power with God*. They are the only persons under heaven that have power with God. All the powers of others are employed in opposing God. They are hostile; but the spiritual power of a child of God is godly, an influence that he has with God. It is a divine power, for God gives it; and having given it to the sinner he gives himself up to it; and hence, his child, the believer, is an extraordinary being. God gives faith, and then he gives himself to that faith; and, hence, the Christian embraces Christ, and the believer embraces God; not part, but the whole of him; even his omnipotence, his wisdom, his goodness, and his fulness. Well may Judah's rulers say, "Those good people are beneficial to us; they are blessings and not curses to the country." Not only is this power Divine, it is a filial power with God, which is very strong. The power of a son with the father or the mother is sometimes very wonderful. The power of Jesus Christ with his Father is irresistible. "Give," says Christ to his Father, and the Father opens his hands, and gives at once. "I will," says the Son to the Father; "that they be with me," and the Father assents immediately, and with all his heart. Bring them home and I will embrace them, and smile upon them for ever. And saints have a filial power with God. It is not merely the power of faith or of believing, it is the power

which a child may be said to have, at least at times, with its parent's mind, and hands, and purse. For instance, a beggar comes; pleads his poverty, and tells a long tale of woe. You do not feel disposed to relieve him, and may speak sternly, if not roughly to him. Yet the case may be one of genuine, bitter want. Your darling child comes tripping into the room, and hears the tale of sorrow, and its little heart being touched, it runs to you with tears in its eyes, and pleads for the beggar, and you are overcome, and say, "Well, I would not have relieved him but for you: I will do it for your sake." Contemplate a child of God in a country full of sorrow, bitterness, and trouble; the people generally being ignorant of the Lord, and perhaps hating him,—this beloved child falls on his knees, and entreats God to bless his country; and God restrains the evils here and there. And this is what I call a filial petition; it comes from the heart, the feeling, and the affection of a child; and God looks approvingly and tenderly on his wrestling child. "As a prince hast thou power with God, and with man, and hast prevailed." And the power is also a prevailing one, for it is said, "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and the door shall be opened to you." The man, the woman, the youth, and there are such persons on the earth, who have power such as this with God, cannot but be a blessing in their day and to their generation. And how does the power of a Christian or of the inhabitants of Jerusalem affect a nation? In all respects, it affects the evils of a nation. What do you think the corruption, vice, and abominations of England would be, were it not for the opposition offered to them by God's dear people, and for the prayers they are constantly presenting to their heavenly Father. Let every saint be swept out of England to night, and I do not know that next Lord's-day would not be a "continental Sunday," such a one as they have in Paris and elsewhere. O, we owe, under the blessing of God, our day of rest, our Lord's day, our chapels, and a thousand other blessings to the fact that the inhabitants of Jerusalem hold them fast, and, having power with God in prayer, they restrain the evil of a country. I am sure they influence that which is good also in a land, its commerce, and its trade. You say I am going to-night in a new direction. I thought, perhaps, I should. Trade and commerce! What have saints to do with them? Take all the saints away, and what would trade and commerce be? Have you never heard ministers and others pray, when trade has been depressed and low, "Revive trade and commerce, O Lord?" Have we any authority to ask God to do that? Yes, I think so. Does he hear such prayers, and answer them? Yes, truly. Then let the rulers of Judah say, The inhabitants of Jerusalem are our strength in the Lord of hosts our God. War and peace. I deem it a mercy that I may speak to my God about war and peace, and especially at the present time. "Pray," says the Lord, "Pray for the peace of the city wherein ye dwell; for in the peace thereof ye shall have peace." If armies and navies go forth to war it is well if godly men follow them with their prayers. We have read much about righteous and unrighteous wars. Very terrible indeed is the war that has just ceased, if indeed it has ceased, to rage. What are the countries that have been in conflict? Well, we must leave Mahometanism, and the Greek Church in the hands of the everlasting God. Had England been drawn into it, and we may even yet, for aught I know; forgive me for saying I should, had such been the case, have attributed as much or more importance to the prayers and petitions of saints than to the plans, schemes, and elaborate arrangements of our senators and statesmen. Her Majesty, and the prime minister, and experienced governments, may be something and even much. The inhabitants of Jerusalem are the strength of the rulers of Israel, for they are godly and praying men and women, related to God, and intimate with him in prayer. They are also defenders of God's truth, and that tends to strengthen a country. They are the only

spiritual and successful defenders of the truth and ways of God. If God is pleased to reveal his will, such a revelation must be important, and to know such a revelation vitally and experimentally is a most important condition to be in. The saints of God and the inhabitants of Jerusalem are the only persons who experimentally and spiritually know the importance, worth, and use of that revelation, which we have from heaven. Their consciences, too, are God's servants; and their hearts and their affections are presided over by the great God of heaven and earth. And let me say what I firmly believe—that the prevalence of Popery, infidelity, and error, is owing in a great measure to the fact that earnestness in defending truth is decaying, and has been decaying in this land for years. Let us hold fast the gospel that we love; let us earnestly, not furiously, but earnestly, contend for the faith once delivered to the saints; let us hold it as dear and dearer than our lives. Never be afraid of it; never start from it, and depend upon it, Popery will wane, and error will gradually wither, and infidelity will hang down its head. I will not say much about myself; but I was preaching in the country last summer when several ministers were present, and one of them came to me, and said, "If sermons such as this were preached in all the pulpits in our land, we should not hear much of Popery." If the strength of the country in some respects, depends upon our earnest defence of truth, let us go and defend it; and let all aim to do this. Popery shrinks from the truth, from the Gospel, a half-way Gospel; half the truth of God, Popery, and infidelity do not care for. Bring out Christ—his complexity, his fulness, his atonement, his sorrows, his tears, his doctrines, and his ordinances, and let them be preached in every pulpit in the land if it be possible; and, O God, let this soon be possible, and then Her Majesty may sit on her throne, and say, "The inhabitants of Jerusalem are my strength in the Lord of hosts, their God."

Then, again, on the ground of their holiness, they are a ruler's strength. Holiness is their nature as new creatures; it is their element, and they are at home in it; they love it, and are looking forward to the period when they will be perfectly and for ever like their Lord. Persons like these cannot be a curse to a country, a village, or a town. Holy men, having holy motives, and united to a holy God, living a holy life, and having a holy home in heaven, these are the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and they are the strength of a people. Grace improves every person in whose heart it is seated; therefore if a man is constituted a citizen of heaven he becomes a better citizen on earth. The grace that makes a man a child of God, manifestly and publicly so, makes him a better master, a better servant, a better father, a better son; or if a woman, a better mother or daughter. Grace never leaves a man what it finds him. The inhabitants of Jerusalem are the subjects of grace, and have passed beneath the transforming influence and power of the salvation of God. O that the Lord would increase the number of his people, if they are so important to the world they are passing through, or increase their earnestness, and their spirituality, and their conformity to himself. The world, therefore, has always made a very grand mistake in persecuting the people of God. It is just like it, to proceed in ignorance. It is one of the most foolish and irrational things under heaven to persecute a child of God, or a Christian church. What place is that? It is a chapel which is said, with a curl of the lip, and a sneer. One is asked what place he attends, and the answer excites bitter contempt. Nobody, it is said, attends there but narrow-minded, bigoted, and ignorant persons. Such is the world's opinion, and yet the world owes its perpetuity, and its harvests, and all its temporal good under God, the Lord of hosts, to those bigoted and narrow-minded persons. Remove the Lord's sanctuaries from the land, and destroy the churches of Christ, and you sweep away the bulwarks of the country, and carry away those barriers which

save England from destruction. Remove Christians from the land if it be possible, and you remove our heavenly soldiers; hence when the good man was taken to heaven, Elisha said, concerning his beloved friend, "There go the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof." Elijah did more for the country than their armies did for it; and with him the chariot and horsemen, and power of the country left Israel. The governors of Judah shall say, In the inhabitants of Jerusalem we have strength. I have trespassed upon your time; and therefore, I think I can scarcely dip into the second part of the subject.

This fact is said to be recognised and appreciated by kings, rulers, and magistrates. The governors of Judah shall say in their heart. This I take to mean the king, and judges, and magistrates. Well will it be for England when this fact is generally and universally recognised. I do not know whether the day will ever come or not. Mary, Queen of Scots, said, on one occasion, "I fear the prayers of old John Knox more than a whole army." She thought and feared that there was a strange power in prayer, although she hated John Knox and his religion. Kings and rulers shall be brought to acknowledge this fact, whether they do it cheerfully or not. This was done occasionally in the land of Judah. David believed it; Solomon believed it; Hezekiah believed it; Zerubbabel and Joshua, the High Priest, believed it in the land of Judah, in Jerusalem, in days of old. It is not universally believed. What constitutes the strength of England? Our navy, "wooden walls," as our ships were called, a few years ago, but now they are iron ones; our army also, and the proficiency, skill, and prowess of our generals, captains, and leaders. The strength of England consists in these, and then we have millions of money, if it be wanted. If you go in that direction the most important element of strength has been overlooked: namely, her Christians and her Lord and God, all other power is comparatively weak without this. The fact that we are surrounded by the sea is something, is much, but the salt of the earth is here. The pillars of the earth are here. I do not think dear England will be swamped or destroyed, while it is the pleasure of God to have so many of the inhabitants of Jerusalem in it. I cannot go further into that matter. May the Lord command his blessing, for Christ's sake. Amen.

THE NEXT SERMON WILL BE READY ON MARCH 15TH.

Printed and published by BRISCOE & Co., 28, Banner-street, Bunhill-row, London, E.C.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

Four copies post-free, by sending stamps to the above address.

Parcels of back numbers, not fewer than 12, may be had from the Printers, at half-price, (viz. 6d., post free.)

SALVATION THROUGH BLOOD.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, 24th FEBRUARY, 1878.

"And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you."—Ex. xii. 13.

WE are taught to believe that the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him; and, therefore, that there never was a period when there were not intentions of mercy in the mind of the everlasting God; and that there will never be a period when there is no mercy for them that love and fear the Lord. Mercy, however, before time, took a peculiar form; it takes another form, in time, for special purposes; and it will take other forms, or appear in other associations and connections, when time shall be no more.

The whole of God's mercy appears in the salvation of sinners, which may be said to consist of several important branches. The first great operation of love occurred in connection with the complexity of the person of God's dear Son. The second great work of mercy in salvation was that of making a veritable, sufficient, and glorious atonement for sin. The third great branch is that of transforming the redeemed sinner's mind, or regenerating his spirit, even that important change which the Lord Jesus himself speaks of as the new birth. Ye must be born again; for except a man be born again he can neither see nor enter the kingdom of God or heaven; therefore the spiritual transformation of a sinner's soul is absolutely necessary. Translation invariably follows transformation; therefore God's people are said to be translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son. The mind having been thus transformed by the Spirit, and received impressions of eternal truth, is guided and defended from year to year, and from hour to hour, by its great saving God. Such a mind is sometimes carried through changes great and many, and is affected more or less deeply by the trials and afflictions of life; but God, having saved and sanctified it, has sealed it unto the day of eternal redemption, there being a place prepared in heaven for it; and, therefore, we sing—

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

Hence the sanctified person progresses and perseveres in a course of holiness. Sometimes he ascends the hill and again goes down into the valley; occasionally he sinks into a horrible pit, and again he is exalted, and his feet are placed upon the Rock of eternal ages. Sometimes he is spiritually buoyant, and soars above

VOL. II., No. 11.—MARCH 15, 1878.

like an eagle; at other times he is greatly depressed, being burdened; but he is as safe as the glorified in heaven, for God is the same in earth as in heaven. He is not less great here than there, nor less omnipotent here than there, nor less loving here than there, nor less omniscient here than there; therefore there are no degrees of covenant safety. The believer progresses until he reaches the Jordan of death, that narrow stream which now divides that heavenly land from our's. When heart and flesh are failing, and all around his regenerated mind is giving way, then the Saviour of minds is his strength and portion for ever. Then follows the grand secret, that secret of which here our knowledge is so limited and faint,—for ever with, and for ever like, the Lord. Therefore, looking at the constitution of Christ's person, looking at the work performed by him, looking at what takes place in the hearts of lost sinners, and looking at the continuous operations of Divine power in guarding the saved on earth, we observe how truly wonderful are the salvation and the experience of believers here; and how rich is their joy and rest hereafter. Now this great salvation involves, not only the communication of grace and the personal possession of the principle of eternal life, it involves the shedding of the Saviour's blood, and the application of that blood to the persons for whom it was shed; and so important a branch of salvation is this, that numerous types thereof were given by God under the Old Testament dispensation, and one of them we have in the chapter out of which our text is taken this morning. I have not time to go through the whole of the connection in which the text stands. The paschal lamb as it is usually called is a subject very well understood by my hearers; for this and kindred portions of the word have been read by you many times; and, therefore, I shall not now set forth the character and peculiarities of the passover lamb. "Christ, our passover, is sacrificed for us;" and as the blood of the paschal lamb was sprinkled upon the door-posts and lintels of the houses of the children of Israel in the land of Egypt, so the precious blood of Jesus is, sooner or later, sprinkled by God's good Spirit upon the consciences of his people: "And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you."

I will call your attention to a few observations—in the first place, *On what the type or the fact before us implies*; and, in the second place, *I will look at this Divine arrangement in relation to God and to Israel*. First, in relation to Israel, "*The blood shall be a token to you*;" and, secondly, in its relation to God, "*And when I see the blood, I will pass over you.*"

I. First, let us look at what this important and interesting type implies—the blood sprinkled on the door-posts and lintels of the houses of all the children of Israel. First, it implies God's method of salvation; that was God's plan of saving the nation of Israel, who were his covenant people, and whom he was now constituting his national church. He resolved to save them from Egyptian slavery, poverty, degradation, and darkness, and also from the plague which was that night to go through the length and breadth of the land, and which was to enter the house and home of every Egyptian. Having resolved to save every Israelite, he said, Take a lamb, keep it a certain time, then slay it; catch the blood in a basin, and with a bunch of hyssop sprinkle it upon the two posts of every house, and also upon the lintel. None was to be sprinkled upon the threshold, for it was to be over the people, and round about them; but it was not to be trampled upon; and a child of God cannot trample upon the blood of the everlasting covenant. Here, then, we have several very interesting and instructive points to contemplate. God's method of saving sinners is by the death of a lamb—by the death of his own Lamb. The darling Son of God is his precious, spotless, and amiable Lamb; and, therefore, John said, pointing at

an interesting Personage who appeared before him, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Without being too doctrinal on this occasion, I may call attention to the fact that death forms a most important feature in the government of God. I do thank God that he has taken death under his own government, and included it within the influence of his own reign. Now death is twofold ; it should, first of all, be regarded as the natural and necessary penalty of sin ; and, secondly, as the source and fountain of pardon, purity, and eternal life. If we look at the death of the sinner, how hideous ! how repulsive ! how cold ! and how terrible it is ! and no wonder, for death is the offspring of sin, the child of moral evil, and not the creature of God at all. God had no active hand in the production of the monster death with its terrible sting. A just and holy God could never have created such a monster as death. No, death is the offspring of sin, and its natural penalty also. Causes produce effects according to their own nature, and sin being the cause of death, an enemy to God and man appears. Death, however, has been taken under the government of God. The saving, gracious reign of our God has been sovereignly connected with this evil. The dear and blest Redeemer comes into the sinner's place, and meets this very death which is the offspring of sin, and enters into a conflict with this monster with its mighty sting, and its burning poison. Death meets the dear Son of God, and stings every member of his body, and every power of his mind. It stings him from head to foot ; and this great Saviour, the Lord Jesus, extracts the poison and the sting from the foe, and thus death is swallowed up in the Mediator's victory. Out of the death of Jesus Christ we have not eternal punishment and woe ; but pardon, purity, peace and perfection freely flowing : we have, in fact, eternal life from the death of the Lamb of God, its principle here, and the certainty of the fullest development of that life in another and a better world. God said to Moses, I will save Israel, but I will save them by the intervention of a lamb and its blood ; therefore take a lamb and slay it, and sprinkle its blood upon the door-posts, and the lintel of every house. This is the first point that it seems necessary to notice here—Salvation is by the death of the Lamb of God.

Then, still dwelling on God's method of saving his people, in the second place, *the blood shed was to be sprinkled*. I apprehend that the destroying angel would have entered the houses of the children of Israel notwithstanding the dead lambs and the basins of blood that were therein, if the blood had not been sprinkled on their lintels and on the door-posts ; for God is a God of order. However disobedient his people may be, bless his name ! he will save in his own way, or not at all. Salvation is honourable, or impossible. God is full of pardon and forgiveness, and the disobedience of his people is forgiven ; but he never disregards his own ordinance, but always saves by atoning blood ; and, therefore, the second order was, "Sprinkle the blood upon the houses where ye are, and it shall be a token to you : and when I see the blood, I will pass over you." Consequently the blood was sprinkled ; and this leads us to view a most interesting and delightful fact in our salvation. There are two sprinklers of blood. Only one person shed the blood ; but two persons sprinkle it, in order to complete salvation. First, blood is sprinkled by Christ himself ; and, secondly, it is sprinkled by the Holy Spirit. The atoning blood of Christ is, or was, sprinkled by Christ himself. It is not his personal or official work to sprinkle his blood on the hearts of sinners ; that is the office of the Holy Spirit ; but he has entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us ; and he entered into heaven, not by the blood of others, but by his own, and there he appears in the presence of God for us. Now two objects were to be sprinkled with blood, and peace and salvation were to result therefrom. First, God him-

self, Jehovah in his legislative and judicial character ; and, secondly, sinners' hearts or consciences. The blood of the lamb had to be carried into the Holiest of all, and sprinkled upon Jehovah's throne, to hush the thunder and quench the lightnings, that the rainbow might appear. God had been insulted and offended, and his honour and glory demanded an atonement for human guilt ; and Christ carried his own blood into heaven, and sprinkled it upon his Father's throne, thus becoming the propitiation for our sins. The blood of Christ, therefore pacified God, propitiated Divine justice and eternal truth, cleared all the storm away for ever, and produced a state of everlasting harmony and serenity in the moral government of God towards all the redeemed.

It only now remains to have it sprinkled upon the door-posts and the lintel of the house of the poor, lost, and ruined sinner, and the destroyer shall pass over him. When the Holy Ghost enters a sinner's heart and communicates life, one of the first wants that springs up therein is an application of Christ's blood. Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, is then wanted. The sinner then begins to talk about the fountain ; and shortly after regeneration, the regenerated one says, " Wash me, Saviour, or I die." Oh the blood is wanted, and it shall be applied. Therefore the Holy Spirit, if I may so speak, dips the hyssop into the precious blood of this Paschal Lamb ; and at the appointed time he meets the sinner and sprinkles it upon his conscience ; and such sinners rise in adoring gratitude, saying, " And not only so, but we joy in God also by Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the atonement."

This leads me to notice a third point, viz., *that the blood of Christ is interposed between God and the soul.* I beg my hearers to receive this fact, and to reflect upon it with pleasure if they can. What was it that separated the destroying angel and the Israelites in their houses ? The door ? That and the walls of the house might have been ten feet thick, and all might have been of iron and granite ; all would have failed to exclude the destroyer had not blood been there. No, nothing but the blood of the lamb was a valid and safe barrier between the plague and Israel. And we sometimes sing in relation to this fact—

" He, to save my soul from danger,
Interposed his precious blood."

Consider God going forth for the purpose of punishing the guilty ; consider him going forth with the bill, demanding payment of every debtor ; consider him going forth in quest of law-breakers, with curses to pour upon every transgressor, and coming to a sensible sinner who is leaning on the atonement, and trusting in the precious blood of Jesus. He passes over him, as if there were no guilt in him, as if that sinner owed him nothing, as if there were nothing in that person for his curse to light upon. There is blood interposed between God and that offender, and God respects and honours it ; for " when I see the blood, I will pass over you." This leads me to notice again the interesting position of the church of God, or all true believers. They are behind the blood. Is it so with all my hearers this morning ? Are you behind the law ? God will not pass over you if you are hiding there. Are you behind your own works ? your own repentance or your own faith ? God will not pass you if you are hiding there. Are you behind the atonement ? behind the cross ? behind the blood ? Are you holding the paschal Lamb, or his blood, between your hearts and God ? endeavouring to cover your whole selves with the atonement of God's dear Son ? It is a token ? " The blood shall be a token to you, and when I see the blood I will pass over you." Just an observation here. I will not dwell upon it, but it is important ; the absence of blood is not the cause of condemnation. That is the point where the great divergence which divides Christians com-

mences. O that professors of religion, and all the children of God could see the almost, if not quite, vital importance of this fact. That the absence of blood is the cause of condemnation is what almost everyone believes. Was the absence of blood from the Egyptians' houses the cause of death therein? Was it not the hardness of Pharaoh's heart, and the cruelty and oppression of the people? No, my friends, it is not the absence of blood that causes condemnation and eternal death. Had there been no Lamb, and no blood, and no atonement, there would have existed a terribly sufficient cause of condemnation and ruin. Oh, I cannot regard the precious blood of Jesus Christ as augmenting in any respect the sufferings of the lost, or as increasing the intensity of the force and power of the cause of condemnation. No; blood is the cause of salvation. Sin is the cause of condemnation. The Lamb is the author of eternal life; The lion, the devil, the old serpent is the author of death, and ruin, and woe. I will not tarry on that point. May all of you see the importance of this fact in connection with our holy religion. Man is not punished and sent to hell because there is no blood upon him, but because he is a breaker of God's law, and an offender of the infinite Majesty of Heaven. Let me have the precious blood of Christ upon my conscience, and my offence is obliterated; my guilt is removed, and I am a debtor to rich, free and undeserved mercy.

Secondly, in relation to the method of salvation the text implies not only God's method of saving sinners, *but the importance of Christ's blood*. Its importance is unspeakable and inconceivable. It is, first, important *to God himself*. "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." It pacifies him, and limits, so to speak, the expressions of his wrath. It influences his justice, and gathers together into beautiful harmony all his attributes and perfections. It so influences him that he regulates his conduct by its preciousness and power. Whatever may enter the blood-besprinkled house; whatever he may do to a blood-besprinkled soul, he can never curse it. Bitters he may put into the hands and cups of redeemed ones, but penal evil shall never fall on any being whose heart is sprinkled with precious blood. God may use a rod, a very heavy one, for half or for the whole of one's life; he will never use a sword. He cannot consistently with his justice, righteousness and truth ever penally smite a blood-besprinkled man or woman. When I see the blood I will pass over you. It is important, therefore, to God. And the blood of Christ *is important to the sinner*. The blood of the paschal lamb was important to the children of Israel. It was their *all* that night. It was blood or death; blood or destruction. And blood is the all of every poor sensible sinner. To repeat what has already been said, "Wash me, Saviour, or I die." Get behind your resolutions, good intentions, past life, or what you intend to be, and you are not safe. Get behind your faith and love, and hope and joy; and all the graces of the Spirit, and even then, without atoning blood, you would not be safe. There is not enough in your faith to save you. Your hope is a staggering power, and your affections rise and sink continually as sinners. You need a barrier that is altogether divine and immutable, and meritorious. That barrier you have in the blood of the Lamb, and in nothing else whatever in the universe of God. It is the blood that is important to the sinner. Oh, if thousands of gold or bank notes were shot down before a law-condemned sinner whose conscience is lacerated by the power of divine truth, he might, were he poor and needy say, "I thank my God for meaner things, but these are not himself. Still my cry is, Wash me! Wash me, or I die." It is not gold that is wanted, nor position, nor honour, but blood. This is unspeakably important to the sinner. What shall I say about *angels*? What have they to do with blood? "Which things the angels desire to look into." They never saw so much of God before he became

a babe, and gradually grew into a man. They followed him all the days of his life, and the poet has expressed the fact correctly and scripturally, where he says they wondered where the scene of love would end. They saw him in Jordan; they heard his sermons, and perhaps learned more from them than men; they saw him grovelling in Gethsemane, and hang on the cross, and heard him groan, and they saw him die. Now they see the blood sprinkled upon the throne, and the sinner, and how it purifies the human conscience and tranquillises the guilty mind, and they wonder what its power must be; and therefore the blood of the Lamb is an important matter to angels, inasmuch as they learn therefrom. And is it not important *to the devil*? Ah! he cares for nothing else. This is the power that carries the slave into liberty. This is the power that redeems a man from all evil. Across the blood of Christ the devil cannot pass. Over this barrier Satan can never go. It is an all-sufficient and perfect barrier between the child of God and the destroyer. It is important *to ministers*. I see one or two present this morning who, like myself, are favoured to open their mouths in the great Master's name. There is no gospel minister without blood. A bloodless Gospel minister is a contradiction. A bloodless gospel is not the gospel of our God. But for the blood of the Lamb the gospel ministry had never been known. There is no gospel sermon unless it contains the blood of the Lamb, the precious blood of God's dear Son.

