

THE HOLY FIRE ON THE ALTAR.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S DAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 13th, 1881.

"The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out."—Lev. vi. 13.

THE gospel of grace is designated a Divine report: "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" It is a Divine report concerning a Divine Being, Divine proceedings, and Divine purposes and designs. It is a report of what was done in Gethsemane, of what was done on Calvary; what was done in the grave, and of what the Lord is now doing on the Mediator's throne. It is also a report of Divine proceedings in the hearts of sinners, for every saint is a temple of the living God who dwells in every true believer. It reports the operations of the Holy Spirit upon the minds of sinners, inspiring their thoughts and feelings, and creating a new life and new powers in the souls of all that serve God. It is a report of God's proceedings with His people between their regeneration and their glorification, describing their peculiar experience as they are in a conflict with the powers of darkness and the seductive and dangerous influences of the world and sin. The Gospel, in fact, reports what took place in the breast of God before the foundation of the world, and what takes place in saved souls in time. The phraseology, "before the foundation of the world," is of frequent occurrence in the Gospel, when God is said to have loved, given life to, and blessed His people. God is the Creator of the world, and the Maker of the children of men, and there is not a creature but what is subject to His power. But when He lived alone, He had thoughts of peace and love in His deep and glorious bosom towards millions of the children of men; and among other things which are reported to us is the fact that it pleased the Father that in Christ all fulness should dwell.

This was God's early purpose, and the arrangement into which He entered with his beloved Son when in His Trinity of Persons He lived in His own everlasting happiness. Then it pleased the Father to constitute

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Christ a Head and Mediator, making all saving blessings to meet and centre in Him. And if all fulness is in Christ, all the fulness of nature, all the fulness of grace, and all the fulness of glory must be found in the glorious person of our Lord; and since all was in Christ before the foundation of the world, immediately after the fall of man, and the breach of God's holy law took place, that fact began to be revealed. The revelation, however, was gradual and progressive, for the going forth of the Lord Jesus was prepared as the morning, when we have first the dawn and then the day; first, the twilight, and then the clear daylight; and the Lord Christ was gradually revealed as the great Saviour of sinners, and consequently immediately after that darkness, which was the result of the fall, God appeared in forms of mercy, and gave a promise, which was followed by many others, until the darkness was, so to speak, softened by those indications of salvation which God had placed by His grace and mercy over the heads of fallen sinners. At length Jesus Himself appeared upon the scene, and said, "The day of vengeance is in My heart, for the year of My redeemed is come." How was it that the day of vengeance was in His heart? We had thought that He came to fulfil the purposes of God's love, and to execute the decrees of His grace and mercy. And so He did: but in executing those decrees He destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil; he unstung death, and conquered the grave, and put away sin, that accursed and abominable thing, by the sacrifice of Himself; and thus the day of vengeance was in His heart. But since the manifestation of the promised Messiah was gradual, there were a multitude of types and shadows in the Mosaic dispensation. Among other things which typified the Saviour there was a lamb every morning and another every evening; there was an altar of brass made, according to Divine direction, and there was a priest consecrated to stand between God and the people, and to officiate in that position, and there was a peculiar fire upon the altar, which consumed the sacrifices offered to God, and of which my text speaks so emphatically and beautifully, "The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar, it shall never go out."

Now having made these few observations concerning the progressive manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ, I shall look at my text in connection with His priesthood and mediation; for I doubt not that the figures before us were intended by the Holy Spirit to direct our minds to these great facts. Let us glance at the priestly work of Jesus a part of which He performed on earth, and a part of which He is performing for us in heaven, and at the everlasting love that appeared in it all.

The first thought that I desire to express is, *the source of the fire upon the altar*, and which was never to go out. It was from heaven, and I beg your attention to this point. Will you turn to the ninth chapter of this book, and the last two verses. Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out and blessed the people, and the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the people, and there came a fire out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering, which, when all the people saw they shouted, and fell on their