Thirdly, notice that the fact implies not only the importance of blood, but its *marvellous power*. Now this is not merely an arrangement by which God has decreed to attribute as it were peculiar importance to blood. We are not thus to take the subject, nor are we thus to believe it. There is a power; an actual, substantial, intrinsic power in the blood of the Lamb. As a divine ordinance and appointment, of course God himself will not disregard it; but the power of the Saviour's blood is not typical, nor ceremonial, nor shadowy, nor merely the result of divine appointment. The power of Christ's blood is living, legal, meritorious, absolutely and necessarily saving. It is all this, or, as I read the Bible, it is nothing. What does its power come from? From the dignity, worth, and greatness of the Person that shed it. All his dignity and glory are inseparable from the life he lived, and the death he died. Between a peasant and a monarch there is perhaps no natural, no moral difference. The soul of a peasant and that of a prince are naturally and morally the same; but socially, civilly, and politically considered, there is a difference. It might be, and it is an important event, when a poor person dies, but people attribute extraordinary importance to the death of a prince; and therefore, rightly or wrongly, it is felt, there is a difference between the life and death of the two. Now, here is incarnate God; God's darling Son, the highest Being in the universe that was capable of dying; and a marvellous work was done to render it possible for him to die. He could not have died had he not assumed our nature. This he assumed, and the Highest became capable of dying. The death of all the world would have been little compared with the death of the Prince of life and peace. "It is Christ that died!" O that I could enforce the fact upon your minds, and feel its power myself! Christ died for us. Had all the angels been given to die, their death would not have met the case, and the gift would have been comparatively small. Here, however, is the Lamb; that great Being, who was and is the embodiment of all excellencies, divine, natural, spiritual, legal. His life is given, and his death fills the scene, in all possible perfection of suffering tears, sweat, blood, and agonies, and in all God's government the blood and death of the Lord Jesus is the most precious. When I see it, I will pass over you, and you shall regard it as a peculiar token. Now, just one word more, and I shall have done on this part of the subject. There were two facts that supported the faith of Israel; viz., *the*

blood of the Lamb and the word of God. "When I see the blood, I will pass over you." There was the blood, and God saw it. The second thing was for God to be true, and he could not do otherwise than keep his word; and the result proved the sufficiency of both the blood of the Lamb and the word of God, and it justified the faith of Israel, for they were delivered, according to the Word of God. Sinner, if you are trusting here, you are as safe as Israel were in Goshen that night, and as safe as God's people that are now in heaven. The Lord, the Spirit sprinkle afresh the blood of the paschal Lamb upon your consciences, and give you the sweetest possible confidence in its heavenly efficacy and saving power.

II. Just a word before I close on the second particular: viz., *this arrangement in relation to God and man.* It shall be a token or a sign, not only to you, but to Myself also. Let me just thread thoughts together here. In the first place, the blood of the Lamb was considered as a *token of covenant relationship.* There was a covenant between God and Israel, and blood was to be regarded as a token of the fact that God had constituted himself their God. My friends, are you behind Christ's blood? If so, the blood that screens and shelters you is a token of your new covenant relationship. God is your God, and you are his sons and daughters; and he says to you, "Regard the blood as a token of the fact that I will perform the part of a God to you. All that a God can become I will become to you, and all that a God is required to do for his people I will perform for you; and a token not only that God would perform the part of a God, but that we, being his people, resolve to follow, obey and serve him. The blood. Important mark. Are we marked with it? Let me ask the question seriously and solemnly. Are we marked with blood? Many of you are ready to rise, and say, "No; we have never yet been marked with blood." Stay, I do not know whether I can convince you of this error of your judgment, if not the error of your ways. Listen to me. Perhaps the mark of blood is upon you, although you have never been able to say, "Christ is mine, and I am his," or "He loved me, and gave himself for me." Well, let us see. There is a hope in your heart; is there not? And what is its object? Well, it is the blood. O, your hope is therefore connected with the blood of the Lamb, and that causes your hope to be what it is; and depend upon it there is not a great distance between that grace and Christ's death, for they are united. Your hope then is in blood. Again you are praying for its application. Thus prayer is connected with the blood, and your hearts are burning with desires to be sprinkled with it. Hence, the blood is upon your desires, your hopes, and your prayers. And do you believe too in the efficacy of that blood; and that that only can set you free? Believe it. I believe in nothing else. Then blood is upon your faith as well as on your love; your hopes, your desires, and your prayers. The people who were in the house could not see the blood themselves, when the door was closed, so there are many of God's dear people who cannot see the blood, though it is upon them. It is not what you see, or what you feel; but when God sees the blood he will pass over you. Faith and hope are God's creatures, and their connection with blood is of him, and he will see his own work. A token, then, of covenant relationship. And, secondly, it is a *token or sign of liberty.* That night a very large host, even all Israel, went out of Egypt. The blood shall be a token to you, for though I destroy the first-born of Egypt, I will deliver you; and that night they all came out of bondage into liberty. Blood is a token of the believer's freedom. Free from curse, and wrath, and condemnation and death. Blood demands liberty, and gives it, even the best of liberty, for ever. Thirdly, a *token of peace between God and the soul.* What a blessed state! Is there any sign of it? Yes; the blood is a sign of peace. There is a beautiful scripture in Isaiah's prophecy, which reads thus, "The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of

righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever." Now, observe the gradient: there may be liberty where there is not peace; there may be peace where there is not quietness; there may be quietness where there is not assurance; and there may be assurance where the idea of eternity is not present. Now look at it. The blood shall be to you for a sign of liberty, and then of peace, between God and his people. The child of God as such is in a state of peace with God, but he may not have quietness of mind. We in England to-day; (I suppose I am stating a fact, but circumstances however arise so suddenly and so rapidly that I do not know)—to-day England is in a state of peace—war has not been proclaimed; but we are not quiet. There is peace, but not quietness. The whole country is agitated. Christ's blood, however, is not only a token of peace, it produces quietness and tranquility of mind. If there be a measure of quietness in the country, I do not think any one would say there is assurance. But here behind the blood there is liberty, peace, quietness, assurance, and that for ever. The blood shall be a sign to you, and when I see it I will pass over. *A sign of consecration.* God's sacred host, his sacred church, was brought out of Egypt by his blood and power. Lastly, *a sign of the certainty of the fulfilment of all God's promises.* To-night I shall come and fulfil my promise, respecting your deliverance out of Egypt, and thence went all the people, brought out with a high hand, and an outstretched arm. The blood was a token that God would do so. "I have promised to lead you to Canaan. The blood is a token that I shall do that; and then I have promised to give you Canaan. The blood is a token that I will give you the land." Friends, God has said that he will be our God for ever, and that we shall be his people. The blood is to us a token of his love and faithfulness, and of the fact that every word of promise shall be fulfilled. May the Lord help us to rely on this precious saving blood until we reach that blessed world where we shall sing, Unto him that hath loved us and washed us in his own blood, be endless glory ascribed. Amen.

THE NEXT SERMON WILL BE READY ON APRIL 15TH.

Printed and published by BRISCOE & Co., 28, Banner-street, Bunhill-row, London, E.C.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

Four copies post-free, by sending stamps to the above address.

Parcels of back numbers, not fewer than 12, may be had from the Printers, at half-price, (viz. 6d., post free.)

JESUS, THE TEMPLE OF GOD.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, 24th MARCH, 1878.

"Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body."—John ii. 19—21.

Two of the Saviour's miracles are recorded in this chapter. In the first place, his miracle of turning water into wine; and, secondly, that of purging the temple. Jesus went to Jerusalem to be present at the feast of the Passover; He came to obey and fulfil the law; for though he was God and the great God-man, he was also a Jew, and observed the law of Moses; and consequently he kept that annual feast. And we are told that he entered into the temple and found those that sold oxen, and sheep, and doves, and the changers of money sitting. The oxen, sheep, and doves were sold for sacrificial purposes at this great annual festival; for the ceremonial law was a heavy burden and a galling yoke. When an Israelite had committed sin and transgressed against God, it was always his duty according to the law to offer a sacrifice to the God he had offended. Those sacrifices were, of course, always ceremonial and typical. When guilt or uncleanness, however, had been contracted, Jehovah called for blood, which was sometimes the blood of a bullock; at other times that of a sheep; and at other times the blood of a turtle-dove, or a young pigeon. And there were, if I may so describe them, dealers in cattle and in clean fowls in the temple of God at Jerusalem. The people, I conclude, found it more convenient to purchase a sacrifice there, than to purchase sheep, goats, or turtle-doves near their homes, and drive or carry them to the temple; hence buyers and sellers were trading in the house of God. Jesus, it is said, entered the temple, and found those that sold oxen, sheep, and doves, and the changers of money sitting; for both Jews and proselytes came from various parts of the world to Jerusalem, to worship at the feast of the Passover, and each person had to pay half a shekel into the treasury. They either brought foreign money with them, or required change for shekels; and hence there were changers of money in the city of Jerusalem. These money-changers, however, were in the temple, and a large secular and sinful trade was carried on in that holy place. Do you not imagine you can see him—that poor person, the carpenter's son, Jesus of Nazareth, who had not where to lay his head—when, having made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and oxen, and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables. He did not, it seems, set the doves free. They were, no doubt, in cages; and therefore to the sellers of doves he said, "Take these things hence. Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise; and his disciples remembered that

VOL. II., No. 12.—APRIL 15, 1878.

it was written, *The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.*" The miracles of Christ have been compared, and many opinions expressed as to which was the greatest. All were, doubtless, wonderful works of God ; but if there was any difference between them, and one was greater than another, I think, perhaps, the greatest, or one of the greatest, was that of cleansing and purging the temple of God on this occasion. He did not call for the assistance of the disciples or other persons, nor did he seek permission to clear the place ; but having made a whip of small cords, he deliberately and authoritatively proceeded, without resistance on their part, to drive those dealers in cattle, and sellers of doves, and changers of money out of the sacred place. "Where the word of a king is, there is power ;" and where the blows of a God are, there is also power. Divine influence emanated from the great Purger and Purifier of the temple, and away went all the buyers and sellers, and thieves. So extraordinary and marvellous was this miracle that the Jewish rulers proceeded from their chamber into the temple, and said to Christ, "What sign showest thou unto us, seeing thou doest such things?" You appear here as a reformer of abuses, and have declared that those men have desecrated the temple, and you have driven them out. We presume you consider yourself authorised and commissioned to do what you have done. Now when reformers have appeared in our nation, and conducted themselves in an extraordinary manner, they have generally given the people a sign from heaven or from God, to assure them that they had Divine authority for what they did. Show us, therefore, by what authority thou doest these things. And Jesus answered and said unto them, Do you ask for a sign ; I will give you one, but it will not appear for two or three years. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." And it must not be forgotten that when the Saviour thus addressed the Jews, he most probably pointed, not at the walls of that material temple wherein he stood, for he did not refer at all to that building ; but at his own body. Laying his hand upon himself, he said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. And the Jews said, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days ? But he spake of the temple of his body."

Let me, in making a few observations on this important subject, call your attention to three things—first, to *God's mediatorial Temple*—"The temple of his body ;" secondly, to *the demolition of this Temple*—"Destroy this temple ;" thirdly, to *its re-erection*—"And in three days I will raise it up."

I. In the first place we have to notice *the Temple* indicated in our text. It is said, "He spake of the temple of his body." The word temple frequently occurs in the Scriptures, and it indicates different objects in different places. Sometimes by temple we are to understand the whole world, or the whole creation. Every one in thy temple speaks of thy glory. The roof of this grand temple will be the visible heavens ; the floor, the world in which we dwell ; the resident, the great Creator himself ; and the furniture will be seas and oceans, and rivers, and trees, and mountains ; and in this great temple God is praised. Again, much is said of the temple at Jerusalem, which magnificent and costly structure was erected by Solomon. Again, we read of the less magnificent and costly structure which was erected by Zerubbabel and Joshua. This was the temple which was standing in the days of Jesus Christ, only Herod and others had added very much to it. Again, the saints of God are described as the temples of the Holy Ghost. Then in the book of Jonah the experience of that prophet when he was in the fish's belly is recorded. "Yet," said the good man, "will I look again toward thy holy temple." Jonah was then in the fish, which was swimming in the ocean. The prophet could not have known where he was, except that he was in the sea, and that he was preserved in some mysterious and wonderful manner in the water. He certainly did not know what part of the sea he was in, neither did he know in what direction to look for the city of Jerusalem ; and yet Jonah said, "I will look again toward

thy holy temple ;” and one cannot fail to remember in connection with this the beautiful words of Watts:—

“ Is he a Temple? I adore
Th’ indwelling majesty and power;
And still to this most holy place,
Whene’er I pray, I’ll turn my face.”

Jonah knew not where Jerusalem was, nor in what direction to look for its temple. Though he was confined in that dark and mysterious prison he knew where Christ was, and what his blessed person and office were,—that he was the great mediatorial Temple of God ; and he turned the eye of his mind and of his faith towards his great Redeemer, and prayed towards that holy Temple. Christian brethren, this is the Temple on which I am now to make a few remarks, namely, Jesus Christ as the mediatorial and saving residence of God.

When Adam stood in Eden an innocent, righteous, holy, and perfect man, he was the natural temple of God in Divine perfection and glory. That temple, however, was destroyed, and became a wreck ; it was ruined morally and physically, and its great Resident left it. Adam was the temple of his great Creator, who dwelt and appeared in the body, in the soul, in the mind, and in the experience of that happy man. This temple, however, fell, and the devil took possession of the ruins, and he held them for hell and eternal torment. Having defiled, polluted, and destroyed God’s natural temple, and made its ruins odious and detestable, he appeared as triumphing over the works of God. God, however, had not forgotten it, nor had he wholly abandoned it ; therefore being determined to re-inhabit fallen men, he made merciful provision for rescuing them from hell and wrath,—for plucking them from the burning, and for reconstituting them his spiritual and everlasting habitations ; and in order to fulfil this great design, he constituted his dear Son his mediatorial Temple. Now this brings us to notice that out of the wreck and ruins to which we have referred there arose a glorious temple in which God will dwell for ever ; for Jesus in whom God dwells, is bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. He is a man like ourselves in all respects, with the exception of sin, from which he is absolutely free ; but he is perfectly human, possessing a human body, and a human soul, both of which are holy and complete. This mediatorial Temple arose out of the ruins which Satan seemed to be presiding over, and which he claimed as his own. Out of these ruins Emmanuel rose ; the Christ of God, the dear Redeemer appeared, our bone and flesh ; and God said concerning him, When he is born and appears on the earth thou shalt call his name Jesus ; for he shall save his people from their sins. And again, he shall be called Emmanuel, which, being interpreted, is God with us. Well, now we have reached a most delightful, because a saving point. We have God in our own nature, dwelling in our own flesh as in a temple, and dwelling therein for ever. This is the holy Temple towards which Jonah resolved to look, and towards which David looked, saying, although the temple of Jerusalem was not then built, “ I will lift up my hands towards thy holy temple ;” that temple must have been Christ whom David knew as the mediatorial residence of God.

Let us say that *the materials of this Temple were not only human, they were holy*. The mediatorial Temple of God is absolutely and unchangeably holy.

“ His life was pure, without a spot,
And all his nature clean.”

This was the true tabernacle, which God and not Moses pitched, or the true temple which Jehovah and not Solomon built, which the Lord built and not man. Now, in order to secure perfect holiness and purity in the materials of this Temple, a body was prepared for Christ. “ A body hast thou prepared me.” Why was a body prepared in an extraordinary way for the Lord Jesus ?

Because, had he taken flesh in the very way in which we take it, it would have been sinful, and the materials of the divine temple would not have been pure and holy ; and, hence, a body was prepared for him. Jesus Christ, as man, was absolutely free from original sin. That sin of Adam which is imputed to all his posterity could not legally be imputed to the Lord Jesus, though sovereign mercy subsequently laid on him the iniquities of us all. Adam never represented Christ ; he was not his covenant head, and he never acted for him. Adam was our covenant head, and we were in him, and there God saw us all ; therefore when he fell, we fell in him. But Christ was not in him ; he did not represent Jesus ; he never was a covenant head to the Lord of life and glory ; and therefore when God erected a mediatorial temple for himself, he *prepared* a body for his Son in a special manner, in order that his Temple might be a pure, and righteous, and holy one. Then, again, our Lord Jesus inherited no corruption from Adam ; for just as Adam was not the representative of Christ, so he was not the root or spring of his human nature. Adam was not the father of Christ ; for had he been so, Christ would have been like him ; for Adam begat sons and daughters in his own likeness. Christ, however, not descending in the ordinary course of nature from Adam, inherited not a corrupt nature from him. You and I are Adam's children—and have descended from the first man : and “ Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean ? ” The fountain, the natural fountain of our being is corrupt, and poisonous, and sinful, and we are therefore corrupt ; but of Christ it was said, “ That holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called The Son of the Highest.” In order to produce the pure materials of this temple, the power of the Highest overshadowed Mary and the Holy Ghost came upon her ; and thus the humanity of our Lord was miraculously produced, and his nature was therefore clean, and his person free from corruption. “ He spake of the temple of his body,” which was a holy though a human one—a temple which the Lord built and not man ; a tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not Moses nor any other creature. And then we may notice, again, that Christ was free from all practical sin. As he came into the world without the taint of original guilt, and without natural corruption, so he came without the power, and this was an excellency, of committing sin, and was perfectly unable to fall into it. This has been disputed, and a late celebrated man wrote against this all-important fact, and decided, I suppose to his own satisfaction, and to the satisfaction of many other persons, that the Lord Jesus Christ was liable to sin. Surely this degrades our great Lord, and we can never believe it. It was simply impossible for any power to stain the pure humanity of Immanuel, the Prince of life. The first Adam was perfectly pure, but his purity was conditional, and therefore possibly terminable. He sinned, and his perfection was lost ; but in the second Adam we have a pure, a holy, a perfect man—a man who was incapable of committing sin or contracting guilt. Here, then, is the temple, and Jesus said, You ask me for a sign. Here is my body, which is the temple of God. “ Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” But why does the preacher dwell on this theme ? He does not know, except it be that it is one of the themes he loves, and that his mind has been directed to it. He loves to have clear and correct views of the person of his Lord ; and prayerfully endeavours to present his dear Saviour before his hearers, in this and other places, in the glories and excellencies of his person and character. If we are wrong about the person of Christ, we are right nowhere. Start wrong, and you will never be right. Christ is the first, and the middle, and the last ; and, therefore, I am prayerfully anxious to present correctly to my hearers the all-perfect and glorious character of the Redeemer, who is the holy Temple of the Lord.

Let us pass on and notice a second fact suggested by the subject, viz., that *this Temple is the residence of Deity*. God dwells in Christ, and hence he is his Temple. A temple, you know, is a house or a building erected for a god.

The savage or the uncivilised person dwells in a cave ; the peasant dwells in a mud-wall cottage ; the person whose circumstances are easy is supposed to dwell in a commodious and comfortable house ; the nobleman dwells in a mansion ; and the king dwells in a palace ; but God dwells in a Temple. God's residence is not merely a mansion, or a palace. A higher word, and one more significant and weighty is employed to designate his residence, and that is a Temple. Christ is God's Temple ; therefore God dwells in him. Now we come to the beautiful words of Paul, who had very comprehensive views of the glories of God's Son, "In whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Again, in the first chapter of this Gospel, John says, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we behold his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." "All the fulness of the Godhead." Then nothing is excluded or left out, for all the fulness of the Godhead dwells there in him bodily. This leads us to observe that God dwells everywhere, for he is omnipresent ; east and west, north and south, are occupied and filled by him, and his essence can never be limited or bounded. But there is nothing in the omnipresence of God considered apart from other facts, that is saving, or comforting, or that the poor, lost, and ruined sinner can rest upon. Here is the vast temple of the universe, and God dwells therein. This we believe, but then we are sinners, and seeing no atoning blood in this temple, nor any pardoning mercy in its great Resident, the omnipresence of God affords no ground upon which we as guilty beings can set our feet. God dwelt typically in the temple at Jerusalem, and there was a symbol of the Divine presence therein, and his residence in that place was conditional and terminable ; for the first temple was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, and the symbol of the Divine presence left the place, and we have no reason to believe that the Shekinah re-appeared in the second one ; and therefore God did not dwell therein as he dwells in the person of his Son. How does he dwell in Christ ? All his fulness is there, and bodily. What does that mean ? Not typically, nor in a shadowy manner ; but really, substantially, fully, and perfectly. All his fulness is there. Well, but God is said to dwell in his saints, and they are, therefore, said to be the temples of the Holy Ghost. He dwells in them, not essentially, or personally, or so as to constitute their life and acts meritorious ; but in a way of grace, influence, gifts, and love ; and all the fulness of the Godhead resides and rests in Christ the great God-man. This mediatorial Temple is the rest of God, as well as his residence. I might accommodate this scripture to our subject. "This is my rest for ever. Here will I dwell ; for I have desired it." There are residences which are not places of rest. You do not rest where you reside. Satan resides in the hearts of sinners, but he does not rest therein. God resides in his Son, and there he "rests in his love," there being all in that temple that Deity requires.