faces. And here in the text it is said, "The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar; it shall never go out." The priesthood of Christ, and the great Priest himself are of God. That glorious Sacrifice for sin was from the love of God, and every branch of our interesting and precious salvation proceeds from the heart of Deity, or the love of the eternal Jehovah. In the first place, understand that the perpetual fire upon the altar denotes the everlasting love of God. Upon this the Apostle dwells so sweetly,—"*He loved me, and gave Himself for me;*" and of this we shall sing in heaven,—"*Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*" The sin that was upon Him has been put away; the guilt imputed to Him has been expiated, and that which was hated and hateful has been removed, while the love that came in Him from heaven, and that inflamed His whole person when He lived here, and which constrained Him to obey, suffer, bleed, and die, is still burning, and will continue to burn for ever and ever; for many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it. Floods of temptation, poverty, privation, wrath, curse and guilt rolled over that sacred fire, and overwhelmed that holy flame; but none of them cooled His affection, or changed His heart. After the sacrifice had been offered, and the clear heavens of eternal satisfaction appeared over the altar, there was the living love which has been burning ever since, and which will continue to burn while we are here, and when we are in heaven for ever and ever. The fire came from another world, from heaven and from the heart of God. It was not earthly fire, and no creature motives influenced the everlasting God; it was nothing but His own love. Love brought the Redeemer down; love inflamed His soul, and His precious person, and all that He did as a Sufferer for sin; for as the Redeemer of His people He manifested and expressed the ever-enduring love of His heart. All God's love was and is in the priesthood and mediation of Jesus Christ. "Herein," says the Apostle John, "is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Herein is the manifestation of love. The love of God, which existed before the foundation of the world was in Christ before He came; He brought it down with Him from heaven into this world, and all His obedient life, all His sacrificial death, and all His triumphs are Divine, satisfactory, and glorious expressions of eternal love. How blessed it is when sinners, sensible that they are guilty and need a Saviour and a great one, can approach the altar whereon is the pure fire of eternal love, and rejoice that the Saviour died for them! You cannot forget the moment when your guilt was carried away, and your consciences were purged from dead works, and you were enabled at the altar to serve the living and the true God. This world and heaven appeared to you in a new light, and God appeared to you as a new Being: indeed "old things then passed away, and all things became new." And this altar fire, ever burning, has warmed your heart since that happy, that wondrous day. This fire of eternal love purges, purifies and inflames us before the throne of God, filling us with zeal and love, and praise for ever. Christ's

mediation is the manifestation and the medium of Divine love. I cannot refer you to a better Scripture than that which we read at the commencement of the service as an illustration of the character of this fire. "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God." If you ask me what I understand the eternal Spirit to mean, I say His eternal Godhead, but not to the exclusion of the Holy Spirit. Therefore we have the everlasting love of the Redeemer ever burning in His priesthood and His mediation, or as we have it in our text "ever burning upon the altar."

Again, my text serves to illustrate another portion of the Word—viz., that "our God is a consuming fire." It has been said by writers good and great, that God is a consuming fire out of Christ; but He is not our God out of Christ, and Paul says, "*Our* God is a consuming fire." How can this be applied to Him? Well, look at the altar on which the Redeemer lay as a sacrifice; that altar was His Deity, and the offering was His humanity in connection therewith. I beg attention to this. Upon His suffering person were the sins and guilt of the church, and therefore when the sacrifice was consumed, the guilt that was upon Him was destroyed; and thus our God there appeared as a consuming fire. What God hated, and was loathsome to Him, was imputed to the Saviour, and consumed. All that came in between God's people and heaven was transferred to Emmanuel, and consumed. All that tends to make death terrible, and eternity dreadful, was laid upon the blessed Redeemer; and He consumed it all; and when He said, "It is finished," and bowed His head, and gave up the ghost, then our God actually appeared as a consuming fire. All this was intended to fit and prepare immortal minds for heaven. Oh how blessed it is to be enabled by the Spirit to sit down and meditate upon these great realities, to feel our minds enveloped in and surrounded by them, and have our hearts inflamed with love to that Redeemer whose zeal ate him up—the source and spring, and fountain of this fire.

In the second place, notice the *seat of it*. "The fire shall ever be burning *upon the altar*." All that was upon the brazen altar in the tabernacle and in the temple was sacred to God. Nothing there was common. The lamb laid there God claimed; and whenever an Israelite approached the altar with an offering, whether it was fruit or money, or animals, God claimed the whole; for the altar was God's sacred table and property, and it belonged exclusively to the King of Israel, and all upon it belonged in a special manner to Him. Hence the fire upon it, which denoted the love of the Redeemer, was divine, and approved of God, and all the great results and effects of the Saviour's sacrifice God claims for Himself. The fire was on the altar, and not upon the ground; for it was not to be trodden under foot, or accounted a common thing. Upon the altar it was consecrated to the eternal God. The fire burned not upon the earth, but between the heavens and the earth, upon the altar or the high place, and it influenced both the heavens above and the earth beneath. It sent a fragrance unto the heaven of God, which will abide and perfume

that blessed world for ever; and it influenced the earth also. The perpetuity of the world, and the prolongation of time, are owing to the fact that Jesus died for sin. He is gathering together a people for Himself, and the people thus gathered have broken hearts, and contrite minds, and pierced consciences, and they are led to the altar that sanctifies the giver and the gift also. Oh, pleasing thought, we have the love of God in the priesthood of the Saviour; and not as it appears in connection with angels merely, not as it appears merely in heaven; but breaking out through the Mediator's sufferings. We see the eternal love of God on an altar, which signifies the existence of sin, and God's resolution to consume it and to annihilate all that came between the sinner and eternal happiness and glory. On the altar. Here then, brethren, we have a great purifying work, and a great preparation made by God for His beloved church. I do not know how some people fancy they are going to heaven, nor what the views of some people can be concerning the heavenly world, for—

“Those holy gates for ever bar
Pollution, sin, and shame;
None can obtain admittance there
But followers of the Lamb.”

If there be a spot on you, you cannot be admitted into heaven. Legal and moral spots, no fires, but those of the Saviour's mediation can purge away. I believe with all my heart what Toplady sings:

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

There is God's altar. There is the Victim, Christ, upon it. Eternal love is in this action, and the guilty conscience must come into contact with the Divine Sacrifice, in order to be purged, purified, and pardoned. That altar was God's table also; hence the apostle says, “We have an altar whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.” We have an altar, and upon it is a Victim, the Lamb of God, and though I would not go too far here, yet since the paschal lamb was roasted, and became not only the salvation of Israel, but the food of the nation also, so God has prepared an expiatory Sacrifice upon His table, which becomes the meat and drink of all His people. Hence, “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you.” The guilty come to this altar for pardon, the filthy for purification, and the hungry come for spiritual meat and drink, whilst they are in this waste howling wilderness.

Notice, in the third place—the *efficacy of the Saviour's priesthood and mediation*. It is compared to fire, because it purges away the sinner's guilt, the cause of death, and the cause of condemnation. What is the cause of condemnation? Some persons have said it is the sovereign will of God, and hence we have that most objectionable question, “Did God

make men to damn them?" Nothing can be more unscriptural, more ungodlike, or more hateful to the holy and heavenly character of the eternal God. I loathe the expression, and hope my friends never use it. Salvation is of grace : condemnation is of sin. "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself : but in Me is thine help." Well, if our guilt is not burned up; if sin is not consumed, and if transgressions are not annihilated by the priesthood of the blessed Redeemer, we shall sink beneath their weight into eternal misery and woe. But there is efficacy and power in the priesthood of the Saviour, and the mediation of the Son of God, who was made sin for us. Let us look at that for a moment. "God hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." If Christ was made sin when he died, sin was put away. If Christ was made a curse for us when he died, all penal death for ever ceased ; for here God appears as a consuming fire. And then again, the conscience is here purged, and the heart is purified. When the love of God is shed abroad in the soul, in connection with the sufferings of Jesus, how deeply sin is then loathed, how strongly it is hated ! Holiness is then loved, and purity of heart and motive is experienced by the believer. One cannot stand on Calvary, or sit beneath the shadow of the Cross, or believingly contemplate the sufferings of Incarnate God, without being purified in his conscience. If you will forgive me for adverting to myself, I have felt the deepest hatred of sin, and have deeply loathed myself on account of it, whilst viewing my interest in the sufferings of the Lord, and said :

" Yes, my Redeemer, they shall die,
My heart has so decreed ;
Nor will I spare the guilty things
That made my Saviour bleed."

The efficacy of the priesthood and mediation of the Saviour. Now as the altar is the seat of the fire, so the conscience is the seat of guilt, as it is also the seat of peace when guilt is removed. Peace in the conscience is an unspeakable mercy, for guilt there is immovable by the sinner. The sinner cannot stir it, and God, by mere abstract power, cannot remove it. Guilt, as a moral evil, pervades the conscience, and like a fire it burns, or like a sting torments the sinner as long as it remains; but the Saviour's priesthood and mediation purge and purify the mind, and bring the sinner with confidence and comfort into the presence of his God. Now you know when certain sacrifices under the law were presented, they were first slaughtered, and then flayed, and then opened, and then washed with pure water. Hence the apostle Paul, when encouraging us to draw near to the Throne, says, We enter "by a new and living way through the vail, that is to say, His flesh ; and having an High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." Oh there is a purifying efficacy and power in the doing and dying of the Saviour, and to this altar you and I bring our offerings. There is first a broken and a contrite heart, which we try

to lay upon it. In the second place there are our poor prayers, for no petition ever reaches God's ear but what is first laid upon the altar. All go to heaven through Christ, and all the blessings we receive from God come through the doing and dying of Jesus. Then there are our songs of praise, and these too we lay upon the altar. Our hearts, our prayers, and our songs are cold and unclean, till they are warmed and purified by this holy fire. Then there are the sins of our most holy things. I sin in the closet, in the pulpit, in the study, in the street, in the house, even when my thoughts seem concentrated upon God, and my feelings are somewhat spiritual. We are unclean beings and sinful creatures, polluted from head to foot, and all that emanates from us is contaminated, and bears with it the odour of sin, and God cannot and will not receive it until it has been purified by the altar fire of which I am speaking. Therefore the fire shall ever be burning, and shall never go out.

Then in the fourth place—*that fire was holy and sacred to God*. It was inimitable. Common or strange fire was not to be used. It would have been death for a priest to have fetched fire from the kitchen, or fire from the parlour, or from any other quarter. The fire on the altar came from heaven. The priests had to perpetuate it by adding fuel night and day, and hence it was inimitable and sacred to God. You remember that Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire, and you know what the consequences were ; for God is a jealous God : and I apprehend that there is much strange fire abroad in the day in which we live. One good brother has flaming zeal, which he wants us to believe he caught at the altar, although much of it is carnal and false. Another person introduces something exceedingly sensational and wonderful into his sermons, which is strange fire, and not having been fetched from the altar, the warmth, if warmth there be, is not holy and spiritual. The feelings may be only excited, the surface of the mind only may be wrought upon, and multitudes may be pleased and carried away by what is only of the flesh. There is only one kind of fire that is sacred and sanctifying, that is the fire of which I am speaking, and of which my text contains a type,—the fire that is continually upon the altar never going out. May the Lord be pleased, therefore, to keep us near to Himself, warming our hearts by the ministry of the Spirit at this holy and heavenly altar.