Let us proceed to observe that *in this temple God performs all his great saving work*. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them ;" and now he is worshipped in this Temple ; for the saints have to do with him in no other connection. Look at God in nature, and tell me, as I have been told, that you can worship God as he appears therein. I question the propriety of that assertion ; for we cannot forget that we are guilty and sinful, and cannot approach God without the intervention of precious blood ; and therefore God is in Christ, as the only proper object of spiritual worship. Do you want to worship him as your covenant God ? He is in this Temple. As your gracious Father ? He is your Father only in his holy place. God dwells in the Man Christ Jesus, and in him he receives worshippers, looks approvingly at them, listens to their prayers, and through him he communicates favours to their hearts. In worship we come to this Temple, and entering it by faith, we fall before Jehovah in Christ ; and our worship, though imperfect, is accepted by God. From this Temple flowed rich streams of merit, precious blood, and eternal sal-

vation; and without being fanciful, we may apply to Christ, the statements that streams issued from the temple, and waters from the threshold of the house." This Temple is filled with God, and his holiness-producing grace, is continually flowing therefrom. Then observe, that Jesus Christ is all. He is the Temple and the Priest, and the Altar, and the Victim, and the Sacrifice, and the Incense, and all that God requires, indeed he is a marvellous Christ, his person is unique, and stands alone; for there is no being in the universe that is like him. One Temple. Oh how grandly simple, and simply grand, is the great business of our salvation! Do not send me into meadows and fields, or tell me to listen to the rippling streams, the flowing rivers, and the blowing winds, to hear the voice of God. All that is very poetical and pleasing. I am a poor guilty sinner. I want the whole of Deity in a form I can apprehend, if not comprehend. I want something definite in connection with the God I have offended, and before whom I am expecting to stand; and all this I have in the humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

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

I will just add that Jesus, considered as the mediatorial Temple, indicates God's intention of reinhabiting lost and ruined man. I have already spoken of sinless man as the original temple of God, which is now lying in ruins. In these very ruins there are some things that seem to indicate man's original greatness. I do not mean that man is great now. He is not. But there are traces in these ruins of his original greatness and use. What do you think of the human conscience? What a wonderful faculty! is it not? What must that power have been before guilt was contracted, and sin stained it! What do you think of the affections of the heart? Are they not marvellous? and what must they have been when they were unstained and uninfluenced by sin! I say, in the very ruins of this human temple there are yet traces of its original greatness. Well, in Christ as the Temple of God, I seem to hear the voice of God, saying, Behold, the ruins of my original temple. I have deserted, but I do not hate them; for from those ruins I will gather a people, and reconstruct them into living temples, which I will reinhabit, and possess for ever. Look at Christ as the Temple of God. What does it indicate? That God loves our nature, though it is ruined, repulsive, and odious. He loves it, and has put it on, and he wears it and lives and rests therein as in a beloved residence. The ruins are, indeed, odious and offensive, yet God intends to do a work by and in Christ, by which man shall be redeemed, rebuilt, reconsecrated and reinhabited. First, he is redeemed. What a mass of materials for God to purchase, a multitude of odious sinners bought with blood. Are they not worthless! Christ does not think so; for he loved the church, and gave himself for it. He thought nothing was too good or too great for them. Well, having redeemed them, what will he do next. He will re-erect these temples; and the Holy Ghost comes into the heart of the ruined sinner, who, at once, from a den of lions, a cage of unclean birds, becomes the temple of God. "Know ye not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost?" Here is a temple! The materials bought are brought together and re-edified. Then as a temple is a consecrated place, the sinner is consecrated by blood and oil; the blood of the Lamb and the grace of the Holy Spirit. Having rebuilt these temples, and reconsecrated them, God enters them, and takes up his abode therein; and says, "I will dwell in these hearts for ever." We convey the bodies of our friends in Jesus to the grave, and leave them there in sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection unto everlasting life; for we then religiously and affectionately inter the materials of God's temples, which have fallen down. They are dissolved; but the materials are not, then, less important than when they were alive, and were actually inhabited by God. Do not say that the child of God

ever ceases to be important; for, whether he be just fashioned, or dissolved, the materials of Christian temples are always dear and precious to God. Friends, God dwelt in that saint whose body lies in that coffin, and whose coffin is in that grave. God dwelt in him; and the dust of that temple is sacred to God, and as Christ raised himself on the third day, so he will raise up all his temples at the last day, and reinhabit them for ever. You may think I am doctrinal to-night; but it appears to me, however it may occur to you, that this doctrine is a loaf of heavenly bread, or it is a cup of heavenly water, drawn from the wells of salvation. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon you." "This honour have all God's saints." The temples of God, whether they stand on the earth or their materials be laid in it, are always important to him. I cannot say anything further on this part of the subject; and the time being gone, I must conclude.

II. The Temple *is represented as about to be demolished.* "Destroy this Temple;" not that the Saviour ordered them to do it, or influenced them to bring about his sufferings and death. It was a prediction, or an announcement of the fact in a figure that they would do it. You will destroy this temple as far as it is possible for you so to do, and I and heaven will permit you to do it. Just as you have polluted this material temple with your cattle and pigeon dealers, and I have cleansed it; so when you have destroyed my body, in three days I will raise it up, just as I have in a few minutes purged this temple. The Jews destroyed two temples, and Christ raised two. They destroyed the temple of the body of Christ, and by doing that they destroyed their own material temple. And Christ has raised two temples. He has raised himself from the grave, and he is raising a gospel church, which is called the temple of the Lord. "He shall build the temple of the Lord, and he shall bear the glory." The demolition of the temple of Christ's body was attended by suffering and pain. The person of our Lord bore all the weight of sin. Will you say that Deity was not in him, when all the terrible load of the guilt of millions was upon him? Will you tell me that God was not in that body—that Deity was not in that man? No God in that man! Then the load that was upon him would have annihilated him—

"My soul, one portion of that ire,
Had scorched thee with eternal fire,
Which spent its sorrows there."

It was the God Man that bore sin. Had he not been man he could not have come into contact with it; and had he not been God—bearing it, he must have been utterly destroyed. Then he, or this temple, was surrounded by the flames of divine wrath. I had almost said it was burned down, and consumed, as it were, by those fires, though not so destroyed as to cease to exist. Heaven, however, poured its fires down upon the Surety and Substitute of Israel; and what flowed from him but blood? And what kind of blood? It was holy; for it came from an infinitely holy Person, and nothing unholy ever emanated from that sacred Temple. Holy blood, and a holy salvation, and holy grace, if I may so speak, without carnalising the subject. See how the Temple shakes! Look at him as his flesh gives way; his hands and feet are pierced; his side is stabbed; his temples are torn; plowers made long furrows on his back, and his hair is plucked off. Here is the destruction of the Temple; they scourged him, and nailed him to the accursed tree. Hear the Redeemer groan, and see how the Temple reels, and at last see it fall wholly down. "Father, into thy hands I commend my Spirit;" and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. Now the temple of God is not ruined, but it is dissolved, or taken down by death, and laid in the grave. Now look at the materials for a minute. Part of them are in the grave in this world, and part are in heaven in another world. "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit;" and they took his body and laid it in a new sepulchre in the garden. Here were the materials of God's Temple. Had God deserted them? Do not forget this, for it is an important point. The materials were not

deserted by the resident when the temple was dissolved. I mean that Deity was in his soul in heaven, and Deity was also connected with his body in the grave. Had it not been so—if Deity left Christ, when he was dead, then he was only man. Was it nothing more than a man that was buried for us, and nothing more than a man that went to heaven for us? Oh, there is something cold and chilling in that thought, and you cannot admit it. No; a good old writer somewhere illustrates the mystery thus:—A man holds a sheathed sword, and having drawn it, he holds the sword in one hand, and the sheath in the other: and so Christ's Deity held his body when it was dead, and the soul that had been in it. There was no separation of Deity from this Temple, when part of it was in the grave, and part of it was in heaven. "He spake of the temple of his body."

II. Well, now, *the re-erection of this temple*. "I will raise it up in three days." We cannot help seeing in all this the fact that Christ's sufferings were prospective. He foresaw what the Jews would do: for his work was before him, and his agonies were prospective. However, he had confidence in himself, and said, "I will raise it up in three days." And mark his power over death, and over himself also. I will raise this temple up, after you have destroyed it. I have power to lay down my life; and I have power to take it in three days. This commandment have I received from my Father. The resurrection of Christ is sometimes ascribed to the Son, and sometimes to the Father; indeed it is the work of God. Well, he raised himself, and is now the everlasting Temple of the everlasting God. Deity looks at us through his eyes, hears us through his ears, and speaks to us with his voice. Oh how wonderful! God is in our nature, and when we get to heaven, what shall we see? "The chiefest among ten thousand," and "the altogether lovely,"—a body like our own; a Being like ourselves, so far as humanity is concerned. And what will be infinitely blessed is the fact that we shall be like him. "We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

Now, where does this re-erected Temple stand? Where did he rise from the dead? At the end of the law. There this Temple stands. Go there, and enter it, and worship. "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth." Where does it stand? In the new Jerusalem. I do not mean heaven merely—it stands indeed there. The new Jerusalem means the vision of heavenly peace. Well, here are new heavens, and a new earth; and here is the new Jerusalem, wherein dwelleth righteousness; and the Lamb of God, the great Redeemer, the temple of the living, loving, and saving God;

"And still to that most holy place,
Whene'er I pray I'll turn my face."

We shall be raised. I cannot now enter into that matter, for time forbids. We, too, shall be raised, and be carried to heaven, and there appear with the saved temples of God. The whole subject may be thus summarised:—God has two temples; a temple that might be called a saving one, and temples that are saved ones. The saved temple is the saint; and the saving Temple is the dear and blest Redeemer. I did not intend, when I read the text, to offer any remarks on the forty-six years. That verse comes in between the two others, and I thought it unnecessary to go into historical matters. May the Lord command his blessing for Christ's sake. Amen.

THE NEXT SERMON WILL BE READY ON MAY 15TH.

Printed and published by BRISCOE & Co., 28, Banner-street, Bunhill-row, London, E.C.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

Four copies post-free, by sending stamps to the above address.

Parcels of back numbers, not fewer than 12, may be had from the Printers, at half-price,
(viz. 6d., post free.)

ISRAEL'S STRENGTH AND FREEDOM.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, 28th APRIL, 1878.

"And I will strengthen them in the Lord; and they shall walk up and down in his name, saith the Lord."—Zech. x. 12.

THE apostle Peter, being blessed with clear, comforting, and comprehensive views of the promises of God, was divinely inspired to write those wonderful words—"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises." The promises are of infinite importance to both God and his people, every one being both precious and great. No unimportant word has ever fallen from the lips of God, and no small promise has ever flowed from his heart. The promises of God are indications of his purposes; for the decrees of Jehovah are their roots, whilst the promises are the flowers of Divine decrees. We know what God intends to do by the promises he has given, as we know what he has already done by the history of the church and the world. Many of these "great promises" are recorded in the latter part of the chapter out of which I have taken my text this morning. The Lord says, in the 8th verse, "I will hiss for them, and gather them; for I have redeemed them: and they shall increase as they have increased." Here two or three important doctrines are indicated, which are cast into a promissory form. In the first place, there is the great doctrine of eternal redemption. The Lord says concerning his people, I have redeemed them; and I suppose the redemption work of God, like that of creation, is Godlike, and eternally worthy of the great Redeemer. God is in redemption; and this great work is a glorious manifestation of his grace, glory, and resources. Having redeemed his people, he says, I will call them, which is indicated in the first clause of the verse—"I will hiss for them." Christ is the Shepherd, and he hisses for the sheep, or calls them in a manner which is peculiar to himself, and the sheep know his voice, and follow him. Then the Lord says, having redeemed and called his people, he will rain favours and blessings down upon them; and "they shall increase as they have increased;" and though they are scattered among the people, they shall remember him in far countries where they shall live with their children. I have not time to show the application of this to the Jewish people. These facts are so expressed that we may apply them to God's spiritual Israel. It is then said, "And he shall pass through the sea with affliction, and shall smite the waves in the sea, and all the deeps of the river shall dry up: and the pride of Assyria shall be brought down, and the sceptre of Egypt shall depart away. And I will strengthen them in the Lord; and they shall walk up and down in his name."

We have to look this morning, first, at the *gracious promise*; and, secondly, at Vol. II., No. 13.—May 15, 1878.

the result of its fulfilment as indicated in the text. The promise made, "And I will strengthen them in the Lord." The result of the fulfilment thereof, "And they shall walk up and down in his name, saith the Lord."

I. Observe, in the first place, *the precious promises made*, "And I will strengthen them in the Lord." It might not be profitable to make critical observations on this interesting and comprehensive portion of the word. If it were, I might dwell on the fact that Jehovah in his trinity of persons appears in the text. First, the Father says, "I will strengthen them in the Lord," by whom he means his Son; and the *Holy Spirit* appears, in the third place, saying, "And they shall walk up and down in his name, saith *the Lord*." As, however, we are Trinitarians, it is not necessary that I should defend the great doctrine of a plurality of persons in the Godhead. Our covenant God is triune, and his trinity of persons is inseparably connected with our salvation. To be strengthened by the Lord is an important blessing. Most of God's people complain at times of weakness and barrenness in relation to prayer, praise, faith, hope, love, and the general state of their hearts. There are times, however, when this promise is fulfilled, and the heart is divinely expanded, and one mounts up with wings as eagles, or runs with cheerfulness and delight in the ways of his gracious God. We know there are professors who treat experimental religion as fanaticism; and if a minister or a private Christian speaks of divine influence upon the heart, and of visits received from the Lord, he is at once said to be dreamy and ignorant. Surely if the Holy Spirit dwells in a human breast and works in the heart, there must be some feeling, some experience, something peculiar in the thoughts and emotions of that individual. I am a firm believer, and that from pleasing necessity, in the indwelling of the Spirit of God, and in the fact that his influences upon the mind are real, powerful, and Divine.

The Lord says, "I will strengthen them in the Lord." Taking these words as spoken by the Father, and the person here spoken of as the Lord Jesus Christ, we notice, first, that God has strengthened his people in his dear Son *by uniting them for ever to him*. You see we are about to take ground so high that some people say it is very dangerous. I cannot think so. The heights of salvation can never be dangerous, nor unworthy of the holiness of God. God strengthens his people by connecting them with the person of his Son. Spiritual relationship is a source of strength; and union to Jesus Christ is the *only* spring of heavenly influence and power. The being that is not in Christ is weak, and never has the slightest measure of gracious or heavenly strength. Absolutely helpless is the person that is out of Christ; but truly saved and sometimes strong is that honoured one who is one with the Lord of life and glory. Christian brethren, it is a high honour to be related to Christ, and a marvellously dignifying blessing to be one with the Lord of all. But how are believers one with the Lord? Jesus is the Head of the church, and therefore its members are his mystical body. He is the root of the heavenly vine; and every believer is, therefore, a living branch in him. Moreover, this union is matrimonial. "Thy Maker is thy husband. The Lord of hosts is his name.....The God of the whole earth shall he be called." This marriage union was formed by the Father, who brought the objects of his love, and presented them to Christ, and constituted him their Head, and their everlasting Husband; and ever since that infinitely distant period, the dear Lord of life has loved them, and he will love them as long as he and they live, that is, world without end. Now the wife takes the name of the husband; and if he occupies a high and dignified position, and possesses a powerful name, she is exalted by her union to him. Your Father has strengthened you by connecting you with his great Son, the Lord of glory; for through this union you are a partaker of his dignity, of his grace, of his fulness, of his love, and of his strength and power. If Jesus, the heavenly Husband of

the church, can by the power of his own arm defend protect and preserve her, we may confidently sing—

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

The wife may be weak and feeble in herself ; but whilst her husband is strong, she is strong in his strength, and mighty in his might. She has a right to be protected by his arm, a right to lean upon it too, and a right to expect that he will defend and sustain her according to his ability. The Father has strengthened them in the Lord by forming an eternal connection between them and his Son ; their persons are in Christ, and since he can hold them up they shall never fall ; since he can save them, they shall never be lost ; and since his arms embrace them for ever, no enemy, no multitude of enemies shall separate them from him, or injure them. This union is one by which they are made for ever strong, for ever great, and for ever mighty. The worm is exceedingly weak and feeble, and some think it very contemptible ; but when it is in the mountain it is strong. The conies (which are believed to be rabbits,) we read, are a feeble folk, yet they make their houses in the rock. Comparing yourselves to worms and conies, like them you are weak and feeble ; but you are in the Rock of eternal ages ; your strength and the endless duration of your life depend, not upon yourselves, but on the heart and the hands of this great Being who has constituted himself your God.

The apostle Paul (3rd of Philippians) says, I pray that I may “be found in him.” To be in Christ is to be in the best place in any world that God has made. It is infinitely better to be in him than to sit on England’s throne, or to be on a throne that commands the obedience of the whole world. To be in Christ is to be where all God’s love is, and where you are immersed therein. To be in Christ is to be where all the promises are ; they are all yours if you are in him. To be in Christ is to be where all God’s power is ; for he cannot save sinners out of his Son, nor condemn them in him. If you are in him, you are where all the resources of Deity are ; for it pleased the Father that in him all fulness should dwell. To be in Christ is to be where all God’s saints in heaven, and all the angels of God are. And to be in Christ is to be where God himself is ; for God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. Why, to be in Jesus Christ is to be stronger than Adam was before he fell, for in him you can never finally fall ; and Adam fell notwithstanding his perfection and original purity, and dragged the whole world down into ruin with himself ; but the little, faint, and feeble believer is stronger than he was ; for Adam stood on his own obedience, and you stand on that of the Lord Jesus Christ. I go higher:—If you are in Jesus Christ, you are stronger than angels were—I mean the angels that sinned, that kept not their first estate. How they committed sin, or how it could be committed in heaven, I do not know. However, they did sin, and they fell, and were cast out of glory, and sent down into darkness. Strong as they were, they remained not in their original state ; but if you are in Christ, though your faith trembles like an aspen leaf, and your hope shakes and reels before the wind and the waves, you are stronger than the first man Adam that lost Eden, and stronger than the angels that lost heaven. “I will strengthen them in the Lord ; and they shall walk up and down in his name, saith the Lord.”

All this wonderful strength—for I am not preaching your weakness this morning—is owing to one important fact, and that is, that Christ with whom you are one, covers the whole of your being, from your birth-cry to your dying-groan ; from your first sigh to the rapturous shout of your souls when you enter heaven, and then he will cover the whole of your happy existence in glory for ever and ever. David says—“I wast cast upon thee from the womb.” When

you came into this world you were born into the arms of Jesus. This neither your mother nor your father knew, and, of course, you had no consciousness of it yourselves ; but you were born into the arms of his special providence, and kind and loving care ; and he held you when you hated his name, and lived in a state of enmity against him. He then loved you, and held you in life ; hence, "Preserved in Christ Jesus," and, then, "called." "Who hath saved us, and called us." Saved us before he called us. Then in due time an incision or a wound was made in your heart, the root of the matter was inserted therein, a cry for mercy proceeded from your spirit to the throne of God, all of which was from the Headship and grace of the Saviour ; and ever since that day you have lived beneath his eye ; under the feathers of the Almighty you have been safe. Behind you are many Ebenezers on which you have inscribed the fact—"Hitherto the Lord hath helped me ;" and the goal, the end of the journey, is not far distant. Our heads are getting grey, and the infirmities of years are beginning to be felt ; and by and bye we shall reach the moment of nature's greatest weakness, and when we are in the very depths of dissolution, and weaker than we ever were before, then I expect that this promise will be fulfilled—"I will strengthen them in the Lord ;" not in their bodies, they will be dissolved ; not the tie that holds the soul and body together, that must snap and give way ; not in their natural affections, for the departing husband or wife who have loved each other, prayed and walked together for many years, then commit each other into the hands of their God, and calmly and comfortably part. In the depths of dissolution, when heart and flesh are failing, and all around that is natural is giving way and disappearing, then the soul shall be tranquil and serene, passing into eternity, saying, "O death, where is thy sting ? O grave, where is thy victory ?" Union to Jesus strengthens the soul.

We notice, secondly, that the Lord strengthened his people *by the mediation of Jesus*. Let us look at the atonement ; for there is power in this great deed, and strength is derived therefrom by faith in Christ. What shall we say, my friends, of the absence of guilt ? Let a guilty being be brought into the presence of his Maker, is he strong ? Nothing weakens more than guilt. It makes every man and woman fear and quake ; but Jesus Christ has expiated guilt, and put the believer's sin away. Out of debt also. The saint is not only free from guilt, his debts are paid. The man who had owed a sum of money but now holds the receipt in his hand, is strong. There is something elevating, tranquilising, and emboldening in the fact that one is out of debt, and owes nothing. And you are out of debt in the court of God's law and justice, for the great work of redemption has been completed, and you are free from guilt, from curse, from debt, and, therefore, free from condemnation. Oh it is a strengthening fact, a fact the full force of which we do not always feel, that we are not liable to condemnation. "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk, not after the flesh, but after the spirit." We have been privileged to sing with more feeling than tongue can tell those beautiful words of Toplady—

"Payment God cannot twice demand,
First at my bleeding Surety's hand,
And then again at mine."

We owe a debt of perfect obedience to God ; and because we cannot pay it, we must be cursed and condemned ; but here comes in the obedience of Jesus, and it is put into our hands and cast upon our persons, and in that obedience we are just, and perfectly free. "I will strengthen them in the Lord," in his mediation, and in his precious blood. What shall we say about his life in heaven ? "Because I live, ye shall live also ;" and the redeemed shall live as long as their Redeemer lives ; and they shall possess the life which he himself possesses ; for

as the branches of a vine possess the life that is in its root, so the Christian possesses the life that is in Christ. There is no difference between the life of Christ on the throne and the life of the Christian down here. We shall be saved by his life. Our Lord is pleading there. He is an Intercessor in heaven, and I do not think that the child of God dwells sufficiently on this fact. The intercession of the dear Redeemer is a source of strength to the believer ; hence Christ said to Peter—"Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have thee that he may sift thee as wheat ; but I have prayed for thee." I beg your attention to that, "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." The intercession of Jesus keeps you on your feet, it keeps the sword in your hand, it keeps the shield on your arm, it keeps the breast-plate on your heart, it keeps the helmet on your head, and it keeps you shod with the preparation of the gospel peace. The intercession of Jesus keeps you surrounded by angels. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them that shall be heirs of salvation?" The intercession of Jesus keeps the Bible fresh to your mind, and it brings your mind into sympathy with its promises and doctrines, while at times it immerses your heart in his strengthening blood, and in his everlasting love. "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." Not that it should not be tried, stabbed, wounded, and strained ; not that it should not enter into darkness ; for faith shall be tried and enter into night, but it shall not fail. The heart shall quake and break, the mind shall feel at times as if it were giving way, but faith shall not fail while Jesus lives in heaven and intercedes for his people ; and therefore in the mediation of the Lord the believer is strong. "I will strengthen them in the Lord."

Another fact is, God strengthens his people in Christ *by endearing him to their minds*. Now, perhaps, this is a little more experimental. He endears his Son to their minds, and gives him the supreme place in the heart, and the highest seat in the immortal soul ; and he that holds this place in the mind, holds the mind itself. If sin is on the throne, the heart is under its dominion ; if the world is on the throne, the mind is its slave ; if Christ is on the highest seat, and is supreme in the conscience, the mind is Christ's subject and servant, and the heart and the conscience obey and follow him. Now, what is Christ to you ? Think if you can, and try to realise the mystery that a human mind is in Christ, and that Christ is in that mind. I am not now using figures, nor exaggerating. All that I have said is scriptural and true. The mind is a marvellous creature, having many excellent powers. It is brought into contact and connection with Christ Jesus, with the person of God's great Son, who sustains it, surrounds it, and fills it. Hence Christ is in the mind, and it is in him. As the branch is in the vine, and the sap of the root is in the branch, so the fulness of Jesus, or a measure thereof, is in the true believer. This a great mystery, and very wonderful. Thus when Jesus is precious to the soul, and he is experimentally supreme in the affections, so that nothing in all the universe is so dear to the heart as he ; then the mind is strong, and then the individual could even die for his Lord. This made the noble martyrs strong, dauntless, bold, and mighty whilst the stakes, faggots, chains, and fire were before them. Free from fear they expressed no regrets, and were not reluctant to die. They gave themselves up for Jesus' sake ; for the Lord of heaven and earth was in their minds ; and they were, therefore, divinely strong for the work, for the suffering, and for death. "And I will strengthen them in the Lord." It is important that the blessed Jesus should hold our affections and our consciences. The Pope of Rome is reported to have said, in relation to Queen Elizabeth, "Let the Queen of England have the bodies of her subjects, if I may have their souls." Jesus holds the souls, the thoughts and the minds of the saints ; and therefore there is

Again, it will mean a bold profession of religion, and of our attachment to the Lord and his cause. Is a child of God to retire from the world because he is a child of God? and to retire from the conflict because the Lord has made him strong? That may suit the spirit of Popery; and monasteries, convents, and nunneries may exist in connection with Antichrist, that child of Satan; but God says, "My people shall walk up and down," and not retire from the world into worse than useless concealment. "I will strengthen them" to live in the world, to pass through it, to live above it, and to overcome it. "Father, I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." Cowards, worse than cowards, are those men and women who leave the world, instead of overcoming it. Such is not the course of the true believer; for he shall go on and overcome, even as Christ himself overcame.

Surely this indicates also the final perseverance of the saints. "They shall walk up and down." The sun is said to be up when he is risen,—down when he is set; and so the child of God rises, runs his race, and completes his journey, and sets gloriously like the sun in summer. He rises as a child of God, ascends higher and higher, and then closes his career on earth, in peace and heavenly splendour, surrounded by circumstances which are peculiar to himself. All is well, for Christ is mine. Farewell. May God bless you and his truth, for Christ's sake. Amen.

THE NEXT SERMON WILL BE READY ON JUNE 15TH.

Printed and published by BRISCOE & Co., 28, Banner-street, Bunhill-row, London, E.C.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

Four copies post-free, by sending stamps to the above address.

Parcels of back numbers, not fewer than 12, may be had from the Printers, at half-price,
(viz. 6d., post free.)

THE GREAT PROPHET OF THE CHURCH.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, 26th MAY, 1878.

"The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me ; unto him ye shall hearken."—Deut. xviii. 15.

THESE words of Moses were delivered to the children of Israel a short time before he went to heaven, and the good man had Horeb in his mind when he uttered them. With God was terrible majesty, which will be with him, in relation to the sinner, for ever. This terrible majesty of God appeared on Sinai, and Moses, the servant of the Lord, was called up to stand before the face of God, who had placed his throne for a time on that mountain. The moral law was then given by God himself, and the ceremonial law was also delivered, and many great and glorious gospel facts were also revealed to his servant. When Moses descended from the mountain, the people expressed great fear ; for the thunder was loud, the lightning was continual and terrible, the sound of the trumpet waxed louder and louder, and all things around and upon the mountain indicated the presence of the great Majesty of Heaven. And the people said to Moses, Since God is come down to reveal himself and his will, let him not speak to us face to face, for we cannot bear the sight of his majesty, nor stand beneath the weight of his infinite glory ; therefore, since he is about to make a covenant with us, and to express his mind to us, we trust a mediator will be provided who may stand between us and him. In the following verse, therefore, we read, "According to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not." And the Lord said, The people "have well spoken that which they have spoken ;" I "will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren." Abstract Deity shall not terrify the people. I will speak to them, and express my mind ; but it shall be through a modifying medium, and by a person from among themselves. "I will raise up unto them a Prophet from the midst of them, of their brethren, like unto you ; and unto him shall they hearken."

Our observations this morning will embrace four or five points lying on the surface of the subject. First we shall notice that in this verse *the Lord expresses his saving purpose* : "The Lord will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee." It is truly interesting and profitable to contemplate the fact that there are concealed secrets in the mind of God, as well as things which have been mercifully and graciously revealed to men. I apprehend that there is more concealed than has yet been revealed ; for Jehovah is an infinite Being, and his mind is infinitely full. Giving cannot impoverish him, and he can never exhaust

VOL. II., No. 14.—JUNE 15, 1878.

himself by revelation ; he will continue to reveal his thoughts until time shall end. At the last great day a marvellous disclosure will take place, and then, in eternity, he will perpetually express his love. Divine revelation will be progressive and eternal, for God will continually display himself. New forms of grace and love will perpetually appear ; for there will never be a period in eternity when God will cease to communicate blessings to the glorified, or say, I have now expressed the whole of myself. The infinity of Jehovah is connected with salvation ; and his majesty, mercy, and greatness, are inseparably connected with that blessed scheme which he is executing, and the result and outcome of which is to be the eternal glorification of countless millions. Well, there was a mighty purpose in the mind of God, and he opened it in some measure to Moses on the mount, saying, I have provided a Prophet, a glorious Being, who shall reveal my will, and his greatness shall not make the people afraid. There is, first, the purpose in God's mind ; and, secondly, in due time he expressed it ; and, thirdly, the operations of his power fulfil the promise of his heart ; and the result is, the salvation of sinners and the everlasting exaltation of his own great name. Moses must have felt much when the Lord thus opened his mind to him, and gave him this view of the coming Messiah. His joy and humility must have been great when it was revealed to him that Jesus Christ should resemble himself. Moses descended with the message, which fell upon the minds of the children of Israel like a shower of refreshing rain. You shall not consult diviners, wizards, necromancers, nor witches, (see the preceding verses,) for a Prophet shall the Lord thy God raise up unto you from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me."

Now let us consider two or three points which are intimately connected with this matter. The first is, the fact that *salvation is the chief scheme of our God*—it is the darling scheme of Deity, and the cream of his mind and purposes. The scheme of creation was wondrously grand ; that of providence was wondrously great ; the order and perfection of his moral government were God-like, and in all respects worthy of himself ; but all the plans of creation, and providence, and moral rule, are eclipsed, so to speak, by the superior grandeur and glory of the scheme of salvation. In nature there is much ; but not all. In providence there is much ; but not all. In God's moral government there is much ; but the whole of God is not there. In salvation, however, we have all there is in providence, and more,—all there is in creation, and more,—all there is in moral government, and more ; for we have all the fulness of God. God has equalled himself in salvation ; for all his attributes, all his persons, and all his glorious fulness, are in the great work of saving sinners. Therefore the poet has not expressed himself too strongly where he says—

" Our thoughts are lost in reverend awe,
We love and we adore ;
The first Archangel never saw
So much of God before."

A greater salvation God could not have planned. A greater scheme of mercy could not have been laid in the infinite mind of Jehovah. That this is the chief scheme of God is a fact in the estimation of every saved sinner ; for when guilt is laid upon his conscience, and his soul is convinced of sin, he wants what he cannot find in nature, nor in providence, nor in God's moral law. A sinner convinced of sin looks up into the visible heavens, and contemplates the sun, and the moon, and the stars, and he beholds in them the greatness, majesty, and wisdom of the great Creator ; but in them there is not a whisper of mercy, not a trace of atoning blood, not a single manifestation of sovereign and saving grace. A guilty sinner may look at the visible heavens till he dies, and sink at last into

eternal darkness and despair. Guilty man is therefore mercifully directed to look beyond creation to the Creator, from the general and ordinary works of God to God himself, and from the operations of his hand to those of his mind and heart: where he observes a Prophet, a Priest, and a King, and an arrangement of things made before the foundation of the world for the purpose of meeting all his requirements, and upholding all the honours and glories of God's moral character and government. In the estimation, therefore, of sinners salvation is the chief scheme of God. When God was pleased to reveal, in some measure, this scheme to angels, it seems to me that they left creation, providence, and moral government, to look into it: "Which things the angels desired to look into." When God spoke the world into being, angels saw the greatness and glory of their God. When he set the machinery of divine providence in motion, and proceeded to guide the affairs of the world, they turned their attention to that, and adored the wisdom, power, and goodness of their Creator. When he gave his law, and revealed the claims of his moral character and government, they turned their attention to that; and when man fell, and became black, vile, and an enemy, methinks they wondered where the scene would end. When God, however, moved and stooped, as it were, on his throne, and spoke to Adam, and revealed his mind, they discovered that he had not previously revealed the whole of himself, and that they had not seen half the glories of their Creator and their God. When he promised a Prophet, a Priest, and a King, by whom reparation—eternal and honourable—should be made, then all the inquisitive minds of angels were turned towards that great revelation; and ever since their Maker said, I will raise up a Prophet who shall teach sinners and train them for heaven, they contemplated the promise, and through that have looked into the loving mind of the Promiser. And this is the highest and greatest scheme in God's estimation also. God attributes infinite importance to this high plan of his mercy, which has a glorious centre, even this great Prophet Jesus. He is the centre of all the loving and saving thoughts of the Father, and that plan of which we are speaking. God's mind, and all his promises surround one great Being, his dear Son. And this great centre of eternal love fills a threefold office, through which all the favours of our God will for ever flow. Hence he is a Prophet to enlighten; for sin has darkened the mind, and made the sinner ignorant: he is a Priest, to give life by blood and by an atonement; for sin has cut the sinner off from God, and from hope: and he is a King to give laws and precepts, to hold the sceptre, and to save by reigning all that he saves by teaching and by bleeding. Without the kingly operations of Jesus, the results of his priestly and prophetic work would disappear and be lost. Jesus comes as a Prophet to enlighten, and, having illuminated the mind, the sinner says, "I am guilty;" then he comes as a Priest, with his blood to wash away the guilt which as a Prophet he has discovered; and then he comes as a King to sway the pardoned sinner's soul and feelings, to spread his wings over him, and to guide, guard, and protect him all his days. In God's highest scheme the grand central object is his precious and glorious Son; and opening his mind to Moses, and disclosing his purposes, he said, "A Prophet will I raise up unto thee, from the midst of thee, of thy brethren."

Now this revelation *was most unexpected*. Leave Sinai, and go back to the Garden of Eden for a moment, and observe that this revelation of God's intentions was not even hoped for. Adam had heard the words of his Maker and Lawgiver, "The day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die;" not only "die," but "surely die." He had disobeyed, sinned, and fallen; and what Adam expected was death and penal evil in some terrible form, of which, perhaps, he could then form no conception. His Maker and Judge appeared with a sword indeed, to vindicate his own character and glory; but he spoke as he had never

spoken before. Ruin had taken place; the law was broken, and God's honours and glories had been trampled upon, and the sinner expected vengeance and nothing less. God, however, said, The Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head. What must Adam have felt! how unexpected were those words, how unlooked-for was this message! Mercy in the mind of the God he had insulted! This was not expected, not thought of; but so it was. Depths of mercy were concealed in the infinitely great mind of the ever-loving God. May I advert to our own personal experience? I set up no standard of experience, however. The Lord convinced us of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; and we saw and felt what we were as sinners in his sight. Did we not expect condemnation; did we not expect that wrath would take place, and that hell would open and receive us? This was what we feared; but, instead of wrath, mercy came; instead of condemnation, salvation rolled from God; instead of eternal darkness, light reached us from Jehovah's throne and from his heart; and we fell, influenced thereby, with the weight of sin upon our consciences, before his throne, crying, "God be merciful to us sinners." This revelation was not only unexpected, it was *gradual and progressive*. We cannot go through the whole of the Old Testament. The first promise was that of "the Seed of the woman." The light increased; the streams of revelation continued to flow, and became broader, and deeper, and brighter, until in the days of Moses it was said that the Seed of the woman should be "a Prophet." Later on it was said, he shall be "a Priest after the order of Melchizedek." Later on it was said, he shall be a King; and by-and-bye, when a long succession of prophets had prophesied in the name of the Lord, the fulfilment of the great promise took place, and "the seed of the woman" appeared; the Prophet that was promised was born in the manger, and in due time he opened his commission, and communicated the secrets of the eternal God to man. And the revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ to every sensible and saved sinner is gradual and progressive; for "His going forth is prepared as the morning." "The path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." We saw, or we think we saw, a thousand beauties in the Lord Jesus many years ago. We followed him; he drew us; his attractions were all powerful; we could not help running after him: but although we then saw a thousand excellencies in his person we did not appreciate them as we hope and believe we appreciate them now. We know more of ourselves, more of sin, more of the church, more of the world, more of Satan, more of our own fickleness and changeableness, and more of many other things, the knowledge of which, we hope and trust, tends to endear to our hearts the everlasting Christ of God. Yes, it was God's intention to give him; that intention he expressed, and the revelation of his dear Son has, always been gradual; but it has, however, always been sufficient, and it will be perpetual and eternal. Now, before leaving this part of the subject, let me say, I believe that the preservation of the world—I will tell you what I mean by that phrase presently—is owing to the fact that God had prepared a Saviour, and intended to raise him up. When Adam fell and moral ruin took place, what is the reason time did not then cease, and the world was not then destroyed? Why did God bless, and why does he continue to bless man, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply?" The mediation of Christ was the cause of the providential salvation of the world. It was the prop—if I may so speak—used by God to sustain and support the world for a few thousands of years, because it was his intention to save from the generations of mankind a people with an everlasting salvation. When this great Prophet has completed his work, and all God's people are saved, and are in heaven, or prepared to go thither, then this sustaining power will be removed from under the world, and it will cease to exist, and time shall be no more.

Let us now consider another point, viz., the *prophetical office and character of*

Christ. I have been dwelling on God's purpose to raise him up. Now he is promised as the great Prophet of the church. "Unto thee I will raise up a Prophet from the midst of thee." This does not mean, as some Jewish and other writers have said, any particular prophet who lived under the Old Testament dispensation, nor a succession of great prophets, as Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and others. A person, one particular person, is referred to—the Lord Jesus Christ. In the third of the Acts which we have read this morning, Peter, in a discourse delivered after having healed the cripple, takes these very verses and applies them to his saving Lord and Master : and therefore the Prophet here spoken of is the Lord of life and glory. Our text, therefore, indicates the prophetic office and work of Christ. Why is he called a prophet? It was the work of the prophets to expound the law, declare the will of God, and foretell future things. And the work of Jesus Christ as the great Prophet of the church is to reveal all the will of God. Now, my friends, the Lord Jesus in his prophetic character is the source of all the light and heavenly knowledge we possess. He is the great spring of all those streams of heavenly information which are continually flowing from the heart of God to man. In the absence of Christ there is nothing but darkness ! There may be reason, intellect, and learning, and education may have done much for men ; but in the absence of this Prophet, this great Sun, there is no right knowledge of God, or of eternal things. Hence, I trust I am not going too far, or treating the subject otherwise than it ought to be treated, when I say, we sometimes almost smile when we read the expressed opinions of some of our most learned men. Sometimes they dip a little into religion, and express their feelings on certain spiritual and doctrinal questions. They are frequently right, no doubt, on scientific matters, and whilst they confine themselves to them, their greatness and usefulness no doubt appear ; but as soon as they begin to meddle with spiritual things, or what constitutes a right knowledge of God, their darkness and spiritual ignorance are manifest. It may be feared they are not intimate with this great Prophet, and that they have not much, if anything to do with Jesus ; and in his absence, and in ignorance of his name, there is nothing but darkness concerning God, and heaven, and grace, and sin, and eternity. These remarks may seem to be sweeping, and it may occur to some persons that the preacher is a little severe. Beloved friends, think of countries where Christ is unknown and unnamed, and where the Bible is unthought of ! I am not much surprised that they are heathens, and worship silver and stone, or the sun and the moon. If England must be called a Christian country, and you know it is so called, why are not we idolaters and pagans ? This is traceable to the fact that we have a revelation of God's mind and will in the Book before us, the great doctrines of which are from the great Prophet of the church, the Lord Jesus Christ. God poured his mind into his Son, and Christ holds all the secrets of his Father ; for he has communicated all to Jesus, and authorised him to communicate all to men ; and while as a Priest he ever liveth to make intercession for the people, as a Prophet he ever liveth to communicate the thoughts and intentions of his eternal Father to dark, guilty, and ignorant men. He is the great enlightening Prophet. He not only opens the mind of God, and reveals his thoughts and purposes ; he is Lord of the mind, opens it when he pleases ; and therefore the grace that was poured into him he pours into others. He governs the mind, and constitutes the heart a vessel of mercy, and fills it with the knowledge of God and salvation, causing the soul to apprehend the fact that his Father is our Father, and his God is our God. The doctrines taught by this great Prophet are most comprehensive. They relate to the past and to the future. Our Prophet came out of God's bosom with all his secrets. He came out of eternity and God's eternal love, and from his mouth, his wounds, and death flows a saving knowledge of Jehovah ; so that he that

knows Christ and converses with him, knows experimentally what was done in eternity ; for this great Messenger imparts this wondrous intelligence to men. Then with regard to the future was it a part of the Prophet's business to foretell future things ? Christ is thus a Prophet for you. Look at his revelations concerning sin, what light he throws upon its ; look at his revelations in relation to trouble, what new and unexpected light he throws upon it. Who would have thought that trouble could be best for a Christian ? yet it is so in God's account. "All things," says this Prophet, "work together for good, to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Who would have thought that we could know anything about the future, since we are told that we know not what a day may bring forth ? yet Jesus has revealed the morrow, and the next week and year, saying, Your God will never leave nor forsake you. In six troubles he will be with you, and in the seventh he will not forsake you. Listen to this Prophet as he speaks concerning death, and casts a light into the grave. Who would have thought that death, the offspring of sin, could become the path to glory ? or that there was anything desirable in connection with the grave. Let this Prophet of whom I am speaking, stand beside the grave and throw the light of his doctrine of the resurrection into it, and the very nature and character of the tomb are changed. And, then, who could have formed any definite or satisfactory idea of another state and world ? The horizon of mortality we see all around ; but all that lies beyond it we are naturally ignorant of. Christ casts a light beyond time into the vast future, even into eternity, saying, I tell you the truth. "If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." Through the teaching of this Prophet we know what God purposed doing for us, and what, therefore, he will do for us ; and we have a good hope through grace that we shall pass safely across the line that divides time from eternity, and enter into all the bliss of being. The prophetic character of Christ is a glorious branch of salvation.

Let us now proceed to notice, thirdly, *the relation in which this Prophet stands to his own people.* This is an interesting point ; for looking at the text we learn that he was to be raised up from the midst of the people, and to be like them. Here, then, we have the relation in which this great Minister stands to his people. First, he comes *from their midst* ; and, secondly, *he is their brother*—"Of thy brethren, like unto me." It is well-known that the prophetic office was not limited to any particular tribe of Israel. The priests and kings of the people were taken from two particular tribes. The tribe of Levi furnished their priests, and that of Judah furnished all their kings except Saul, Israel's first king, who was an exception. The tribe of Judah was the royal tribe, and that of Levi the sacerdotal tribe ; but the prophets of Israel were raised up from all the tribes, and they might come, therefore, from Judah and from Levi, and hence the expression, "From the midst of thee." That, however, which follows is interesting and important, "*Of thy brethren.*" Here, then, we learn that we are not to be taught by abstract Deity, nor called to stand at a great distant from a terrible Being, nor listen amid lightnings to words of thunder, and to tremble whilst we learn. This is not how the family of God are called to learn the will of their heavenly Father. Not abstract Deity, and not a mere man, but Jehovah-Jesus—God manifest in the flesh. Now, my brethren, look at Christ as the brother of his people—"Of thy brethren." He is their brother in grace, for he was chosen as they were.

"Christ be my first Elect, he said ;
Then chose our souls in Christ our Head."

And he is their Brother in nature ; for he was born into the world, and not dropped down from heaven ; for had he come otherwise than by birth he would not have been their Brother, and in all respects like unto them. Therefore he

was born of a woman, and made under the law as they are, "that he might redeem those that are under the law, and call them to his feet, and teach them the mysteries of the kingdom. He is our Brother in nature, which is most wonderful. He took not upon him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham. There is Deity in Christ and Jehovah's grandeur also ; but it is all modified, moderated, and simplified by his humanity. We can stand before that consuming fire, because it is confined and limited within our own nature ; for he is bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. Has he a knowledge of the mind of God ? Yes. Is he capable of supplying all the information we require ? Yes. Then we are not afraid of him. Let him speak ; his terrors will not make us afraid. He is raised up from the midst of the church, and he is our Brother as well as our Lord. Our Brother in grace, our Brother in nature, and our Brother, too, in glory ; for this relationship is a permanent one, and will endure for ever. Christ has changed his place and his condition, but he has not changed his heart nor his nature ; and since he was our Brother here, he is our Brother there ; and therefore we are informed that at the last day he will say, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of *these, my brethren*, ye have done it unto me." When the world is on fire, and devils are chained, and the wheels of time are stopped, and all eternity is before countless millions, then Christ will avow the relation in which he stands to his people, and say, "*These, my brethren*." A purpose in God's mind to save, and Christ raised up to be the teaching Saviour of sinners, and this prophetic Saviour who communicates the secrets of God to man,—flesh of their flesh, their Brother born for adversity, and for prosperity. Some brothers leave their brethren in adversity, but cleave to them in prosperity ; but this Brother was born for adversity. He sees us into it, visits us when we are in it, sustains us whilst we are passing through it, sanctifies it to us, and takes us ultimately triumphantly through it all. And he is born for prosperity also. Well, he is a Brother born, a Brother living, and a Brother dying for his brethren. The elder brother, who was faultless, died with all possible affection for all the younger branches of the family, all of whom were guilty ; and the Father expressed his satisfaction with his course and his death. A Brother buried ; a Brother risen from the grave. Hence he said to Mary, "Go and tell *my brethren* that I ascend to my Father and their Father, and to my God and their Father." And now he is our interceding Brother in heaven, saying, "Father, I will that all whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." And he is also the great Archangel that will sound the last trump of God. Death everywhere shall hear his voice at the last day. Our Brother will open every grave, and raise all his brethren, who shall recognize in the descending Lord their teaching Prophet, and their gracious and everlasting Brother.

Fourthly, *a similarity between Christ and Moses*. Moses was his type—"Of thy brethren, *like unto thee*." The resemblance might be traced in many respects, which we have not time to mention. Like to him in nature. Moses had been with God, who communicated to him much of his will, that he might instruct Israel. The people could bear the sight of Moses, and the Prophet that followed was in this respect like unto him. Moses was a deliverer ; and Christ delivers his people from guilt, curse, condemnation, and wrath, and from bondage worse than that of Egypt. Moses was a lawgiver ;—and so is this Prophet of God. Moses had intimate intercourse with God, and spoke with him face to face ;—and our Lord and Prophet is inconceivably intimate with his Father. But the grand point is that of *mediation*—"Like unto me ;" as if Moses had said, I have acted as a mediator between you and this great God, and the Prophet that shall follow me will be the saving Mediator between God and men. Now the mediation of Christ is a comprehensive theme, a fact that covers all the ground ;

for, first, he is a *Mediator of revelation*; and, secondly, a *Mediator of reconciliation*, reconciling God and man, and bringing them together; thirdly, he is a *Mediator of communication*; for all that God gives, he gives through him, and all that we offer and present to God he receives through this Mediator. And he is the *Mediator of our eternal intercourse* with Jehovah. "A Prophet of thy brethren, like unto me."

The great fact asserted, or the obedience enjoined, "Unto him shall ye hearken." When I am dead and gone, and when all the voices of the prophets are silent, "Unto him shall ye hearken. Hence, Moses and Elias appeared to the Lord Jesus on the mount of transfiguration, and resigned their office and official authority and glory to him. Elias as a prophet, and Moses as a lawgiver, both resigned their offices to Jesus Christ, and a voice from heaven said, This is my beloved Son; *hear him*. You have been accustomed to hear Elias and his brethren the prophets, who spoke of him and for him; you have hitherto listened to Moses, and very properly; for Moses wrote of, and represented him. My Son is the great antitype of Elias and of Moses; and both have, therefore, retired to make way for him, and he is now the one great and infallible Teacher; hear ye him. Now, when you read Moses and the prophets, hear ye him; for "unto him shall ye hearken." Hear his doctrines, hear his promises, hear his precepts; for Christ *is all and in all*. He delivers prophecies and promises, and fulfils all he delivers. His word shall never fail. Thus, my brethren, we have a teaching Brother to give us light, an atoning Brother to give us life, and a reigning Brother to give us laws, and to protect us on the way to our heavenly home and rest. God bless both you and his truth, for Christ's sake. Amen.

THE NEXT SERMON WILL BE READY ON JULY 16TH.

Printed and published by BRISCOE & Co., 28, Banner-street, Bunhill-row, London, E.C.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

Four copies post-free, by sending stamps to the above address.

Parcels of back numbers, not fewer than 12, may be had from the Printers, at half-price, (viz. 6d., post free.)

THE GOSPEL NOT BOUND.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

20th JUNE, 1878.

"But the word of God is not bound."—2 Tim. ii. 9.