I notice in the next place *its perpetuity*. It shall never go out—for the love of God is everlasting, and Jesus will never leave his people nor forsake them—God will never give up housekeeping with his church on earth. I would not carnalise the subject, but in some great houses the fires are not allowed to go out, in consequence of the requirements of the establishment. The requirements of God's church upon the earth are very numerous and great, and God will keep house with them until the end of time. They will always want food, always want a sacrifice, always want a priest, always want an altar ; and therefore the fire on the altar shall never go out. Why, the love of Jesus Christ is essentially and intrinsically immortal and eternal. His love is not eternal by His will, or by His purpose, but it is, like Himself, essentially everlasting. Besides, my friends, man will always be a sinner, and the saint of God on earth

will always be defiled ; and however high our joys may rise, we shall always need the blood, the Sacrifice, and the Lamb of God. But there is another thought here. It was to be kept burning night and day. When all the nation of Israel were asleep, when few or no persons were at the altar, then the fire was to be kept burning ; and the love of Jesus is the same, whether we enjoy it or not, whether we make believing use of it or not, and we can never come to our Priest at an unseasonable moment. When all the world is asleep, if we want the Lord, and cannot do without Him, and are helped into His presence, we find Him on His throne, and that His love is the same. In the morning, in the evening, at mid-day and at mid-night, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

Lastly, *this fire is the origin of all other spiritual fires*. What do you think of the Gospel ? The Word of God is a fire, and the Gospel derives its light and heat and power from Christ. And what do you think of the graces of the Spirit, and of the Spirit's work generally ? "If I depart, I will send Him unto you." And the Holy Ghost is compared to a fire. What do you think of the love of God shed abroad in your hearts ? It always comes from the altar, or through the wounds and sufferings of the crucified Son of God ; and that minister will never be permanently, spiritually deeply blessed to his congregation who does not fetch his materials, and his personal and official all, from this wonderful fire. May the Lord touch our lips with burning coals from this altar, and shed abroad His love in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given to us, for Christ's sake. Amen.

THE NEXT SERMON WILL BE READY ON JAN. 15TH, 1882.

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

PRICE ONE PENNY.

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

May be had also of ELLIOT STOCK, 62, Paternoster Row, London.

HEAVENLY WISDOM PROCLAIMED AND RECEIVED.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S DAY MORNING, DECEMBER 11th, 1881.

"Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect : yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought."—1 Cor. ii. 6.

THE circumstances connected with the formation of the church of God in Corinth are recorded by Luke in the eighteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. It will be remembered by most of my hearers that the Apostle Paul went to the city of Athens, and that his spirit was deeply stirred by the idolatry which he witnessed there. "Therefore He disputed in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him," but the word spoken was not very generally received or blessed. The eternal God is an absolute Sovereign, and "he does according to His will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth;" and as the Apostle found it was not the will of God that he should remain at Athens, since He did not bless the gospel in that place, he left, and went to Corinth. We are informed that he preached in that city the glorious gospel of the blessed God, and that his preaching occasioned a considerable measure of confusion. So deeply did the Apostle feel in connection with the effects of his ministry in Corinth that he contemplated leaving the place, apprehending he was in danger. His doubts and fears rose so high that he said, "I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling." The Apostle having formed the resolution to leave Corinth, "the Lord spake to him in the night by a vision: "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace; for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee; for I have much people in this city." Encouraged by this word of God, the good Apostle remained in Corinth eighteen months, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and he tells us in the chapter out of which I have taken my text, that he "determined not to know anything among them, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified;" and he added, "I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling." No doubt the Apostle realised the fact that that he was spiritually weak, and doubtless sometimes trembled on account of the body of sin under which he groaned; but when he says, I was with you in weakness and in fear, he refers, I apprehend, to that particular period when he contemplated leaving the city and going elsewhere to preach the Word. He was, however, encouraged by his God, and by the Divine assurance that there were many vessels of mercy to be called by grace there. Who would have thought that God had much people in a place so idolatrous, so degraded, and so unclean as Corinth! True, there were considerable learning, philosophy, and talent there; nevertheless their idolatry was gross, and their licentiousness abominable: yet the Lord had much people there,