THESE are the words of one whose knowledge of the Lord Jesus was both deep and wide, and whose spiritual love to the gospel was exceedingly strong. Jesus Christ is the Saviour of minds; all their faculties and powers being redeemed by blood, and eventually regenerated by the Spirit. A peculiar element or influence is therefore communicated to the will, the judgment, and the understanding. His people are thus made willing in the day of his power, and are no longer alienated from the life of God; for, being filled with spiritual light, by which they are quickened and sanctified, they appear before their Saviour as his subjects and his servants. "Ye are not your own: ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God with your bodies and your spirits, which are his." There is something very interesting in the fact that the affections of the human mind have been redeemed by the Lamb of God, and that, having been so redeemed, they shall be sanctified and filled by the Spirit. When divine life enters the affections, they become detached from sin, and the world, and self, and carnality, and from all that is hostile to their Lord. They are washed by the Spirit in the blood that was shed for them, and then raised to heaven and fixed upon the person of their great Redeemer. A person so redeemed, sanctified, and saved, loves, not only the person of Christ, but his work and his gospel also. Hence the Apostle Paul was a strong lover of the glorious gospel of the blessed God, and he loved it all the days of his life, and never hesitated to say, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ," because it is the power of God unto salvation. He was not ashamed of it when he was stoned; nor when, for its sake, he suffered want; nor when he was surrounded by scoffers; nor when some of its professors departed from its doctrines, and left the good ways of God. He was not ashamed of the gospel before Agrippa, Festus, and the Jewish Sanhedrim. He was always bold to avow his attachment to his Lord, and that he was wedded to the blessed word of his grace; and when he appealed from the court at Jerusalem to that at Rome, he was not ashamed of the truth, and did not appeal to Cæsar through any want of love to, or confidence in, the testimony of his reigning Lord. He was not ashamed of the gospel on the voyage from Palestine to Rome, nor when he appeared before Nero, although all his friends forsook him and fled. "No man," said he, "stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge." Paul was a prisoner at Rome when this letter was written to Timothy, and one great fact is very prominent from first to last there, viz., Paul's intense love to the everlasting gospel of his Master. He was manacled; but he was not ashamed of the chain, because he wore it for the sake of Christ. He was as a prisoner somewhat favoured, being permitted to live in his own hired house; nevertheless he was accompanied from place to place by a

VOL. II., No. 15.—JULY 15, 1878.

soldier, and was not ashamed to be considered a prisoner, and be pointed at in the streets of Rome as such; and therefore he said to Timothy, "Be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel." Never desert the glorious cause of our saving Lord. You know that we are appointed to persecution, tribulation, and affliction; and therefore, "Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things. Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead, according to my gospel." That doctrine was most intensely hated by the Jews. They insisted upon Paul being silent on the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. But still the apostle says, "Remember, Timothy, that Christ, who was of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel, wherein I suffer trouble." It has been said concerning the martyrs and the persecuted people of God, that in their imprisonment and death they did not feel much pain, and that on their way to and at the stake they did not suffer. I think Paul suffered in prison, just as Joseph suffered there. He was not only in tribulation, he *suffered* trouble: "Wherein I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound."

In a few observations on this great fact,—*"the word of God is not bound,"*—I think, perhaps, we might be profited by looking at it in three aspects: the *providential aspect*, the *doctrinal aspect*, and the *experimental aspect*.

I. Let us look at the fact, in the first place, *in relation to divine providence*. "The word of God is not bound." This was literally true of the gospel when Paul was a prisoner at Rome. "I suffer trouble even unto bonds: but the word of God is not bound." The apostle was rather favoured as a prisoner, for some time at all events. Living in his own hired house, he was permitted to receive visitors, and of course he conversed with them about the things of Christ, grace, and eternity; and in all probability he preached, or at least delivered, brief discourses now and then, and the Lord was pleased to bless the word, so that the apostle had seals to his ministry, and souls for his hire; and hence he informs us that his bonds were manifest in the palace, and that certain members or servants of Cæsar's household had received light and grace from heaven; so that the apostle could very correctly say, I am bound, it is true; I am a prisoner of Jesus Christ: "but the word of God is not bound."

Now we may take a wider view of the subject than this, and looking at it in connection with providential operations, notice *that the providence of God has ever opened a way for his word*. It did so in Paul's days; it did so when the disciples were scattered abroad, being obliged to leave Jerusalem in consequence of bitter persecution; and Providence has always opened a way for the printed and the preached word. In some respects, and to a certain extent, the word of God has never been bound; for Providence is the handmaid of grace, and evermore attends the circulation of the Bible and the dissemination of truth, whether persons read it, preach it, or hear it preached. The disciples of Jesus Christ were ordered to remain in Jerusalem until they had received the promise of the Father, and they continued with one accord in the city until the day of Pentecost. The Holy Ghost was abundantly poured down upon them, and they were capacitated for preaching the gospel to all the nations of the earth. Having, however, received the promise of the Father, they manifested no particular desire for going into all the world to preach the gospel to every creature. The Master's orders ran thus: Abide in Jerusalem until you receive the promise of the Father; then go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." They remained, however, in Jerusalem, and preached the gospel there. By-and-bye, we are told, persecution arose in connection with Stephen, and its flames increased in extent and intensity, and the brethren were scattered abroad. Wherever they went they carried Christ and the gospel with them, and the Holy Spirit attended them everywhere, so that persecution was in that instance a great though a bitter blessing. It was permitted for the purpose of so affecting the disciples that they might fulfil their commission, and instrumentally accomplish the will of their great Lord and Master. They would, in all probability,

have continued in Jerusalem until the day of their death, had not persecution arisen.

Persecution, however, was permitted ; the fires were exceedingly hot, and the brethren were scattered, some in one direction and some in another ; but the gospel of God was universally preached. "Whoso is wise, and will observe these things,"—the permissions of the divine will, and the productions of the divine power,—*"shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord."* Providence went before those good men, and in the course of time opened a door in Rome for the word ; another in Ephesus, another in Philippi, and another in Thessalonica. My dear friends, the providence of God has always wrought in connection with the gospel, and wherever it is preached a spiritual eye and mind can always discern a special providence. It is interesting to observe the manner in which the gospel was introduced into our country. I am aware that there was a great deal of darkness connected with the first dawn of day here,—that there were many errors and much superstition connected with it, if Paul himself did not bring it here ; nevertheless, Providence wrought even in connection with that state of things, and now, through the tender mercy and sovereign favour of God, our native land is one of the most highly favoured, if not *the* most highly favoured nation of the earth. Providence opened the way for the word, and it has guarded it for hundreds and hundreds of years in this land. May that same Providence ever guard that Holy Book, defend the sacred truths thereof, and surround those little flocks called Christian churches, which hold it forth, and ever protect those good and holy men who go forth to preach the gospel of God's grace. "The word of God is not bound," for a special Providence makes way for it, and will work in conjunction and harmony with the operations of grace until the end of time. Providence accompanies the ministers of the gospel also, for Paul was shipwrecked fourteen days and nights ; he was driven up and down on the sea, and all the wares of the ship were cast overboard, and eventually the vessel itself went to pieces, and two-hundred-and-seventy-six souls were cast into the water, and Paul was among them. Did not a special Providence guard that floating apostle, and make him buoyant ? I do not know whether he could swim or not ; but he got hold of one of "the broken pieces of the ship ;" for it came to pass that, "some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship," they all escaped safe to land. Precious seed was in the heart, and, so to speak, in the hands of that great apostle. A marvellous sight indeed it was to see the great Paul tossed and tumbled about in the water ; but he was just as safe there as he had been in Jerusalem, and as he was subsequently in the city of Rome ; for the Providence that guards the word, and gives it free course here and there, attends its preachers, and Paul could not die,—neither seas nor enemies could kill him ; for he had a work to do in the city of Rome. Therefore, says Paul, although I am a prisoner here, and suffer trouble even unto bonds, I rejoice that the word of God is not bound. Divine providence accompanies grace, in order that the conquests of grace may be completed, and the purposes of God's love fulfilled.

Jesus sent his disciples out in pairs into every place whither he himself would come. His divine providence makes a way for the word into every place in which the God of grace intends to save poor ruined sinners. How very mysterious were its operations at Philippi ! There was an abominable wretch keeping the city jail whose name was in the Book of Life. What his wife and children were, we are not told ; but probably they were all pretty much alike. They were all heathens, and enemies. How wonderful were the operations of Providence in connection with the jailor's reception of the word of God ! Paul went to Philippi, and remained several days without preaching. On the Sabbath morning he went down to the sea-shore, where a few women resorted, and "prayer was wont to be made," and he spoke to the women that resorted thither ; and the Lord opened the heart of Lydia to receive the things that were spoken. Then observe

a fortune-teller, or soothsayer, followed Paul, and the devil was cast out of her. Her masters were enraged by what Paul had done; for the hope of their gains was gone; and they apprehended Paul and Silas, had them before the magistrates, and they were cast into prison. But at midnight they prayed and sang praises, and the prisoners heard them, the fetters of the prisoners fell off, and the jailor, apprehending the prison was empty, would have slain himself. Now all these were links in that chain of Providence, which was to follow the operations of the grace of God, which was to result in the salvation of the jailor and his household. Oh, my beloved friends, people talk about seeing sights and contemplating mysteries. Divine providence is a marvellous sight, so far as its operations are visible, and so far as they are invisible the contemplation of the mystery is most instructive and profitable to the mind. It has been said, that he that watches Providence shall never want a Providence to watch. God is always at work, for himself, for his people, and in connection with his word; and he ever guards it and makes a way for it here and there; and whenever it is his intention to save souls, thither the Bible shall be carried, and thither ministers of the gospel shall be conveyed. Doors shall be opened in some unaccountable and mysterious manner, for Providence is the handmaid of grace, and the word of God is not and cannot be bound.

Now let us look at the providence of God in relation to *ministers, and to laws*, and to other things if we had time and strength; but these two points may suffice. The devil said, as it were, I will cast or have Paul cast into prison, and shut him up, and close his mouth, and so bind the word of God. Paul was taken to Rome, and made a prisoner, and bound; but he says, although I am bound, "the word of God is not bound." Again, Satan said, I will stop the mouth of John, and he shall shoot no more arrows, and do no more mischief to my kingdom; and John was banished to the Isle of Patmos, but "the word of God was not bound." Paul never wrote so much, probably, as when he was a prisoner at Rome, and it has been well said that the epistles that were penned at Rome smell of the prison. And John wrote gloriously and blessedly when he was an exile, living alone in the deepest solitude. Oh, the devil may contrive to bind ministers, to follow them with persecution, to load them with contempt and disgrace, and to bring ruin upon them; but there is something which he cannot do,—he cannot arrest the progress of the word of God, nor lessen its divine power. Seeing a ministerial brother or two here to-night, let me invite them to take comfort with myself from this fact. I have sometimes been considerably comforted by the fact, that although we are bound in spirit, in preaching, in prayer, and in our feelings, "The word of God is not bound." I cannot enter far into those aspects of a minister's experience. It might not be very profitable to my hearers. Permit me, however, just to say that there have been times when I have not known what word to utter next, however I may have appeared in the pulpit—whether I stammered, or seemed to be fluent, or not: times when I could not start a single thought, nor produce a single feeling; and was utterly destitute, or seemed to be utterly destitute, of all feeling, except that of deep bondage and wretchedness. Under such circumstances my mouth has been almost closed. I was bound, shut up, unable to come forth; yet, even then, the word of God was not bound. I cannot account for it otherwise than by referring all to God's determination: My word "shall not return unto me void; it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." Brethren, we make a mistake if we think God needs our fluency, or if we imagine he needs our comfort and our happiness in preaching. The late Mr. Irons said, perhaps on more than one occasion, addressing a word to ministers, "My brethren, God wants only one sentence of your sermon; and that sentence having been uttered, God takes it and makes use of it, and he would not give a groat for the rest." I do not know whether it be quite right to express oneself in that way; nevertheless, on one occasion at least, he did thus express

himself. God's word is not more free when we are fluent than it is when we are shut up, and seem to be unable to preach it. It is not the feelings of the preacher, but the facts that fall from his lips; these facts being the word of God shall be followed by the blessing of their great author, God himself. The hand may shake, the legs may tremble, the soul may palpitate, the minister may feel as dark as midnight; yet if whilst he opens his mouth he states divine truths, although he stutters and stammers,—inasmuch as they are divine facts, and have God for their author,—God will make use of them: for “the word is not bound” because the preacher is contracted. You know that very old-fashioned saying that some men preach better when they are “shut up” than when they have liberty and are fluent. Not unfrequently I have been informed by my friends that I never preached a better sermon in my life, when I have descended from the pulpit as miserable as possible, having been loaded with chains, and feeling that the people have been sitting and listening for an hour to the rattling of them. Endeavouring to enter the vestry and hide myself, under such circumstances some persons have been so provoking as to say they never heard more profitably and satisfactorily in their life. I have sometimes been so wicked as to think that I know when I preach a good sermon, and that the people either make a mistake or express themselves in that manner for the purpose of soothing the unhappy feelings of the poor, tried minister. Well, it is a matter for faith, after all. It is so with me; for, whatever my feelings may be, though the minister may be bound, “the word of God is not bound.” A minister's soul may be in prison; his mind may be dark, his views may be limited, his sermon may be short, “but the word of God is not bound.”

Now look at the subject *in connection with human laws*. Most iniquitous laws have been framed against the Word of God, against preachers, against Christian churches, and against conventicles, and against the whole system of vital and heavenly Christianity. Laws against the circulation of the word have been framed, and there was a time when it was a crime to be found reading it, especially in public, and when it was a breach of the laws of the land to meet together for public worship in conventicles, (and this chapel is one.) But was the word of God bound then? In Wycliffe's time, and in the times of other good, great, and gracious men, did not the daylight of heaven shine through human laws? Men have never been able to frame laws which could exclude the saving light of the everlasting God. God will have his own. Persecutors may do what they can, frame what laws they like, and constitute acts of public worship offences, and capital crimes, too, if they like to do so: the word of God has God himself behind it, and no creature can ever bind the omnipotence of Jehovah; and hence “the word of God is not bound,” for both Providence and grace attend it and its preachers.

I may also give this subject a little turn here, and observe that “the word of God is not bound” by Providence itself. If you ask what I mean, I mean this:—Sometimes the mysteries of divine providence are so dark and deep, that they seem to contradict the word, and to render the fulfilment thereof impossible, or at least uncertain; and not a few of God's tried children have often been heard to say, How can the word be fulfilled now? Does not that event clash with the Bible? Are not those circumstances at variance with the word? How can God fulfil his promise, and make good his word? My dear friends, the providence of God can never bind the word, nor restrain the fulfilment thereof. The very clouds that seem to contradict the word “are big with mercy, and shall break with blessings on your head.” That very door of providence that seems closed against the fulfilment of the promise shall be opened suddenly by the invisible hand of God, and out of it circumstances shall flow that shall result in the perfect and complete fulfilment of the word. The gospel of God is never bound by Providence. I think, however, we must dismiss this part of the subject; and I do so by just observing that since these things are, so the word of God is *independent of all*

human power. I wish this were practically and universally believed in the day in which we live, and at all other times. The word of God is absolutely independent of all human power. Oh, it is said, the word will be bound unless it is preached by learned men only; and it will be bound unless it is preached and heard only in connection with the Church of England. And the hating and hateful church of Rome believes that it will be bound unless it is heard only in connection with herself, notwithstanding that she conceals it. The word of God is independent of all human power. It does not require eloquence to make it effectual, to give it freedom, or to cause it to have free course and be glorified. God can produce beautiful and heavenly music on an old instrument that is quite out of order. The sweetness of the music depends not upon the instrument, but upon the hand that uses it; not upon the trumpet, which may be cracked, but upon the skill and power of him who uses it. And God makes use of his own gospel, and causes his own voice to be heard through it. The sword! oh, no, the interests of Emmanuel are not promoted by the sword; nor is the power of the word affected by it. Political combination and human laws, and the connection of the church with a worldly state—away with it all! God grant that the day may soon come when the whole of that shall be swept away, and God and his word, and his Church, shall stand out naked and alone, unpropped and unsupported by everything that is worldly and human. It is the word of God; the gospel is the word of God; and since God is with it, and inseparably connected with it, it requires no help, no assistance from the feeble creatures of his power.

Now look at the subject in another aspect. What wonderful gulfs the word of God has passed over! Contrast Paul's prison with Nero's palace, and yet the word went from the prison to the palace. Hence Paul said, "All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Cæsar's household." And sometimes in families there is a great difference and distance between the convictions of one branch and the habits and customs of the family itself. Well, the word of God passes over these wonderful gulphs, it cannot be bound. It can go at once from a prison to a palace, and pass over all the hoary habits, customs, and usages of families, and though it may be a disgrace in the estimation of some to become a dissenter and a Baptist, the word of God is not to be bound by any such social considerations. How different was Luther as a monk from Luther as a Reformer? Look at him as a grovelling monk, and then look at him as a Christian, as a preacher, as a translator of the word and a writer, as a Reformer, and then as that gigantic believer who shook the whole system of Rome to its very centre. The word of God in the hands of the Spirit was the great instrument by which all this was accomplished. Look at it, however, in a doctrinal aspect. No good can ever result from attempting to bind the word. There is not now, and there never was, any good reason for attempting to bind it. Why should it be bound? It does infinite good to millions, and never injured a king on his throne nor a beggar on the dunghill. The word of God—the Gospel—is a revelation of goodness and grace, and mercy; and, therefore, too good to injure anyone. Oh, I say, let the whole world have it, and the whole world hear it, if it be possible. O may the time soon come when Spain, and all the nations of the earth, shall have their doors opened by the providence of God for the inflow of the glorious Gospel of God's grace. I am not afraid of the word, nor afraid of its influence, nor afraid of its results, or, to use Paul's words, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ."

II. *Doctrinally considered.* Look at it in connection with its Author. It is the word of God, and God, therefore, is its Author; and hence it cannot be bound, for it is inseparable from God himself. It is the image of God's thoughts. The letter you write represents your thoughts in connection with the subject on which you write; and the word of God is the image—the representation of his mind and thoughts,—it is a representation of God himself, and he is inseparably connected with his own inspired word. Nothing can ever

separate God from the Bible, Christ from the Gospel, or the Spirit from revealed truth. If, therefore, the word is inseparably connected with God, and is further the instrument by which he intends to accomplish his purposes; and his almighty hand holds this instrument, we may safely and confidently believe in the statement, or in the fact before us to-night that "the word of God is not bound." Who can bind an almighty arm? or limit the fulfilment of the purposes of an almighty mind? "I will work," says God, "though Rome oppose, and that in league with hell and the world." I will work, and who shall let or hinder it? To bind the word of God would be to bind his love, for love divine flows there. To bind the word would be to bind Christ's blood, for his blood is in the Gospel. To bind the word would be to bind the Spirit, for he is in that word. To bind the word would be to bind that river of water of life that flows from the throne of God and the Lamb. To bind the word would be to limit God's voice; for its influence is in his Gospel: and hence you see, looking at the subject in its doctrinal aspect, the fact appears very beautiful, very blessed, and very glorious. The "word of God is not bound." In no respect is it bound: not as to time. Meet at eleven o'clock on the Sunday morning, and retire from the house of God at half-past twelve, and God will bless his word during that hour and half; but he will also bless it at midnight as well as at mid-day. He will bless his word in a barn as well as in a cathedral. He will bless his word in darkness as well as in light, and he will bless and make it free when two or three are gathered together as when two or three thousand are met for the purpose of heavenly worship. Therefore, "the word of God is not bound."

Now, as time is nearly gone, permit me to leave this part of the subject, although it is yet very full, and look at *its experimental aspect*. The word is not bound as to its power on the mind. The unregenerate sinner may be in the greatest depths of vice, darkness, and guilt; he may be a profound infidel, and his infidelity may have dwelt in his mind and been rooted therein for twenty, thirty, or forty years. "Will not that bind the word, sir? The word cannot reach *him*, or, reaching him, it cannot *change him*." Yes, it can, if God is pleased to connect his transforming blessing with it. A verse, a sentence, a clause, or even a word of inspired truth may be sufficient to break down all his infidelity, to roll away all his unbelief, to kill the long-standing bitterness of his heart and to transform him from a sinner into a saint, and from an infidel into a precious believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" Conceited people are telling one another now-a-days that God's grace very rarely saves sinners after they are forty years of age; for when they have reached that point their sins are so deep and their character is so fixed that it is an exceedingly difficult thing to save them. Miserable trash! vile representation of God! The two-edged sword that is in the hands of Almighty God can pierce through sin of forty years' standing, and through the deep results of its love and reign for fifty or sixty years. "The man was about forty years of age on whom this miracle was performed." But, coming a little closer, you and I have taken our seats in the house of God in a very low, gloomy, and wretched state of mind. The temptations of the devil have been flying round about us thick and fast, and some of them have been entering our minds and poisoning our thoughts—bellish poison!—a word to the wise is enough. Oh, the fiery and poisoned darts of the wicked one! When they enter the mind they poison one's thoughts, one's feelings, and one's motives—faith staggers, hope reels, love grows cold, and hardness and bondage prevail everywhere. In such a state we have taken our seats in the house of God, fearing there would be nothing for us. You have silently said, "My mind is so bad, and so vile; the walls that seem to surround my spirit are so thick, and the darkness within is so dense, that the word of God cannot reach me. I shall not be reached, helped, fed, nor succoured to-day." The word of God is not bound by any state of mind. You took your seats, and the service proceeded. Perhaps it was the hymn that melted you. Melted? Oh, yes; in a moment.

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

Oh how great a difference the sun produces in a minute in the aspect of all things! and how great a difference is produced in a minute by an application of the word of God! Temptation and the enemy fly before it; for when the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord lifts up a standard against him; and a counter-flood, if I may so speak, is created and caused to flow, which is the word of God. It carries the family, domestic matters, sins, temptations, and hardness all before it like so many infernal ruins—away they go from the mind, and from the soul; and the heart that was hard is left soft; the heart that was barren is left fertile; the heart that was cold becomes warm; and the depressed and dejected becomes buoyant and is lifted up. Where all was a wilderness before, all is a garden of Eden—a holy Paradise now; for "the word of God is not bound" by any state of mind. It is applied to the soul, and it is free therein—it is not bound. There is one fact noticeable in connection with this,—when the word first took possession of your mind and convinced you of sin, you were in the hands of the Spirit, and felt you were held by a force you could not break away from, and grasped by a power that you could not vanquish, and your convictions were so deep that you could not remove them. And they were immovable as well as deep; so that if all our modern discoveries had been brought to bear against your convictions they would have remained unshaken, though flooded with them. Oh, the word of God is a power—a heavenly power. When applied by the Spirit, it holds the mind fast, and the convictions it then produces are deep and immovable. And then it grows in the mind like seed in the field, like leaven in the dough; for the kingdom of heaven is like leaven taken by a woman and hid in three measures of meal. It works and spreads silently but certainly,—it continues to work and spread until every part and the whole is pervaded with the eternal truth of God. The word having been rooted in the soul and hidden in the mind, grows, spreads, and increases therein until the whole mind becomes conformed to God. "Ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine or of truth into which ye were delivered;" and hence the child of God becomes, sooner or later a Bible Christian; and it is one of the greatest blessings under heaven to be a Bible Christian. There are a great many sorts of Christians on the earth, but it is vitally important to be a Bible Christian—such a Christian as the word of God represents and describes. To bear the image of Jesus Christ, which appears herein, and to resemble those good and godly men whose likenesses hang in this great picture-gallery of heaven—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: for "They shall come from the east and the west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of our Father." To look at Abraham, and then at ourselves, and feel that we resemble him; and to look at Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Paul, and feel that there is a likeness between them and ourselves, and to feel that we are somewhat like Jesus the Lord: this is joy unspeakable, and full of glory. The Lord make us Bible Christians, for Christ's sake. Amen.

THE NEXT SERMON WILL BE READY ON AUGUST 15TH.

Printed and published by BRISCOE & Co., 28, Banner-street, Bunhill-row, London, E.C.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

Four copies post-free, by sending stamps to the above address.

Parcels of back numbers, not fewer than 12, may be had from the Printers, at half-price, (viz. 6d., post free.)

* * 18 Sermons, stitched in a neat Wrapper, 1s. (1s. 2d., post free.)

"YE ARE NOT YOUR OWN."

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, 7th JULY, 1878.

"And ye are not your own."—1 Cor. vi. 19.

DIVINE exhortations are important, and they were felt to be so by the children of Israel in the desert. The Lord continually reminded them by Moses that they had been strangers and slaves in the land of Egypt; and that they should, therefore, "remember all the way in which he had led them forty years in the wilderness." It is important and necessary that the child of God should be constantly reviewing the way in which he has been led by his heavenly Father, the blessings he has received from heaven, and, as far as possible, his own conduct as a Christian and a follower of Jesus Christ. It is also important that the believer should never forget where and what he was, and what he was doing when grace first arrested his mind, and rescued him from a state of death, and translated him into the kingdom of God's dear Son. The Israelites were not to forget Egypt; they were not to forget the furnace of iron, the tyrant Pharaoh, nor that bondage and slavery in which the Lord found them when he came down to deliver them; and we should not forget what we were when the Lord came to save us—when grace was first dropped into our hearts, and we cried for mercy; and Paul was of this mind, and desired that believers in the city of Corinth should be of the same mind also; for he says, in the 9th and following verses, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God." He then gives a catalogue of vices to which Corinth was addicted, and adds, "And such were some of you." You observe the apostle reminded them of the terrible character they sustained when grace stripped and saved them. "And such were some of you." They owed their deliverance to the sovereign and unmerited mercy of God. If they were fornicators and idolaters and so on, of course God's love towards them was infinitely free, and their salvation was of grace from first to last. "But ye are washed" in the blood of Christ and by the hands of the Spirit; and heart or soul-washing is most important and peculiar work. It is what no angel can perform, no minister of the Gospel can do, and no sinner can accomplish for himself. Hearts are not washed in tears. Much that is empty and foolish is both preached and written now in relation to this great matter. The tears of sorrow and repentance are represented as possessing a power to expiate guilt, and remove stains from the human heart; but

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

The absolute mercy of God cannot wash human hearts and make them white. Justice, apart from mediation, can never cleanse souls; and the fires of purgation.

VOL. II., No. 16.—AUGUST 15, 1878.

tory (if there were such fires) could never cleanse human minds; and the flames of wrath in hell can never purify or whiten sinners. There is only one fountain for cleansing guilt, and one power for reaching the roots of sin and eradicating that evil; and that is the blood and atonement of Christ. "Such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified," for this is God's order. First, the blood of the Lamb is shed, and then the holy anointing oil is dropped upon the blood-bought soul; the Spirit breathes into and through the mind; and his breath pervades all its faculties and powers. Therefore, ye are washed, then sanctified, and then justified or made perfect and complete. Examined and tested by justice, law, and the moral government of God, you are, if justified, all that God requires. Hence exhortations were felt to be important: and therefore, Paul deals freely in them in this epistle. Proceeding, he dissuades saints from certain courses described in the context, saying, "Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication, sinneth against his own body. What! Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God; and ye are not your own?"

I shall, first, consider the text as a *fact*; secondly, as an *explanation*; thirdly, as an *argument*.

I. Let us contemplate our subject as a *gracious and heavenly fact*. "Ye are not your own." Certainly, this is a fact, most obvious and clear to every Christian, to every devil, and to every angel in heaven. We are not our own makers, our own saviours, our own sanctifiers, nor our own masters. There are times, perhaps, when even the good man wishes he were his own, and could do certain things for himself and for others. But if there is one fact that we more deeply prove than another, it is this: that we are not our own. We thank God we are not the devil's! There was a time when that tyrant held us fast, and seemed to be our proprietor; when we followed him, and wore his yoke, and carried his heavy chains. Being then dead in trespasses and sins and immersed in ignorance, we called darkness light and light darkness, bitter sweet and sweet bitter; but by the riches of God's grace our "covenant with death was broken"—our "agreement with hell was disannulled;" and we were taken out of the hands of the mighty, rescued from the dominion of Satan, and we ceased to be his followers. In the next place, we do not belong to the world, having been translated into the kingdom of grace. There is something in us which the world hates; and, therefore, it has cast us out, and we are willing to be regarded as outcasts in this respect. Grace has alienated our affections from the world, and connected them vitally and sweetly with heavenly things. Whatever the world may be to professors and to the dead in trespasses and sins, we have been led to see that it is a huge bubble, and that its pleasures and pains should be beneath the feet of the child of God. In the next place, we are not the slaves of sin. Sin has not dominion over us. It dwells in, but it does not rule, the mind. We live in a state of conflict, not in a state of harmony, with it; and it is good to be in a state of conflict with sin, with the world, the flesh, and the devil. There were buyers and sellers in the temple of old; nevertheless, it was God's abode; so the buyers and sellers have no property in the saints; and the time is coming when all those foreigners and strangers shall be turned out, and the body and the soul of every saint shall be filled with all the fulness of God. Well, if we are not our own, and do not belong to the devil, to the world, nor to the tyrant sin, to whom do we belong?

If we are not our own, nor the world's, nor the devil's, we must be God's property. There, then, we have an interesting fact, viz., *the believer's connection with heaven*. Jehovah, seated on his throne of glory, claims every saint; and is represented as saying, concerning all the millions of his regenerated people, "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name: thou art mine." How is God connected with the saints? In every sense, saints are the property of God—his by every tie eternal love could make. They are his by

creation, by redemption, by regeneration, by a surrender of themselves to him, and by a public profession of their attachment to his name, and truth, and cause; for they are not ashamed to avow their connection with the God of heaven. Is the saint ashamed of his saintship? Formerly he was on the dunghill; now he sits among princes. He was once covered with filthy rags; now he is clothed with the beauteous robe of a Saviour's righteousness. He was the slave of a filthy master, the devil; and now he is the willing and sanctified servant of the Holy Master, Jesus. Is there anything in these facts to be ashamed of? No; he is God's property by creation, love, purchase, power, and by public profession of religion; and he trusts he shall be found in Christ, in life, and death, and to all eternity. The people of God are thus represented in relation to the Trinity: They are the Father's children, they are the redeemed of the Son, and they are the workmanship of God the Holy Ghost. The Father says of all the saints, "You are my children;" and he embraces the whole family, saying, "I am a Father unto Israel;" and Jesus says of them, "I have redeemed thee; thou art mine;" and he intercedes and reigns for them, resolving to have them with himself for ever; and the Holy Spirit regards the eternally loved and completely redeemed, regenerated, and transformed family as his special workmanship, "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." "Ye are not your own." If you are the Father's children, you are the Son's purchased ones, and the temples of the Holy Ghost—vessels of mercy formed by the Spirit to be filled with all the fulness of God. A temple is not self-constructed; and a saint is not self-made. Again, the people of God are represented as the King's daughter, the Son's bride, and as made ready and adorned by the Spirit as a bride for her husband. The King's daughter is all-glorious within. Here the whole church of God is represented collectively as the daughter of the Father; and as the bride, the Lamb's wife. "Who is this that cometh up out of the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved?" Why, she belongs to the Lord, and he belongs to her. Their love is mutual and deep. He takes infinitely greater pleasure in feeling the whole of her weight on his arm than she takes in leaning all her weight thereon. Who is she? She is not an angel, she is not like the inhabitants of the wilderness through which she is passing. No! She is a new creature; she is the King's daughter, and the bride of the King's Son. "Forget also thy own kindred and thy father's house; so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty; for he is thy Lord, and worship thou him." Looking, therefore, at the love, and blood, and power of God meeting in the heart, we see what the saint is, and to whom he belongs.

Coming closer to this subject, What is the nature of the connection between God and his people? It is a perfectly natural one. I mean that we are in our nature connected with God. Our nature is in him, and this is what I mean when I say that his people are naturally connected with him. He is bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh. "We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." There is a body like our own in the great and glorious God, and there is a soul like our own in him; and this constitutes mediation, and the foundation of our salvation, and of all those joys which warm, purify, and elevate the mind. But, leaving that, I notice that this connection is a federal one. Jesus is the great covenant Head of all his people, having placed himself at their head before the foundation of the world. He stood before them all as their Sponsor and Representative, and spoke or responded for them all. Here was indeed a Sponsor standing before the whole Church, promising and vowing for them. Justice and love, stopped at the Saviour, took his word, received his pledge, held him bound, and regarded all that were behind him as his own covenant people. "Ye are not your own," but the members of your covenant Head and Surety, Jesus Christ. Then this connection is a vital one. The love between Christ and his people is to a certain extent mutual. The people are in Christ's heart, and he is in theirs. They are in Christ for safety and salvation, and he is

in them for all the purposes of life and experimental salvation. The flame in our hearts is limited ; the fire in the heart of Jesus is illimitable, and infinite ; nevertheless the love is mutual. There are times when we love him with all our powers ; but he always loves with all his heart. If your love were infinite, or if you had many hearts full of love divine, you would give them all to him. The union between the Lamb and his people is a vital one. Love flows from him to them, and returns from them to him again. And then this connection is mystical. Know ye not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, and the members of Christ. "Ye are not your own." The hand is not independent of the arm, nor the arm of the body, nor the body of the head ; and no saint, however tall and strong he may be, can ever become independent of Jesus ; and, therefore, mystically considered, God's people are Christ's body. The weak and the strong, the tall and the low, the fruitful, and those that are just starting into life, are equally in Christ, and equally dear to him ; and concerning the least member Jesus says, "He that touches it, touches the apple of mine eye ;" therefore the body goes by the name of Christ. "Ye are not your own," but Christ's ; and therefore you are Christians.

Let us now notice *the extent of the connection between God and his people*. I am sure this is an important matter, because I find it in the Word, and in the gracious and saving government of God. It is personal. The whole person of every saint, soul and body, belongs to Jesus Christ. We talk much about our souls, and no wonder, for they are immortal, and are going into the presence of our Maker and Judge ; but why should we generally forget our bodies ? It would be something serious if God forgot them, or had not included them in the covenant of grace, and if they were not, like the mind, united to the Lord. Paul says in this chapter, "Your bodies are the members of Christ." Were it not so, God would not have all he has made. The body is his creature and workmanship, and were it not saved, much would be lost that he has made. If the body were not saved, grace would be less extensive than sin, however vast it might be ; but where sin abounded, grace shall much more abound. Sin abounds in the whole body, and grace shall therefore abound in the bodies of all the saints. Moreover, Christ took a body, because it was his intention to save bodies, and because it was the Father's intention to glorify them. He suffered in a body to atone for the sins of our bodies. Body and soul are therefore saved with an everlasting salvation. Christ possesses grace and glory for bodies. It hath pleased the Father that in him all fulness should dwell ; and these vile bodies are destined to come forth out of their graves and be fashioned like unto the glorious body of the Lord Jesus, and then to be caught up to meet him in the air, and to be for ever with the Lord ; therefore the body is savingly connected with heaven and with God, and consequently it is not your own.

Now then, let us come to the soul, which, having been chosen, redeemed, and sanctified, is not our own. Consider its essential parts and powers. There is the understanding, which is a wonderful faculty, and so important that the devil keeps it closed and in darkness as long as possible. But Christ has bought the understanding, and he intends to save and sanctify it ; therefore in due time the eyes of our understanding were opened and illuminated, that we might see sin and God's method of saving sinners, and eventually see ourselves as saved by God. Your understanding, therefore, is the property of your redeeming Lord. Your judgment is not your own. Light having been poured into the understanding from your saving Master, the judgment proceeds to work by examining, comparing, and weighing, and ultimately by deciding. And Christ, by his Spirit, presides over all its operations ; for it is Christ's creature, and the purchase of his blood ; and he guides it in all its comparisons and decisions, so that the judgment is not wrong in its conclusions concerning sin, grace, the world, heaven, the Bible and the Church, or the living God. Then there is the will. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." I will do this and that,

is an expression frequently heard, as if men were their own, and there were no tie binding the will to the Great Supreme; but our will is not our own, but Christ's; he claims its obedience and acquiescence in all his own arrangements and appointments as the best that could have been made. Shall I say a word on the affections? He has bought them and washed them in the blood of his heart, and sanctified them by his Spirit, and he demands them; and since they are sometimes immoderately fixed on earth and earthly things, he occasionally adopts severe measures for informing his people of the fact that he is their Lord. "My glory will I not give to another;" and often has he swept away some prop that we leaned upon and loved, and put out his own almighty arm, saying, Lean on that: for "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord." We might speak of the conscience—purged from dead works. Who did it? Your Lord purged it that you might serve the living and the true God. He demands the whole. Nothing is our own, all is his; and hence he says, I will raise up all at the last day, and nothing shall be missing. The understanding, the judgment, the will, the affections, the conscience—all these faculties, together with others which constitute an immortal mind—are the property of our saving Lord, and are therefore to go to heaven. This is a limited view of the extent of the connection between God and his people. I might say a word or two on the supernatural powers rooted in the soul, and which are foreign to human nature. Faith came from God. A good hope is his creature; and all the graces of the Spirit which the apostle enumerates in his Epistle to the Galatians, are all from heaven. "Bless the Lord, my soul, and all that is within me." Sin, however, is within; and that is not God's creature, and it is doomed to destruction, and shall shortly be annihilated. The connection between heaven and yourselves is natural, extensive, and universal.

Shall I say a word *on the evidence of this*: "Ye are not your own?" It is very clear, and lies upon the surface. Had I time, I might mention half-a-dozen evidences; but let this one suffice. We had not been here this morning had we been our own. There was a time when many of you looked at the position you now occupy with scorn, contempt, and hatred. You said, "Associations of that kind we will never enter—the position of a Dissenter we will never take." But you are here in this position; for you were not your own. Just a word, in the last place, *on the duration of this connection*. How long shall we be the Lord's? As long as he lives, or as long as the cause of union exists, which is eternal love; as long as there is power in the blood of Jesus. As long as God is of the same mind, so long shall we be the Lord's. Bless the Lord, then; for we shall be his property, his jewels, his children in death; and, on the other side of time, we shall realise the full force and preciousness of the text, "Ye are not your own."

II. The text is to be considered as *an explanation of several important facts*. In the first place, that "we are not our own" *explains our inability to fulfil our own desires, hopes and expectations*. Our desires are varied, some of them being good, others doubtful, and others ardent and baseless. Some desires are good and spiritual, and these we cannot fulfil, for we are not our own. "The good that I would I do not, and that that I would not that I do." I call this a good desire, and I think it is so considered in heaven. Such a desire is the fruit of God's Spirit, and is acceptable in the sight of God. "To will is present with me," says Paul, "but how to perform that which is good I find not." Hence the child of God would now crush every sin if he could, and be at once like the Lord Jesus, which is a good desire; but he is not his own, and therefore he is unable to fulfil this desire; for power belongeth not to the Christian, but to Christ; not to the godly man, but to God himself. God permits the Canaanite to dwell in the land, or sin to dwell in every saint, that there may be a perpetual and lifelong conflict, in order that the Christian may deeply realise the fact that God is his Master and Ruler, and that he is not his own. Again, many of our desires are of a

doubtful character, and even selfish and fleshly. If we had been our own managers and masters, we should have surrounded ourselves by destructive circumstances many years ago. "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." We have many ideas concerning what would be good for ourselves, and we try to realize them ; but we are disappointed every day, and almost every step we take. We see something exceedingly pleasant before us in the future, and try to make a way towards it ; we work hard, and our hearts burn with vehement desire ; but disappointment, keen and bitter, drowns all our hopes. This seems to be explained by the fact that we are not our own, but the property of God, and the followers of Christ, and that we are in our proper places only when we are following our great Leader and Guide. Again, some of our desires have been ardent and baseless. Let me address the young now. What young person did or does not see a beautiful future before him ? You and I can remember the time when we saw, or thought we saw, a very promising future before us. And what young saint does not see a whole paradise of delights before him, and at the other side of this garden of pleasures a heaven of happiness and perfection. He sees no serpent anywhere ; he sees no thorns and briars before him. There is nothing but flowers, fragrance, and beauty, between him and heaven ; every promise is rosy, and the sun shines upon the whole. I would not say a word to check his happy feelings ; for the evil day will come soon enough, when he will be undeceived and corrected. I mention these things now for the sake of illustrating a point. Does not the young believer, in the warmth of his first love, anticipate unbroken joy ? I come to myself and to young ministers, for I think these remarks will apply to them also. I confess that when I started as a minister, and found myself surrounded by people, I saw a very sunny future. I saw a prosperous church and congregation ; the blessing of God attending the word ; the prey taken out of the hands of the mighty, and much more which I will not mention ; for I saw, or thought I saw, so much. And now for the realisation of it all. We have ceased to be young and black-haired, and are now getting into years ; and we have lived to prove that what we saw were illusions which vanished as we advanced, and life has now become sternly, if not terribly, real. Come again to the young believer. The heat of his first love is gone ; his happy days are past ; his ardent joys have ceased to exist ; and he wonders where the flowers are, where the beauties are, where the mossy path is, where the ease is. Instead of God, there is the serpent—the devil ; instead of ease and pleasure, there is pain. Life—even spiritual life—has become stern and real, and a matter of hard toil and work. He would not have had it so had he been his own controller, and the manager of his own affairs. He would have had a smooth path, with flowers growing on both sides all the way to heaven ; but "here we have no continuing city ;" and that must be learned, and is being taught, by Him whose we are and whom we serve. I am, in many respects, a disappointed man. I have not realised all my expectations—all my desires have not been fulfilled. I do not possess all I thought I should possess. What is the reason ? "Ye are not your own," but the servants of the Lord Jesus.

This explains the mystery of the special providence of God. It is owing to spiritual relationship that Providence has taken a special form, hence "The bounds of our habitation are fixed" by our Master and Lord. I do not know that I should live where I am living if I could help it ; and there are some in this congregation who would not be just where they are if they could help it. God will have his own way and do as he pleases. We are his children, and he has a perfect right to do as he pleases with us. How has he fixed the bounds of our habitation ? Not with granite walls or fetters, but by certain circumstances, which are very strong. They surround us, and we cannot control, guide, or destroy them ; they hem us in and keep us where we are. One says : "I would not live there another day if it were not for circumstances." Just so ; but there they are, you see, and you cannot remove them ; and thus God binds his people

here. Sometimes he hedges up our way with thorns, and there may be as much mercy in a thorn as in a rose, in a thorny hedge as in a smooth path. We should run into mischief, destroy our reputation, and damage the church of God, were it not for a hedge of thorny, uncontrollable and impenetrable circumstances. And then, again, "All things work together for good to them that love God." Perhaps the nauseous medicine from which we shrink does us more good than honey. Well, we are not our own—but the Lord's! therefore we are in his hands, and surrounded by a providence which is gracious, divine and special.

III. Look at the text as *an argument*. Now, this appears to me to have been a leading thought of the Apostle. He introduces several arguments here for the purpose of leading the minds of the saints from the world, and sloth and sin into the paths of practical godliness; and hence, in the first place, let us regard it as an argument in relation to faith and practice. You are not your own as believers. You hear much about the right of private judgment, and that one man has no right to attempt to control the conscience of another. Well, I will not have my conscience controlled by man, and I contend for what is commonly called the right of private judgment; but let us talk becomingly and spiritually about this right in God's presence. You cannot go to God and say, "I will believe what I choose and as I choose." "Ye are not your own." You belong to God, and you are to believe his word. This is the word of that great Being who made me, bought me, regenerated me, sanctified me—and I am not at liberty to believe anything, or anyhow; I am at liberty to believe only this, and to believe as a saint. Are practice and obedience to be optional? Obedience to Jesus and to his preceptive will might be considered optional, but it is not so. Is it optional with the servant to obey his master's orders? May he do as he likes about it? Does he receive orders from him, to execute or not, just as he chooses? Well, we should not think that right in human things, but it is supposed to do for God. God loves his children with an everlasting love, and their salvation does not depend upon their obedience; and, therefore, they do not choose to obey all his orders. Friends, we are not our own. The dear Redeemer came from heaven to die for us; he gave us himself for our redemption; and since I am bought with a price so great and so precious, I would evermore say—

"Here, Lord, I give myself away;
'Tis all that I can do."

Then, secondly, look at the argument in relation to sin and temptation. There is a pleasant path yonder. Bunyan calls it "Bye-path meadow." It is easier than the path in which I am walking, and I will take it. But first consult your Lord; for you are not your own. Look at Joseph in temptation! How fiery and strong it was! but he felt he was not his own, and could not dispose of himself; and therefore he said, How can I do this, when I am not my own? "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against my God?" There are some pleasures to be enjoyed that are quite compatible with church-fellowship and a profession of religion, and we will enter into them and enjoy them if we can. First, take them to the Lord, and pray him to bless you in entering them; for depend upon it, if you are going into something that you cannot conscientiously ask God to bless you in, you are about to take a doubtful, if not a mischievous, step. I am about to form a peculiar association, and think I have got so far into it that I cannot withdraw—I must go forward now. Did you think before you entered it that you were not your own, and were a Christian, and owed God something, and that it was due to the Lord to ask his permission? You did not at first, but it occurs to you now. Well, the sooner you and I, if we are in those circumstances, betake ourselves to our Master and Ruler, the better; for we are not our own. God sometimes says, "Ephraim is turned to idols: let him alone;" which is one of the greatest calamities that can befall a Christian. May the Lord never let us alone, nor suffer us to be filled with our own ways. Before associa-

tions are formed, before pleasures are entered, before a church is joined, before any step is taken—whether in relation to social or business matters—go to the Lord. If we cannot get on by committing our way unto him, we cannot get on without it ; therefore, “Ye are not your own” may be regarded as an argument against sin and temptation.

Lastly, look at it in relation to affliction and trial. Sometimes the conduct of God is deep and dark. He has a right to be deep and to work in the dark, and we are not entitled to say, “What doest thou?” If we were our own we might ask God why he dealt thus with us, but “Ye are not your own.” Let us be silent and dumb, whilst God is performing the wonders of his providence and grace. We are the clay, and he is the potter ; and he has a right to do as he pleases with us. We thank him for having made us vessels of mercy ; and let us never forget that we are his workmanship, and not our own. If these positions are true, death concerns Christ rather more than it concerns the Christian. We are his property ; and to lose a Christian—to lose a saint—would be for Christ to lose his own honour and glory. Let us lie quietly and calmly in the hands of our great Proprietor, and leave the time, the place, and the circumstances of our death with him. Amen.

THE NEXT SERMON WILL BE READY ON SEPTEMBER 14TH.

Printed and published by BRISCOE & Co., 28, Banner-street, Bunhill-row, London, E.C.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

Four copies post-free, by sending stamps to the above address.

Parcels of back numbers, not fewer than 12, may be had from the Printers, at half-price,
(viz. 6d., post free.)

* * 18 Sermons, stitched in a neat Wrapper, 1s. (1s. 2d., post free.)

THE PROMISED VISION.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, 4th AUGUST, 1878.

"For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie."—Hab. ii. 3.