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who were by the foolishness of preaching to be called by grace, and to be separated from their fellow men and women. Their hearts were to be broken by the power of saving truth, and they were to be brought as weeping penitents into the presence of the God of heaven and earth. Paul continued to preach; the Holy Ghost continued to bless the Word; the people that were secretly beloved by God were gradually called, and a gospel church was formed, which, of course, the Apostle regarded with very peculiar feelings; for he says elsewhere, "Though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you, through the Gospel." Well, he was determined, whilst with them, notwithstanding that many Jews were there, and many philosophers heard him, not to know anything among them save Christ, and Him crucified. Paul preached the glorious, the complex person of the Saviour, the dear Son of God, with the feeling that he himself was a debtor to the Jew, and also to the Greek, saying, "Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel!" He never forgot his former Pharisaism, nor the condition he was in when grace found him, and from which it released him. The name of Jesus, which he had previously hated, so bitterly, was now most sweet and precious to his soul, and that dear Saviour, who had done so much for him, and done it so well, was the prevailing theme of his ministry. If learned persons went to hear him, he preached Christ to them; if an illiterate congregation surrounded him, he preached Christ to them. If masters or servants heard him, he had only one theme: "I am determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." And he proceeds, "My speech and my preaching were not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power." The Apostle was himself a learned person, and a wide and well read man. Paul could have preached eloquently, no doubt; but he says, "I did not use enticing words that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect; yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, which come to nought."

In making a few remarks this morning on this portion of the Word, I will try in the first place to call your attention to *the nature of the gospel*; and secondly, to the *character of its receivers*. In the first place, we have *the nature of the gospel* indicated in our text, "We speak *wisdom*." The Gospel is here spoken of as being wisdom; and a little lower down it is said, "We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory." Wisdom "yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, which come to nought." When Paul says, "Not the wisdom of this world," he means, not political wisdom; for it formed no part of his duty, no part of his official work to enter into politics. He means in the second place, not heathen nor human philosophy; for he was not sent by his great Master to explain or preach philosophical systems. Not the wisdom of this world nor of the princes of this world that came to nought." There is a better world than this, and there is a worse one also. From that world which is infinitely better than this, we have wisdom, the wisdom of God, a glorious revelation, and good news from the throne of its great King, and

this was what Paul preached. Now it is said that wisdom consists in proposing to oneself the very best end or object, and in appointing the best means for its attainment. God proposed, so to speak, a great object to himself before the foundation of the world, which was the eternal, the honourable, the heavenly, the glorious salvation of countless millions, in connection with his own eternal honour and glory. That was the great end which our God proposed. And He displayed His wisdom further in the appointment of all the necessary means for the accomplishment of His purpose. This great object, together with the means appointed are revealed in the gospel of His grace, which is therefore said to be the wisdom of God—the wisdom once hidden, but now revealed.

Let us notice in the first place, that the gospel is designated wisdom because it is *a revelation and display of Christ, who is at once the wisdom of God and the power of God*. I would here direct your attention to the complexity of His Person, which is the masterpiece of God's works; for the wisdom of God breaks forth and shines most gloriously and illustriously in the constitution of the complex person of His beloved Son. Who but a God, infinite in wisdom, and boundless in resources, could have thought of bringing two infinitely dissimilar natures together, and uniting them in one glorious person? In the person of Christ there are all the majesty of Deity, all the perfections of Jehovah, and all the eternal fulness of the Godhead, God has not lowered, degraded, nor lessened Himself by becoming man; and therefore the Child born, and the Son given, is the mighty God, the everlasting Father; whilst in that same person there is human nature: for Christ is man as well as God—a man like ourselves, with the exception of sin. He is bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, having a human mind with all its powers, a human soul, and all its properties; and thus our nature has been taken into inseparable connection with the infinite God; and therefore this complex person is said to be Christ, the wisdom of God. In this complex Redeemer we see how men are united to the eternal God. Remove Christ from between God and the creature, and there is nothing whatever in existence that we have ever heard of that can unite the mighty God with sinful men. The law cannot connect Jehovah with the sinner, at least not favourably so, and Providence cannot savingly connect fallen man with Him. In the complex Emmanuel, however, the gulf is filled up, and the distant are made nigh. There is that in the person of Christ which is in contact with the guilty sinner, and holds him fast, while at the same time the Mediator brings God down to man. We have God in the Man, and guilty men in Christ Jesus are reconciled to God, and God is reconciled to them; and hence the gospel is wisdom, even the wisdom of God in a mystery that was hidden for ages and generations from the sons of men. Christ is the great link which connects Jehovah with His church—not like one of iron, cold and insensible; but a living, sensible, tender, omnipotent link that unites God and man together for ever. “I am determined,” said he, “to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.” In the complex person of the Redeemer we have what I may call a universal Representative. I do not mean that He represents every creature I mean that He represents every interest connected with eternal salvation. He is the perfect representative of God, for He exhibits the whole of Him

to us. What we know of God is through Him, for He is the image of the invisible God, and we shall see God in Him: for "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." They shall see Him for ever; but they shall see Him in the Lord Jesus Christ, who represents all the perfections of God. He represents the whole of man. He represents the moral, government, and the moral law of God. He represents His whole church, and all the grace required to save them, and all the glory into which they shall enter, and which they shall possess for ever. This wondrous person, the blessed Christ of God, contains all; for "it pleased the Father that in Him all fulness should dwell!" Oh how vast are the mysteries of our salvation, how profoundly deep are Jehovah's secrets in connection with eternal life! If they were scattered abroad, and were not united in one being, or one centre, we should not have half the knowledge that we now possess: but all are sweetly simplified by God for us. The mysteries that we could not have understood had they not been in Christ, God's dear Son, are savingly known by the person that embraces that great name; and he that believes in Him is interested in God, and the whole of His salvation. "We speak wisdom," said the Apostle, "among them that are perfect."

Not only the personal wisdom, but the *official wisdom of God*. It is important to dwell upon the glories of Immanuel's person, and it is equally important, I apprehend, to dwell upon the glories of His office. I need not say anything here about His prophetic office, character and work. Just look at His priesthood for a minute or two, and the wisdom of God in connection therewith. Christ appears officially as a Saviour and Redeemer, and here He stands alone; for, "of the people there were none with Him;" and no angel was with Him in His saving merit. Alone He stood; alone He suffered; alone He bore the guilt of millions; alone He put it away; and alone He saved them with an honourable salvation. His blood was shed, and the church was rescued. Justice sheathed her sword; the fountain for uncleanness was opened, and the blood that redeemed us is applied to our consciences and washes us clean, and makes us pure and white. Thus we have the official wisdom of God in the glorious gospel of His grace. He hath obtained eternal redemption for us. Adverting to myself, I shall never forget the wondrous hour when my soul first clearly saw, as I think I did, how God saved sinners—just as I shall never forget the hour when I first saw and felt that the Son of God had redeemed and saved me. What glories did I then see in God, and what glories did I then discover in His redemption! When I laid the hand of my faith on the head of the dear Saviour, and was enabled to say, "He loved me, and gave Himself for me!" all other glorious objects faded from my view, for this eclipsed them all. Oh how sweet it is when Christ is all in all the faculties of a poor sinner's soul!

We speak *doctrinal wisdom*. Some professors despise *some* of the doctrines of the Bible; but they all display, set forth, and expound the wisdom of the eternal God. Take, for instance, the doctrine of imputed righteousness, for I cannot go into many this morning; therefore take one or two—the doctrine of imputed righteousness. Here is our Lord keeping and obeying the law, and giving such a glory to it, as Adam never could have given had he lived in innocency until now. Our blessed

Redeemer came under the law, and went from one precept to another, from the beginning to the end, and gave eternal glory and honour to it. Having reached the end of the precept, He offered His obedient life and His sacrificial death to His heavenly Father, and the Father accepted it, saying, "I am well pleased with Thee, for Thy righteousness' sake; for thou hast magnified the law, and made it honourable." That obedience is cast upon the guilty sinner, and made His own. "He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness." It is long enough to reach from head to foot, and large enough to surround his guilty soul. Or, if it be compared to a bed, it is long enough for the tallest sinner to rest upon, and its covering is wide enough to wrap him in for ever. Take your own works your own graces, your own personal religion, or the grace that is in you, and hide in them. They are not sufficient to cover you in the sight of God, so as to conceal your sin and guilt. Under this mighty name you must creep; behind this great Person you must be found; or lying and resting on this blessed bed, and covered with the glorious obedience of the Saviour, you are now safe, will be safe when you die, and eternal glory will follow death as the Lord declares.

The wisdom of God in the doctrines of divine grace, is again manifest in union to Christ. How wise an act was that on the part of God to unite His people to His Son before the foundation of the world! What for? Well, He loved them, and intended to bless them with all spiritual blessings for ever; and therefore He united them to the great Repository of eternal life. He united His people to the root of all blessings in order that they like branches might derive from Him spiritual and everlasting life; for union to Jesus secures eternal salvation. Look at the intercession of our Lord. On the cross He put away sin, and in heaven He reigns, and before God He pleads the virtues of His blood, "Father, I will that all whom thou hast given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory." He cannot be satisfied in heaven without you my dear friends, for His heart is set upon you, and He cannot be perfect unless you are in the place He has prepared for you. No husband ever loved his wife as Christ loves His people; for the love of a husband on earth is that of a finite being, while that of the Redeemer in heaven, like Himself, is infinite. Thus there is no confusion or disorder in our salvation. All is a marvellous representation and demonstration of the wisdom and the power of God, in Christ.