THE mysteries of God's government are numerous and great, and they will in all probability surround the church and the world until the end of time. Jacob felt that God's conduct towards him was mysterious, and his son Joseph learned that Divine Providence was indeed dark and inscrutable. Jeremiah, the weeping prophet, was frequently filled with astonishment, saying, "Mine eye runneth down with water!" for marvellous was the conduct of God towards himself and the children of Israel. Job also was overwhelmed and lost in mysteries. Their force and wonderfulness were so great that he was at times carried away, as it were, from himself. Mysteries filled the world, but more especially the land of Canaan in the days of Habakkuk, the prophet, who lived a short time before the captivity of the children of Israel. That people, during his life, were in a very degraded and degenerate condition; and the prophet expostulates with the Lord concerning them, saying, "Why dost thou shew me iniquity and, cause me to behold grievance? for spoiling and violence are before me, and there are they that raise up strife and contention. Therefore the law is slackened, and judgment doth never go forth: for the wicked doth compass about the righteous; therefore, wrong judgment proceedeth." Habakkuk, having poured out his feelings in this mournful manner before the Lord, received an answer from him, saying—"Behold ye among the heathen, and regard and wonder marvellously; for I will work a work in your days which ye will not believe, though it be told you. For, lo! I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possess the dwelling-places that are not theirs." This was perfectly astounding to the good prophet. He had said, "Wherefore dost thou show me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance?" and the Lord at once opened his mind to him, and the revelation on that occasion overwhelmed the prophet, and he said, "Art thou not from everlasting, O Lord my God, mine Holy One? Therefore, surely we shall not die. O Lord, thou hast ordained them for judgment! and, O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction! Thine eyes are too pure to behold iniquity." If the children of Israel are vile, the Chaldeans are viler than they; and if Israel as a nation are degraded, the Babylonians are more degraded than we; and therefore wilt thou, almighty and everlasting God, use them as a sword for the purpose of smiting thy people? The prophet proceeded to complain somewhat in submission to the will of God, of God's words, and of the revealed intention of the great King of Israel, and having uttered his complaint, he said—I expressed my astonishment at the degeneracy of my own people, and received an answer from the Lord which has astonished me. Having complained in submission to his will,

VOL. II., No. 17.—SEPTEMBER 15, 1878.

I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved. And the Lord answered me, and said 'Write the vision—make it plain upon tables—that he may run that readeth it ; for the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie.' ”

These are a few thoughts upon the meaning of the connection in which the text stands. Now let us limit our attention for a few minutes to the subject indicated. It divides itself into two branches—first, *the vision* ; and secondly, *its certainty promised*—“ For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie.

A very important vision or view of things is indicated. The vision is yet for an appointed time. Notice, in the first place, that this vision was to be written, and that it was to be made plain upon tables, that he might run that read it. First, it was to be written, for it was to be preserved. The children of Israel were to go into captivity, and they were to live in the land of Babylon seventy years. God had promised that they should return to Canaan, and the promise was given before they were carried away ; and therefore, since the thing was absolutely certain, and God had positively resolved to destroy the Chaldean empire, and to bring his people back again to their own country, he said to his servant Habakkuk, Write the vision, and preserve it. Do not trust to your memory ; and let it not come from tradition, from one person to another, and from one family to another. Write it, and let it be preserved, that the people may refer to it year after year during their whole captivity, and in order that when they apprehend I have forgotten myself and them also, the vision may be before them, for the encouragement of their hope and the strengthening of their own faith in me.” And, again, the vision was to be written in plain characters : “ Write the vision, and make it *plain* upon tables.” The letters were to be large, and as perfectly and correctly formed as possible, and written in their own language, so that all might be able to read it. And then it was to be written upon tables, and not upon the wall, nor upon the earth ; written, not with chalk, but inscribed or engraved upon tables of wood, which were not to be put away in drawers, nor concealed in cupboards, nor covered at all. They were to be taken into the temple, and hung upon the pillars, or walls, or doors of the holy place, and also by the waysides, so that they that ran might read as they ran. And what was to be written ? Write these words—“ The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie.” Now, having made these two or three preliminary remarks, let us attempt to come a little closer to the text.

Literally, the vision here may refer to prophecy, for the word “ vision ” is very frequently so applied in the Old Testament. Something like a fear or an objection in the mind of the prophet may have been anticipated by God. Habakkuk might fear that the vision and spirit of prophecy would discontinue with the liberty of Israel, and that when the people had been removed from Canaan into Babylon there would be no visions from the Lord—no further revelation from heaven, and no more prophets to speak for God. It seems that he feared that visions and prophecy would then finally cease. Now, the Lord proceeded to correct that feeling, and to remove that fear. The vision is for an appointed time ; for, although the children of Israel shall go into Babylon, and remain there seventy years, yet there shall be visions and revelations from myself to them. Prophets, prophesies, and the spirit of prophecy shall not cease, and therefore we find that two prophets were raised up by God during the captivity, and that they actually prophesied in the land of Babylon. The first was Ezekiel, whose prophecy was most extraordinary, and he lived in Babylon and prophesied during the captivity. The second prophet was Daniel, the greatly beloved of the Lord, and an extraordinary man ; and some of the most wonderful predictions recorded in the Old Testament were delivered by him. God therefore said, as it were “ Habakkuk, do not fear ; the vision and prophecy shall not cease ; for

though the people go into captivity, yet they shall have prophets there, and also, when they have returned to their land, the spirit of prophecy shall remain among them. And it was so : for three prophets—Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi—were raised up after the return of the people from Babylon, and therefore the prophets continued until John, who ushered in or introduced the great Prophet of the Church of God. This I take to be the literal meaning of the words—"The vision is for an appointed time." It shall continue, Habakkuk, until the people return ; and after they have returned, and until Christ's messenger appears before his face, and it shall continue until Messiah himself comes, and then the vision and the prophecy shall be sealed up, the present dispensation shall for ever cease, and the kingdom in a new form shall be revealed. Then the vision will refer to the return of the children of Israel from Babylon to their native land. That vision was for an appointed time—seventy years—and at the expiration of that period God so worked in grace and providence that the captivity returned to Canaan. The people frequently lost, or almost lost, their hopes, saying, "Our hope is perished !" There appeared no probability, and sometimes they thought that there was no possibility of their return. It is truly wonderful that the Holy Ghost has been pleased to say by the prophet Daniel, "And that night was the King Belshazzar slain." It is said of another night, on another solemn occasion, "And that night the Lord went through the land of Egypt, and smote all the firstborn." That night the 400 years mentioned by God expired, and that night, therefore, the firstborn of Egypt were destroyed, and the children of Israel came out of Egypt "with a high hand and an outstretched arm." And when Babylon was invaded and taken, "That night was King Belshazzar slain." The seventy years had expired, and that very night the tyrant was slain, and Cyrus took possession of Babylon, broke up the Babylonian empire, and appeared as the great emancipator and deliverer of Israel, proclaiming liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that were bound. This is a twofold view of what I conceive to be the literal meaning of the vision.

Having mentioned these two or three things, perhaps more for the sake of my younger hearers, than for the sake of my aged friends, let us come a little closer to the Gospel, and to the experience of a child of God in connection with this vision. I notice that the text will apply to the *advent of the Lord Jesus Christ*. I mention this because the Apostle Paul makes use of this very passage in his Epistle to the Hebrews, in connection with the Gospel, and the great mysteries of salvation. I am not, I am sure, misapplying this vision when I connect it with the advent, person, and work of God's dear Son. Well, in the time of Habakkuk, the vision of God's Son, "the woman's seed," and David's seed, was for an appointed time. At the appointed time this vision was seen by angels, by the shepherds, and by the children of Israel ; for then our great and glorious Lord appeared on the scene. And what kind of vision was it ? God in a human form ! God in our own flesh ! God dressed like the sinner whom he had come from heaven to redeem, to save, and to set for ever free ! And where did this vision appear ? In Bethlehem. In a palace ? No ! in a stable, and in a manger there ; incarnate God appeared as a babe, a few spans long, and wrapped in swaddling clothes. Write it plain, Habakkuk—plain upon tables. Let the letters be large, so that he that reads it may run. The Seed of the woman is coming ; there shall be a vision of incarnate God. It is for an appointed time, and at that time it shall speak, and not lie. This vision of God moved three worlds. It moved all heaven, and angels came and proclaimed the fact that God was on a visit to the earth. It moved this world also, and it moved hell ; and a view of Christ by faith, taken by the sinner that hopes in his mercy is elevating, sanctifying, and dignifying. Oh, that we could for ever fix the eyes of our poor, imperfect minds upon this great object—this marvellous mystery—God manifest in the flesh. We may take this vision, however, to indicate the glorious life of our incarnate Redeemer. He lived under the law, and passed through persecution, privation,

temptation, and desertion, to the great end of his journey—the great glory that was set before him. He lived perfectly, obeyed perfectly, spoke and thought perfectly, and left behind himself footprints of loving perfection and obedience. There was nothing to correct in his life, nothing to alter in his obedience, nothing to excite the frowns of God, in anything he ever did. The vision was a heavenly one of a perfect Being, perfectly obeying the perfect law of God. We pass on to notice the Christ of God on the cross, the dear Redeemer in the depths of his humiliation, sweat, suffering, blood and death. What have we on Calvary, but a vision of all the love of God? It had been promised before. There had been streams of divine love flowing before Immanuel reached Calvary's hill and Calvary's tree; but there was a view of all the love of God in the dear person that hung on the cross, and who was no less than incarnate Deity. If you would have a view of the heart of God, look at Christ crucified; and if you would have a view of the true nature of sin in all its blackness, vileness, and enormity, look at it upon the Christ of God; and if you would have a view of the inflexibility of divine justice, see the conduct of the just God towards the dear and blest Redeemer. Christ groaned, but justice did not stay her hand for his groans. There were virtue and merit in every groan and in every wound, but justice continued to smite him till a full atonement was made, though the blood streamed from his person, and all his bones were out of joint. He wept and made strong supplication, at length shouting, "My God! My God! why hast Thou forsaken Me?" All that was a marvellous revelation of the terribleness of divine justice, of the awfulness of sin, of the fearful character of divine wrath, and of the wondrous fact that God could not save sinners without the intervention of an atonement and the interposition of the blood of an Infinite Person. And what further may we see here? Why, a finished salvation. Hither the sinner comes; to this great object the sensibly guilty sinner repairs. The vision was for an appointed time; and at that time it spoke on Calvary and said, "It is finished;" and he bowed his head and gave up the ghost.

Now look experimentally at the matter. *The vision may be taken to indicate some personal and special blessing or favour.* It is for an appointed time. Take it in relation to the pardon and the liberty of the child of God. The congregation this morning is not quite so large as usual, and yet I imagine that a considerable number of friends present are in bondage, having never known what liberty is, otherwise than having heard it described by ministers, and spoken of by some of God's dear people, who have seen the vision of Christ, and him crucified. Some of you are still carrying your chains, still wearing your prison dress, and still sitting in the dust. You are at a distance from liberty and peace, and cannot get near to salvation, although you wish with all your hearts you could do so. No other object engages your attention, for you are guilty sinners, and feel it, and you know there is salvation in that great Christ that hung on the tree—therefore your eye is fixed on him, and your hope rests on his blood: but you are chained and fettered, and in prison: your souls having never been set free. Well, my brethren—"The vision is for an appointed time; at the end it shall speak, and not lie." If you cannot get nearer to the cross, wait awhile where you are, and watch and expect. If you cannot get into liberty, but must remain in bondage, continue to pray, look and desire; for the promise is written, by divine authority, and written plainly and legibly. God has bound himself to appear to you, therefore keep your eye on the writing, and expect a manifestation of Jehovah and his eternal love by-and-by; for the vision is only for an appointed time, when it shall speak, and not tarry nor lie. Soon a heavenly power will remove the fetters from your legs, the manacles from your hands, and the chains from your soul, and strip you of your prison garments. By-and-bye an influence will lift you up from the dust and place you on your feet, and you will have power to run with alacrity and delight to the dear redeeming Christ. You will run with feelings such as you have never had before, and not stop till full salvation is

reached, and the bleeding Redeemer is held fast in the arms of faith, and you are heard to say, "He loved me, and gave himself for me." Some persons say, "Only believe;" and you ought to have been beyond hope long ere this. Some professors, belonging to a certain section of the Christian church, sneer at hope and despise it, and speak cruelly to a child of God who cannot get into liberty, and feels that he cannot command the influences of the Spirit. My beloved friend, we required all the mediation of Christ to set us right with God, and we as deeply need the power and presence of the Spirit of God to apply that atonement that Jesus Christ has made. I have sometimes represented the matter thus :—There is a bed, and a patient lies suffering upon it ; while, in the middle of the room, stands a table upon which is an infallible remedy for his complaint. The poor patient looks at the medicine, and wishes some kind friend would reach it to him. Go to him, and mock and taunt him by telling him it is his, and to get up and take it. The poor sufferer wants strength, for he is exhausted. If his life depend upon his getting out of bed and administering the medicine with his own hands he must die, and cannot live. No ; there must be some other hand to administer the remedy prepared. There is the vision of Christ, and here is the poor sinner who would give a world to see him as his own Saviour. What is wanted ? Why, the interposition and operation of God the Eternal Spirit. "He shall take of mine and shall show it unto you;" therefore Paul says, "We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image." Without being fanciful, I will go as far as possible here. The glass is the gospel ; the glory of the Lord that appears in this mirror is the Lord, or the face of Jesus Christ ; the children of God are represented as looking at the glory of God, and the look is represented as having a transforming influence upon the observer. We are changed into the same image, from glory to glory ; but this change is owing to the Spirit of the Lord. Now, what I meant by going far, was this. We look at Christ in the glass of the gospel as he wept ; and we weep, and do not wish to refrain. And we look at him as wounded, and this wounds us ; and we are thankful to be wounded in this way. We gaze at him as suffering, and we suffer and have fellowship with him in his sufferings. We view a dying Christ, and see him die ; and we die too. We die to sin, "For, if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." We gaze on him as rising from the dead, and we rise with him to newness of life. We gaze on him as rising to heaven and taking his seat in glory, and this has a transforming influence upon the spirit. Gazing then on the glory of the Lord in the glass of the gospel has a transforming influence upon the observer's mind. Well, brethren, here is one view of the vision. The vision is God incarnate—incarnate God dying—incarnate God expressing and exhibiting all the character and love of God, and our souls brought to be sweetly immersed for time and for eternity in the doing, the dying, and the merit of the dear Son of God.

"Tarry his leisure, then,
Wait the appointed hour;
Wait till the Bridegroom of your souls
Reveal his love with power."

For

"The time of love will come,
When you shall clearly see,
Not only that he shed his blood,
But each shall say, For me."

And I am sure you will see the vision soon, because you now want to see him, and by nature you did not want this view of the Lamb of God. The want has been created in you by the Holy Ghost, and it will and must be supplied. Therefore, if you should have to wait till you die you will see the vision then.

I do not know the experience of a dying saint in the deep wonders of death, but here is the vision written, and here also is the God that promised it—

“ — His word shall stand,
Not like the writing on the sand,
But firm as his decree.”

At the end it shall speak, and not lie.

I might dwell on providential matters, but time forbids ; we will, therefore, pass over them, and glance at *the subject in relation to prayer*. Many of you have presented important prayers to the Lord. You prayed, and that with much faith and feeling, that on retiring from the throne you were conscious that you had been with God, and had to do with him. You hoped and believed that he had accepted your prayer, and yet he has not answered it yet. Wait ; the vision is for an appointed time. The prayer having been divinely indited, and offered under the influence and by the help of the Spirit, God received it, and it is on the file attached to his throne as a matter that shall not be forgotten, and at the appointed time the answer shall come. God help us all to wait for answers to prayer, and to approve of them when they come.

Well then, in the fourth place, *there is the vision of heaven*—the vision of the New Jerusalem, and of eternal rest. I cannot go into that, but it is for an appointed time. We are going thither, and shall see the city of heavenly peace, plenty, and purity, where sin is never felt and never will be known, where the whole atmosphere is vital holiness and all our powers shall

“ — find sweet employ,
In that eternal world of joy.”

Go to Paris, to Berlin, and to other places if you like, and be satisfied if you can. See those places. But there is a revelation to come, a grand discovery approaching, a vision of the best city in the universe, “whose Builder and Maker is God.” We do not expect to see material gold or jasper, or trees or flowers there ; yet such is the character of that city, that the most precious and beautiful things we know are mentioned to illustrate its glory ; hence its streets are golden, the tree of life grows everywhere, the river of life flows through it ; it has precious stones for its foundation, its walls are jasper, its gates are pearls, its inhabitants are princes, its seats are thrones, and saints therein all wear crowns of eternal glory. The vision of heaven, of the land of peace, of the Jerusalem which is above. Well, what shall we see there ? The vision of his face. Oh ! it would not be heaven without that !

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

It is only for an appointed time, my brother. We are glad to see one another in the flesh, especially under certain circumstances ; but there is a grand object to be seen, the grandest in all the universe of God—that dear Person whose face expresses love, salvation, pardon, heaven. Oh, to see his face will empty minds of self, and sin, and imperfection ; conform them at once to his blessed self, and fill them with pure eternal happiness. This vision of Christ's face will be seen. We see him by faith now, and at a distance ; but then we shall be near. The vision of Christ's face will be transforming and appropriative, and eternally satisfying. Wait for it, though it tarry. If you are seventy or eighty years of age, and inclined impatiently to say, Lord, what wait I for ? Younger persons than I die, cross the river, and enter into rest ; what wait I for ? There is a reason for everything, and therefore a reason for your tarrying here ; and why God withholds, as it were, the vision from you. It is for an appointed time ; at the end it shall speak, and not lie. Though it tarry, wait for it.

Then, lastly, there is *the second coming of our Lord*. This, too, is for an appointed time. That will be a universal vision; for every eye shall see him, and the view will have different effects upon different persons and characters. Some would shrink into themselves, or if they could, they would hide themselves in rocks and caves; but the people of God, seeing their descending Lord in the heavens, will shout, This is the Lord, we have waited for him! This is our God, and he now comes to save us! This will be the climax of all; the climax of all God's purposes, of Christ's covenant engagements, and of all the hopes and desires of his dear people. The grand business, therefore, of salvation and providence will proceed and progress until the heavens pass away with a great noise, and we have a vision of the great and blest Redeemer. These few thoughts must suffice on the first part of the subject.

II. Now *this is absolutely certain*. The vision is for an appointed time; but at the end it *shall speak and not lie*. An appointed time is *a time concealed*, if we contemplate this subject in connection with the Lord Jesus Christ and Christian experience. The children of Israel were seventy years in Babylon, and Jeremiah assured them that the captivity should extend over that period, and Daniel learned it would be one of seventy years, and therefore the time of that vision was not absolutely concealed. But my text speaks of the vision, and of a time appointed as a concealed time, and hence "wait for it." The time of the fulfilment of God's promises is concealed. The promise is written, and the fulfilment must take place; but the time and the manner are in the bosom of Deity. Your desires must be fulfilled because God has created them, for it is not like him to create desires and disappoint them, to create hopes and tantalise them. Every desire, that is, every righteous desire, of the righteous shall be granted, and every spiritual hope of the spiritual mind shall be fulfilled; but *when* is not revealed, only at the end it shall come and not tarry, it shall speak and not lie. Now, a knowledge of the appointed times of revelations from God would be useless and injurious, as I understand these matters. Would such knowledge increase our spirituality, our faith, our holiness, or our conformity to God? Such knowledge is needless; for God, our own God, knows all. A knowledge of the future would or might be injurious. We should probably make an improper use of it; for it seems to me that if the child of God could look into the future appointments of his heavenly Father, that very knowledge would defeat the purposes and decrees of God; for it is his purpose that his people shall trust in him, and if one foresaw the whole of his life, I do not think there would be much trusting in him. It is his purpose that his people shall live by faith, and not by sense, and not by sight; and if they could see the vision and know when it would speak, and what it would say, they would not live by faith trusting in him, but by sense and sight. But the just shall live and walk by faith. Therefore the appointed time is concealed, and the appointed time is *a fixed time*. No alteration can ever take place in God, or in his appointments. The favour itself is decreed, and no alteration can take place in that; the nature of the favour will remain the same, the measure of it is appointed, and it will never be reduced in extent, and the recipients and the date are purposed. Dates are arranged by God, and they are all fixed. If the preacher may speak for his hearers, we want to hurry matters and to hurry God, and sometimes we would hinder him; but he will not be either hurried or hindered. He will take that time which is divinely appointed and fixed, and meantime he gives the promise of the vision in a written form, saying, sit down and expect the fulfilment of this word; for I am not a man that I should lie, nor the son of man that I should repent. One of the most difficult positions of a child of God is that of waiting and trusting. We are only half-believers after all. Talk about strong faith! I wonder how many have strong faith. I have it not. I wish I had. We are something like children; we want the vision, and must have it now, and cry impatiently because the blessing does not now come, whereas we are in the hands of Infinite Wisdom,

and in the heart of Eternal Love. Oh that we had a stronger faith to wait for God, as well as to wait upon him! It is for an appointed, for a fixed, time.

Then, thirdly, *the appointed time is the best*. The appointment was made by God, who is the Father of his people, and he has arranged that they shall have the best of everything at the best time. The best Saviour and salvation. The world has a temporal salvation, but his people have both a temporal and a spiritual salvation. The best salvation, the best Saviour, the best friends, the best associations, the best manifestations of himself, the best road to walk in, the best life, the best nature, the best death, and the best world to come; and, therefore, God's dates concerning the revelation of himself must also be the best, the best for all parties interested and concerned. The best for God, for he dated your blessings with a view to his own glory, and arranged that you should have them at such dates, because they would most promote his own praise and glory, and best for yourselves. If the blessing came before there was room for it, it would not be appreciated; just as there would be dissatisfaction and discontent, if, when it came, it did not fill the void. God, however, is preparing you for the blessing, and when the space is large enough then it will come, the heart will be satisfied and God will be honoured. Though it tarry, wait for it. His time is the best. And then *the time is near*. It must be so, for life is short. A thousand years are but as yesterday when it is past. God never gives his people unripe fruit, and you and I cannot reap before harvest time. If we do, we shall be disappointed. It would be folly and a sin to cut corn green, and it would be unlike God to give fruit from his trees to his children in an unripe state. You must wait till the fruit is ripe, and the corn is grown, and things are perfectly prepared to accomplish God's purposes in relation to yourselves, and the devil, and the world; for all these are to be affected by the revelation of God to his people, and by what the vision shall say when it speaks. The time of reaping is near.

And, lastly, *it is an expected time*. Here is the promise. I place my faith and hope thereon, and try to stand upon my watch-tower, and watch and wait to hear the vision when it speaks. "At the end it shall speak." End of what? At the end of the time appointed, and the end of the preparations God is making. When he has prepared everything for the vision, then it will speak, and it will not lie. It will speak according to the promise. What God hath promised shall be received, and what God has promised shall be done, so that soon you may compare God's work with his word. Here is his word; but his work is yonder in the future. By-and-bye he will complete his work, and then you may lay the work beside the word, and compare the one with the other. It shall not lie; that is, God's people shall not be disappointed of the favour. They shall surely have it. And, lastly, they shall not be disappointed in it; for though we sometimes get what we expected, yet when we have it we are not satisfied with it. We shall have what God has promised, and having it we shall be satisfied with it for ever. Therefore, tarry his leisure. Wait, for you cannot wait too long for such a blessing as this. It is worth waiting for. My brother, if you should wait till you die, it will repay you even so; and if you should not receive it on this side eternity, you will have it on the other, and possess it for ever; and, therefore, any way you will be debtors, undeserving debtors, to the God of grace. Amen.

THE NEXT SERMON WILL BE READY ON OCTOBER 15TH.

Printed and published by BRISCOE & Co., 28, Banner-street, Bunhill-row, London, E.C.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

Four copies post-free, by sending stamps to the above address.

Parcels of back numbers, not fewer than 12, may be had from the Printers, at half-price, (viz. 6d., post free.)

* * 18 Sermons, stitched in a neat Wrapper, 1s. (1s. 2d., post free.)

THE MAN OF SORROWS.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, 15th SEPTEMBER, 1878.

"A man of sorrows."—Isa. liii. 3.