In the next place *the Gospel implies Divine, infallible, infinite wisdom.* God has so manifested His wisdom in the gospel, that every word of it must be fulfilled, or that wisdom will be eclipsed and obscured. For instance, how positive are all God's declarations here! I will do this and the other, and they shall be saved and blessed. This implies a well formed scheme, and a deeply laid plan, and having appointed all the means for executing it, God comes forth in the Word, and says thousands of years before the act is performed, I will do it. Why this leads us back into the councils of eternity, to contemplate the scheme of eternal wisdom, and the arrangements our God had made for Himself and for you. In the next place, look at the promises—our God has bound Himself by His own word, and placed Himself under peculiar obligation. I trust I am not wrong in using the word obligation in relation to the great God; He

has created bonds for Himself, and placed Himself beneath them; and every promise made to you is unconditional, and divinely absolute. By way of making that which was sure still more sure if possible, He has been pleased to say, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My word shall not pass away." Look at the promises. They are great, as to their magnitude and as to their number, and they require more than all God's angels possess to fulfil them, and more than all creatures hold to make them good. Ask yourselves the question, How can they be verified and fulfilled? There is enough in God to fulfil them all, and He has bound Himself to do it. The gospel implies wisdom in its great Author. I sometimes unwisely make a promise, and am obliged and forced to break it, because it was ignorantly and unwisely made. Every promise of God, however, is not only gracious and loving, it was wisely formed, wisely filled, wisely shaped, and wisely given. Expect the heavens to fall rather than to see the Word of God broken, for that can never take place.

Then, again, the gospel *expresses*, as well as *implies*, wisdom. Here I will just mention two or three points. Is it gracious to pardon sin? Yes. Is it right to punish it? It is. Has God done both? Yes. He has punished and pardoned too. By punishing He has satisfied His truth. "The day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt die." By pardoning He has satisfied His mercy. Sin was punished on the Saviour, and is forgiven to the sinner, and hence we are pardoned for His sake. Death becomes the spring of life; and surely it was wisdom that made an arrangement to bring eternal life out of death. He died, that we might live. All our life as believers flows through the deeds and death of our beloved Lord. The devil intended that death should be the way to hell, and that it should convey all thither. Behold the wisdom of God. Jesus dies and dies really. He dies a violent, painful, and penal death, and out of that comes eternal life and glory to men. We speak the wisdom of God. Take the two attributes or diverse glories, if I may so speak, mercy and justice. Who can unite the two? If crime has been committed, who can satisfy both? Her Majesty exercises as it is termed, her royal clemency, and pardons a prisoner—that is mercy; but if justice had taken its due and proper course, he would not have been released. The Queen can have mercy if she pleases, and forgive a criminal; but then justice suffers. If she withholds mercy, and justice takes its due course then where is mercy? Law cannot justify a criminal. It is God that justifieth; He removes sin, and establishes the sinner's character, and thus satisfies His mercy and glorifies His justice. In Christ mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

In the last place, the gospel is called wisdom, because *it teaches wisdom*. I love those words in the thirty-fifth chapter of Isaiah, wherein the way of life and salvation is described. "A highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it: the wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein." The wayfaring man is not supposed to be a studious or a learned man, but though he be a fool, he shall not err therein, for he is made wise unto salvation. He that knows the way of life is in that way, or else he would not know it; and I am not here speaking of a mere theoretical knowledge.

Oh, you say, I fear I am not in the way of life. You know the way of salvation, and you go to God in prayer. Yes, yet I fear I have never done so acceptably. But you go and go, and go again, in the right way, pleading the right name, leaning upon the precious blood of Jesus, and acknowledging the sovereignty of Jehovah. My friend, you are in the way, notwithstanding your doubts and fears, and are as safe therein as our beloved friends who have reached their eternal rest and home. The gospel, it is said, makes wise unto salvation, and to nothing else. Now-a-days people want something in addition to the Gospel; but this holy book of heaven was intended to teach us spiritual things only. Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things—not political, philosophical, commercial or scientific things, and yet ye know all; but all the things the believer knows for himself are spiritual. He spiritually knows all things essential to salvation, and as much of them as is necessary to eternal life. Thus he knows all things. This unction from the Holy One, which falls from Christ, teaches us more in five minutes than we can learn in five months by reading the best human authors that were ever presented to the world. The gospel makes wise unto salvation. Let me sum up the whole in one or two words. The mysteries of divine wisdom are simplified thus. Now here is the wisdom of God, “But of him are ye in Christ.”—What is the result? “Who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; that according, as it is written, He that glorieth let him glory in the Lord.” We speak wisdom.

Just one word, secondly, as I have a few minutes left, on *the appreciative receivers of this Gospel*. We speak wisdom among *them that are perfect*. Perfection is threefold—relative, comparative, and absolute. There is a perfection which is relative. Ye are complete in Him; perfect in Jesus Christ, so that as to your union to Christ, and viewing Him as your Representative and your Head, you are now wholly justified and righteous in Him in the sight of God. Your personal godliness is not perfected, for the Holy Ghost’s work is not finished; but being interested in the finished work of Jesus Christ, God sees you in His Son all fair and without spot. Secondly, perfection is comparative. Thirdly, it is personal and absolute. When we have reached heaven, and are seated on our thrones of undeserved honour, then we shall be personally perfect for ever and ever. Which of the three is meant? The second—comparative perfection. We speak wisdom among them which are comparatively perfect. Well, now this comparative perfection is, or should be, viewed in two connections. God’s called people are *perfect as compared with others*. The whole world lieth in wickedness, in the arms of the wicked one. We are not of the world, but of God. There is no holiness in the world, but there is some in the saints. There is no spiritual life in the world, but there is in believers; and we speak wisdom among them that are perfect. Now these persons are very few. I am not going to number the people; yet I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not. Fear not *little* flock, it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Do you think the large numbers that make a profession of religion in the present day are all living souls? Well, I will leave them where they are. To their own Master they stand or fall. I am of opinion, and indeed I feel convinced, that they that are