THE Christian church has always been imperfect on the earth, its members being, while in the present state, only partially conformed to their Head and Pattern. There is perfection for Christ's mystic body, but not here; and therefore every spiritual member of that body must go to heaven in order to possess it. Imperfection appeared very early in the churches of Christ—as early, in fact, as the days of the apostles; not only in the churches at Corinth and Galatia, but in a very considerable measure in the large, and influential, and wonderful church which had been planted in Jerusalem. We speak of that church as a kind of pattern, as Christian churches of the present day profess to be followers of that divinely organized body. That church was a very large one—three thousand having been added to it on the day of Pentecost, and shortly afterwards we read, "The number of the men was about five thousand." In this first and numerous church, we have reason to believe there was a considerable measure of spirituality. Their knowledge of Christ and of eternal things being deep and powerful. Nevertheless, there was much imperfection and error therein; for if the word of God sounded out from Jerusalem, error also freely flowed from that city. The truth of God, as to its proclamation, proceeded from Zion; and doctrines which were opposed to the gospel proceeded also therefrom. Certain members of that church—some of them being preachers—went to Antioch, and told the good and simple-minded people there, that it was necessary they should keep the law of Moses, and be circumcised; and that they could not, in fact, be saved, unless they did so; hence, both truth and error proceeded from Jerusalem. Well, those teachers troubled the minds of some persons at Antioch; and afterwards they went to Rome, and to Galatia, and seduced the minds of many; for, "Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth!" and one sinner, or heretic, is capable of doing much mischief. False doctrines having been propagated, some of the members of those churches gloried in them, some in the fact that they were descended from Abraham, others in the ceremonial law, and that they kept most of it; others in their riches, and others in the talents and abilities of their ministers. The mind of the apostle Paul was deeply moved by all this; and feeling, as I suppose he did, somewhat angry while writing a part of his epistle to the Galatians, he said, "I would that they were even cut off [as with some judgment] which trouble you." These men have perverted and bewitched you that ye should not obey the truth. He was angry, but his anger was not sinful; and having much deep and fervent feeling, he said, "From henceforth let no man trouble me [about the ceremonial law, about circumcision, or about his carnal descent from Abraham]; for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus;" and

VOL. II., No. 18.—OCTOBER 15, 1878.

am determined not to glory in anything save in his cross, "by whom I am crucified to the world, and the world is crucified to me." A person may be a Jew, a natural descendant from Abraham: that fact has never crucified an individual to the world. One may be circumcised and keep the ceremonial law: his obedience can never crucify him to the world, nor the world to him. Paul had been a Pharisee; he was descended from Abraham, and belonged to the tribe of Benjamin; he had, therefore, been circumcised, and had kept the law of Moses; but all these things he had proved absolutely vain and worthless, and had cast them all, therefore, behind his back, and prayed that he might "win Christ, and be found in him." And he did win Christ, and was found in him; and looking at all the insignificant and empty events, and objects of fleshly glory by which he was surrounded, he turned himself towards a dying Christ, and said, "God forbid that I should glory except in him;" and I am determined, as a preacher, "to know nothing among men save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." Hence, the Lord Jesus said to his disciples in the days of his flesh, "All things that are written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me must be fulfilled." We have, therefore, in the New Testament the fulfilment of Old Testament promises and predictions; for "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy;" and Isaiah, therefore, perfectly coincides and agrees with Paul in relation to the person, sufferings, and salvation of God's dear Son. Isaiah was a circumcised man, an observer of the ceremonial law, and he, too, was a Jew, and probably belonged to the royal house of Israel. However, in the chapter out of which we have taken our text, he turns himself altogether to the Saviour, and says, among other things: "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;" but "He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands."

In looking at our text this morning, I shall call your attention for a few minutes to the two branches into which it naturally divides itself—first, *The great Sufferer*; and, secondly, *His unparalleled sorrows*; and then, thirdly, if we have time, we shall offer a few *reflections* upon the subject.

I. Turning our attention, first of all, to the *Sufferer* himself, we notice a few things in connection with his person, which is one of the most important Bible subjects that the mind can possibly contemplate. Jesus Christ is the Man of God's right hand, the glorious Man, the Man of the holy unction, and the Man in whom it pleased the Father all fulness should dwell; but he is now before us as the Man of sorrows.

I notice, first, *the real humanity of our Lord*—"a man of sorrows." I need not stop to say that I am a most unlimited and firm believer in the eternal power and Godhead of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is not necessary, therefore, that I should attempt to offer any argument for the purpose of establishing that great fact. We have to look at him this morning as a man, and we now notice his real and true humanity. A man, and not an angel; for angels are eternal strangers to sorrow. We read in poets about angels' tears, as we read about angels' wings; but, whether they have wings or not, we are quite sure they never shed tears; for they never have sorrow. We have not an angel before us this morning; but a Man—a real Man—"a Man of sorrows." And this Man did not belong to a new, to an unheard of race; and the Father did not create an unknown kind of being for the purpose of redeeming his people. Had he not been a real Man, he would have been, so far as I understand the matter, utterly incapable of bearing sin, and putting away guilt and transgression; therefore we descend from the angels of God to men, and look at a Man who was in all respects like ourselves with the exception of sin. It is an interesting fact, in which I cannot speculate, that the Person, usually called the second Person in the adorable Godhead, assumed human nature. It was not the Father that became a man: it was not the Holy Ghost that became a man, and there-

fore, it was in covenant arranged, not that the Father, nor the Holy Ghost, should enter into expiatory sorrows; but that the second Person should assume human nature, and actually become a man that he might become acquainted with grief, pass into and through all sorrows, and so save human sinners with an honourable and everlasting salvation. This Man of sorrows, therefore, is our kinsman, and is closely related to us; for he is one of the people. "Behold," says God, "I have exalted one chosen out of the people." He is bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh; and this Man of sorrows is no other than our Friend and our everlasting Brother, our Brother by divine purpose and decree by his own voluntary act and determination, and by actual birth. Not a brother-in-law, not an official brother, not a nominal brother; for sometimes persons in peculiar positions address all that are in the same position as brothers or brethren. Christ is not a nominal, but a real Brother; a Brother by birth, and born for adversity—born to taste sorrow, to drink it up, to sanctify it, and to emerge therefrom a great and a glorious Conqueror. He constituted himself, or was constituted, capable of entering sorrow. Abstract Deity could never enter sorrow; and had not Christ assumed a nature other than human, or a nature lower than ours, he could not have entered and sanctified your sorrows and mine. It was necessary that he should assume, not merely a nature inferior to his Godhead, but the very nature he came to redeem. He assumed not the angelic nature, for fallen angels were not interested in his doing and dying; and, therefore, he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham, because it was his intention to bear the sorrows of Abraham's seed, and to rescue them from death and eternal ruin. See, therefore, my brethren, the glorious God put on your nature, and in that nature become your Brother, your near kinsman, and your all. See him in that nature entering the realms of sorrow, distress and woe! He could not have entered those realms, nor stood in that region had he not been human; but he became a man, and thus capacitated himself for bearing sorrow; for being filled and overwhelmed with it, and for being pierced and bruised thereby.

This pure and perfect Man having entered the regions of sorrow, could never have been pierced by it had not certain peculiar and wonderful conditions existed. Having traced him into the regions of sorrow, we want now to see how it came to pass that the evils he was surrounded by entered into his soul, and pierced him through and through. Had angels been surrounded by evil, methinks they would not have been pierced with pain. Adam in his innocent state could not have been pierced by sorrows. Here was a greater than Adam, and a greater than angels, standing in the midst of evils incurred by others, and they pierced him through his soul, and he exhausted the whole. But how could those sorrows justly touch him? How could that anguish and woe righteously enter into his soul? How could he be wounded in harmony with the goodness and the glory of God? Listen! Having entered into that realm, and taken his stand under the law, the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all, and coming thus into contact with sin, sorrows innumerable, deep and fierce, rolled into him; and then it was that the cup of bitter wrath was put into his hand, and the sword of justice smote him through and through. "A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." But as time is going, and the subject is a great one, and we have another thought or two, let us proceed. The real humanity of our Lord we have offered a very imperfect thought or two upon.

Secondly, *The humanity of our Lord was absolutely perfect.* This is an important point in our salvation, and our comfort. A perfect Man in the perfection of sorrow. All was perfection. The Sufferer was a perfect person, and his sufferings were entire and complete. Our Lord was capable of suffering in all respects. His physical nature, his mental nature, and his moral nature in mysterious connection with his divinity, all suffered—suffered during the whole

of his life, and his sorrows ceased not until he said, "It is finished." What part of his body was it that did not suffer? And what power of his mind was it that was free from sorrow? and what moral excellence in our Lord was it that was free from grief? A perfect body in perfect sorrow; a perfect mind in perfect grief; a perfect moral nature without a stain, undimmed by sin in the depths of sorrow, grief, and woe. Our Lord, we say, was perfect as to his human nature. Observe, my friends, that all his perceptions were quick and tender, and their quickness and tenderness were intensified, if I may so speak, by their connection with the Godhead. Sin had not blunted one of his feelings, nor dimmed one of his perfections. No heart on the earth was ever so tender as the heart of incarnate God, and no sensibilities were ever like those which were possessed by the Man of sorrows. The hand that has a hard skin is pierced with greater difficulty than that with a thin one. Our dear Redeemer had no hardness in his nature; nothing had ever blunted him in any respect, and therefore he was alive to the slightest breath of sin, and opposed to it. Every sinful look and word he was essentially opposed to, and yet this pure and tender Being, with all those quick sensibilities and perceptions, lived thirty-three years in an atmosphere which, being charged with evil, filled him with sorrow; yet he voluntarily came into it, lived, worked, and died therein, "a Man of sorrows," and acquainted with grief, as no other being could have been acquainted with them.

"Wonders of grace to God belong;
Repeat his mercies in your song."

My beloved friends, the marvellous humiliation of our Lord Jesus was inseparable from his sufferings, which were unparalleled, indescribable, and inconceivable. God only knows the love of God, and Christ only knows the wrath of God. The devil knows something about God's wrath, and the wicked shall know something of it; but the Man of sorrows is the only being that wholly and exhaustively knows the terrible wrath and curse of Jehovah. When, therefore, sin was presented to Jesus, he saw that which he was utterly opposed to, could never be in harmony with; and he shrunk, not from bearing it, but from the thing itself, which he regarded with loathing and detestation. It was the thing that he hated, and the only thing he hated. What was there in Christ that was at all in harmony with sin? His will? his affections? his understanding? his conscience? his holiness? All shrank from it; all his senses were opposed to it, and they suffered in consequence of his contact with it. A hundred slimy, poisonous serpents put upon your person would produce—even if they did not sting you—unspeakable suffering. The Lord laid on Christ ten thousand times ten thousand sins that would have stung countless millions in hell for ever; and that filthy, corrupt, and vile thing, sin, was borne and put away by the pure Lord of life and glory. We read of "the way of a serpent on the rock." Sin was upon Christ; but it left no impression or stain whatever upon him. "The way of a ship in the sea"—a ship in the sea leaves no road behind it, and no trace of its course: so sin and Satan, on the Rock of ages, made no impression upon his holiness, left no stain upon his character, and no trace whatever of the uncleanness he had borne for his dear people. A Man, a real Man, and a Man possessing all the absolute and essential perfections of humanity. We speak of that which is good in man. Well, we know there is nothing spiritually good in any man by nature; but let us descend for a minute from spirituality to nature and morality. There are, thank God, some natural and a few moral excellencies in men; hence, we speak of persons whose moral principles are high and most commendable. Well, there are such excellencies in men, although they may not go far, and I think it will be universally admitted that they are all pre-eminently in this Man, all that can be thought of as good in the creature may be seen in its perfection in Jesus Christ. Is natural love an excellency? It is

all in him in its perfection. Social love, and social order, and beauty, and all perfections which are human, are all to be seen in their fulness, integrity, harmony, operation, and glory, in the blessed person of the Man of sorrows. Let us never forget, then, the Saviour's capacity for suffering. He was not hard, but capable of feeling every touch, and of experiencing sorrow in connection with every sin that was imputed to him.

And therefore, thirdly, we notice that *he is pre-eminent in suffering*. We read in Paul's Epistle to the Colossians: "In all things he shall have the pre-eminence." I know what this refers to; but I do not hesitate, notwithstanding, here to apply the words to Jesus Christ. In all things he has the pre-eminence, and he has the pre-eminence in sorrow.

"His way was much rougher
And darker than mine:—
Did Christ, my Lord, suffer,
And shall I repine?"

The most prominent being in glory is he that was the Man of sorrows, and the most prominent being in grief, sorrow, and death, is the man Christ Jesus. Pre-eminent in sorrow. There have been great sufferers that have stood out prominently. What Adam's sufferings were when he was thrust out of Eden we do not know. What the sorrows of angels were when they became devils, and were hurled from their heaven, we do not know, and we do not know what their pains are now. And what the sorrows of the wicked are we do not know, and hope we never shall; but there is no sorrow in hell to be compared for measure to the sorrows that were endured by the dear and blest Redeemer. And what the sorrows and sufferings of martyrs were we do not know. Some persons have supposed that their bodies did not suffer at the stake, and that they were so blessed by God that they were suffering-proof when the flames enveloped them. Well, whether it was so or not, I cannot tell. I am, however, most inclined to think that fire was fire to them, and that they did really suffer, though they suffered heroically, believingly, and willingly. But leave the stake, the fire, the garden of Eden, Adam, the devil, and hell, with all the lost and their groans—leave all, and come to the Man of sorrows, and ask the question, Was ever grief like his? Were ever sorrow and pain like those that were endured and passed through by the Lord of life and glory? He stood alone in the fire,—alone at a distance from God,—alone in bitter sufferings, and in the wrath of God. No being was ever so far from God as Christ was when he said, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" No being was ever in darkness so dense and black as that which enveloped Jesus when his heavenly Father deserted him; and no being was ever in a hell so hot as that wherein he stood when he put away sin by the sacrifice of himself; and no being ever saw such hideousness, nor beheld such terribleness in death as the Lord saw in the death that he went forward to meet,—death with its ten thousand stings, the cup of wrath mixed by the hand of inflexible and unalterable justice—was ever grief and sorrow like his? Let him wear all the crowns that are upon his head, and sit upon the highest throne that stands on the plains of glory. The Lamb, the Man of sorrows deserves it well. He suffered willingly and resolutely. Nothing deterred him from suffering, and no power arrested him in his course; for the joy that was set before him he went through the sorrow—"Who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is now set down on the right hand of God." You observe with what feeling and spirit he spoke to Peter. When the Man of sorrows said that he was about to suffer and die, and leave his people on the earth—"That be far from thee," said Peter. Peter rebuked him, and the Man of sorrows turned round upon his rebuker, and addressed him thus: "Get thee behind me, Satan; for thou savourest not the

things that be of God, but the things that be of men." A willing and resolute Sufferer. Lastly, a triumphant Sufferer was the Man of sorrows. On he went until he was overwhelmed; into the sea he waded in which there was no standing for any being but himself; and that sea of damnation the Saviour drained dry: and then he emerged from his sorrows on the shore of salvation, and said, "Hail! Mary," and Peace be unto all my ransomed people. It is significant that one of the first words he spoke was "All hail!" and "Peace be unto you." Thus much for the person of the Sufferer.

II. His sorrows, if I have not already anticipated that branch of the subject. First, the *cause of them*; and this was various. The moving cause was love eternal; and I want you, my friends, to bear in mind that the love of Jesus Christ was and is a twofold love. Do not lose sight of that fact. He is a man, and has human affections. He is God, and his love is divine. Yes; but are they not united? They are. Just as the two natures are united in one mysterious Person—so the properties, the attributes, of the two natures are also united in the same Person. He manifested his human love in a very wonderful manner when he was on the earth. John lay in his bosom; Jesus wept at the grave of Lazarus; Jesus loved Mary, and Martha, and Lazarus. Oh, I rejoice in the thought that Jesus loves me as a man; and I rejoice also in the fact that he loves me as the everlasting God. His love then was the moving cause of the sorrows he passed through. Here was love under the curse, love weeping, love bleeding, love suffering, and love dying. The love of God is a mystery of humiliation and blood. Watts says—

"Our misery reached his heavenly mind,
And pity brought him down."

Perhaps the words "misery" and "pity" were necessary to the poet. I do not think, however, that the word "pity" is sufficiently strong here. It was not merely pity that brought him down. It was infinite love. He saw his bride in the sea. Ah! we think of the *Princess Alice* now for a moment, for thoughts of that terrible calamity will crowd into our minds. He saw his bride was sinking, the vessel she had been in being wrecked. And was it pity only that brought him out of heaven? Was it not rather a love that heaven could not hold, and that flowed over the walls of glory down into this world of sin and sorrow? And since he could not reach his bride without coming into the depths of sorrow himself, he went into the stormy, bitter sea, and put his everlasting arms underneath her, and said, "It is finished," and brought her out of her sin and ruin into a state of justification and eternal life. Oh, thank God for such a salvation, and for a humble hope that we are interested therein. "A Man of sorrows." Love was the cause of his experience. The meritorious cause of his sorrows was sin—I speak reverently and solemnly—all that the Saviour suffered was deserved. For Christ's sake, do not misunderstand me, nor misrepresent me. I do not wish to convey the idea that Christ personally deserved what he suffered, but that all that he endured was merited and deserved by sin, and the sin that was upon him was that by which the sorrow he experienced and the punishment inflicted upon him were measured. This is where the word "infinite" comes in most inappropriately to describe the person of the sufferer. Does one of our poets speak quite correctly when he says, He

"Bore all incarnate God *could* bear,
Had strength enough, and *none* to spare."

The good man's intention was excellent, but is the form in which he has expressed it correct? Our great Lord had omnipotence on the cross, and all the power of his life and person were perfect, when he cried with a loud voice and said, "It is finished." The meritorious cause of his sufferings was sin. The moral cause of

them was God's justice and law. God could not take his people to heaven without removing their sin, and having his holy law obeyed. Christ's sorrows came from many sources; from God, from man, and from the powers of darkness. The final cause of his sorrows was the salvation of his people, and the glory of his heavenly Father.

The *nature of his sorrows*—they were penal. You and I are at times full of sorrow, and we make much of it; and I am not surprised at this for we are poor finite beings unable to bear much. But, my brethren, your sorrows are not penal, they are not intended to remove sin, nor to help in the removal of it. All our afflictions and sorrows are more or less corrective and medicinal, and are intended to work for our good. The fire of hell is quenched; therefore the other fires, and there are many of them, are not penal. The floods of divine wrath have been rolled away, and therefore the waters we go into now are not floods of wrath. The sorrows of Jesus were penal, they were a punishment—the punishment that was due to sin. The moment he appeared in this world of sorrow, justice came upon him, and the broken law looked frowningly at him. Therefore said Herod to the wise men, Go to the young child, and bring me word, that I may come and worship him. As soon as he appeared on the earth, persecution, sorrow, and affliction rolled upon him; and in that state he continued until he said, "It is finished." His sorrows were meritorious. Every pang he felt, every step he took, every tear he shed, and the whole of his sufferings from Bethlehem to Gethsemane and Calvary, were meritorious. He deserves his own glory, great as it is, and he is conscious of the fact that he deserves what he possesses. And he deserves heaven for us, and that is how we hope to possess it, or the ground on which we hope to enter that place. And if we should reach that glory world, the Man of sorrows shall receive eternal expressions of gratitude from our ransomed spirits. He deserves and merits heaven for all the objects of his love. And are not his sorrows healing? By his stripes we are healed. A sorrowing Christ and a sorrowing Christian brought together is sure to heal the sorrows of the Christian. The Holy Spirit, "lays a wound upon a wound, and makes the wounded whole." A sorrowing Christ, his balmy blood, his meritorious and powerful stripes extract the guilt of sin, remove its defilement and pollution, and produce a peace in the mind which the world can neither give nor take away.

Thirdly, *the measure of his sorrows*. Well, I cannot tell you that. He only knows how much he suffered. Since I cannot measure sin, and all the sins of millions were upon him, I cannot measure the sorrows of the Man of sorrows—the great God-man. However, they were universal; and perhaps this was typified by the ark that Noah built, and the storm. What part of the ark was it that was not smitten by the storm? It fell upon its roof, the billows and waves rolled and dashed against its sides and ends, and it floated too upon the floods—the deluge that drowned the world. And what part of the ark of our salvation, the dear Redeemer, was it that was not smitten? His head, his hands, his feet, his side, his back—his whole body was mangled, his whole soul was scorched, every thought and every feeling was immersed in sorrow. Was ever—I repeat the words—was ever sorrow like that of the great Son of God? They were universal, and the measure was perfect and complete. My dear brother, if you are leaning on Christ, and resting on his worth and merits, you will find no portion of the debt unpaid when you come to die, you will find no terrible curse lying in the valley of death, and when the cup of sorrow is put into your hands you will find no dregs of wrath therein. The curse is exhausted, the cup is empty, the valley of death is paved with love, and traced with lines of blood. The Man of sorrows has swallowed up all penal sorrows, and left nothing but safety here for his people, and eternal perfection and joy hereafter.

The *progress of his sorrows*. See him from the stable in Bethlehem

to the cross at Calvary. Let me impress the fact upon your minds—that our dear Lord went deeper and deeper into sorrow, every week, and every day. Every step he took carried him deeper into sorrow than the previous one; yet on he went, until the garden of Gethsemane and the cross of Calvary were reached. He descended into the very depths of death, and when he had reached the bottom of our deserved hell, then his sorrows were completed and our salvation was finished. So continuous were his sorrows that on one joyful occasion—when heaven was on earth, and a most glorious scene appeared—I refer to his transfiguration on the mount, with his three disciples, and Moses and Elias—he tasted sorrow, for Moses and Elias appeared to him and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. Therefore, when he was surrounded with the glory of heaven, he was even then “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.” One Lentulus I suppose, if his letter is not a forged one, wrote to the Roman Emperor and said that that mysterious man Jesus Christ, was never known to laugh, or was never seen to smile. Whether that was so or not I do not know. On one occasion we know that our Lord rejoiced in spirit and said, “Father, I thank thee that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes.” Well, my friends, the fact is, when he was here, he carried the cup of sorrows, or rather he drank thereof every day, every night, and every hour, and that for three-and-thirty years. At length it was emptied. The business was settled, and millions were saved. The expressions of his sorrow—they were progressive, too. In the early part of his career he said in calm conversation, “Foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has not where to lay his head.” Sorrow in poverty, and privation, and persecution. That was in comparative calmness. We trace him on a little further, and he said, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death.” We go with him a little further, and he “began to be sore amazed.” We go a little further, and we see him fallen to the ground, and offering a prayer—“If it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done:” and we see him on the ground, sweating great drops of blood. We trace him a little further, and we see him on the cross, and he says, “I thirst;” and when such a Being thirsted, the thirst was intense indeed. We trace him a little further, and we hear him say, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” We see, as it were, the last blow struck, the last curse fall upon him, and the last drop fall from the last vial of God’s wrath, and we hear the great fact that all was over, all was finished; and we sit down in peace under the shadow of the cross, and with Paul we feelingly say, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

III. The reflections are simply these, and then I will leave the subject with you. He can sanctify sorrow, for he has been into it and through it. He is authorised to take his people through it, and he can do so. And, thirdly, He sympathises with us in it; for he was a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. In heaven we shall never forget his sorrow. Our joy will never drown the remembrance of the bitter sorrows of the Man of sorrows. The Lord command his blessing, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

THE NEXT SERMON WILL BE READY ON NOVEMBER 15TH.

Printed and published by BRISCOE & Co., 28, Banner-street, Bunhill-row, London, E.C.
PRICE ONE PENNY.

Four copies post-free, by sending stamps to the above address.

Parcels of back numbers, not fewer than 12, may be had from the Printers, at half-price,
 (viz. 6d., post free.)

*• 18 Sermons, stitched in a neat Wrapper, 1s. (1s. 2d., post free.)