comparatively perfect are few in number, compared with the mass, compared with the multitude. We cannot determine the excellencies of anything by the numbers that receive it and appreciate it, or otherwise. It frequently happens that the minority are right, and I think in relation to the things of God it is almost invariably so. We speak wisdom among them that are perfect, and they are the persons who dare not for a moment say that the preaching of Christ is foolishness, and who do not stumble at the cross of the Redeemer. Such persons are in the kingdom of Christ, and are in sympathy with God, with Christ, and with the Gospel. Indeed such persons are believers; the Gospel suits them as nothing else in the universe suits them. They have broken hearts, and here is the remedy. They are needy sinners; in the Gospel they see what they need, and what they want. Here is a pardoning God, and here is the guilty needy sinner, with his eyes full, and streams of godly sorrow flowing in his heart. He reads, prays over what he reads, and says, "Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation." Bring those promises to me, and apply that balmy blood to my soul. They are the men and the women that receive the Gospel as the wisdom of God. We preach the wisdom of God.

Secondly, I want to go a step further. They are *comparatively perfect in themselves*, and not only with respect to others. Are you going to preach perfection in the flesh? Comparative perfection I will, but not absolute perfection; for, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us," says the Apostle John. The idea of sinless perfection in the flesh is from beneath, and not from above. What do you mean by comparative perfection in oneself? If you are a spiritual person, of course you have been born again, and the new birth was in itself a perfect act, completed at once, and you will never be more thoroughly regenerated than you are now. You will be happier, and by-and-bye you will be higher and absolutely perfect; but you are now a child, however young or weak you may be. You are now a son, a new-born child of God, and heir of heaven. Regeneration is a perfect act, completed at once. When the infant is born, supposing it to be naturally perfect, it possesses all its members and parts. Its eyes and arms and feet are perfect, though small and undeveloped, and growth and time are necessary. The child is a perfect being, but its perfection is comparative, and not that of a full-grown person, but of a natural being. We speak wisdom among them that are born again. The children of God have their senses exercised to discern between good and evil. Have we this germ of glory in our hearts? If so, God is our Father and we are His children, and members one of another, and are capable of appreciating the glorious gospel of God, which is wisdom. Unto the perfect, the preaching of Christ is the power and the wisdom of God. God grant His blessing, for Christ's sake. Amen.

THE NEXT SERMON WILL BE READY ON FEB. 15TH, 1882.

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

PRICE ONE PENNY.

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

May be had also of ELLIOT STOCK, 62, Paternoster Row, London.

ALL THINGS NEW.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S DAY MORNING, JANUARY 1st, 1882.

*"And He that sat upon the throne said, 'Behold I make all things new.'—*Rev. xxi. 5.*"*

THE disciples were comparatively ignorant of the spirituality of Christ's kingdom before the day of Pentecost. This perhaps is not very surprising, because in the covenant of grace there are certain official departments occupied by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The eternal love of the Father, displayed in the gift of His Son, the precious blood of Jesus atoning for sin, and the unction and sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit for quickening sinners, are the essentials of salvation. It is the official work of the Holy Ghost to spiritualise the disciples of Jesus, and that wonderful work did not fully take place until the day of Pentecost. It is evident that they were carnal in their views; for on one occasion, before their Master went to heaven, they said, "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? Their Lord had been on the cross and in the grave, and He was risen from the dead. They certainly regarded Him after His resurrection with very peculiar feelings, and He manifested a peculiar spirit towards them after that event, and yet they had carnal conceptions of His person and His office, especially of His kingly character and of His kingdom. They expected that He would raise a power against the Roman empire, and restore liberty, peace and glory to the children of Israel as the national church and people of God; hence, "Wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And He said, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in His own power." It is not for us to know the times or the seasons which are future. Our Lord has given us many great and precious promises concerning the future; and therefore, although we do not know all that will and must take place, we do know many things that will happen, because we have God's promises in relation to them. Not a few persons have attempted to expound fully the Book of the Revelation, and perhaps most of you have read expositions of it. I have observed that young persons are very deeply interested in this wonderful book, and especially young ministers of the Gospel. Many years ago I was in the habit of taking texts out of it, and really fancied that I understood the meaning of them. He that is wise will not become a prophet, and judicious persons will not attempt to explain the unfulfilled prophecies of the Revelation. Time is the great expositor of the will of God, and what we know not now as to the meaning of what we read we

VOL. III. No. 22.—FEBRUARY 15, 1882.

shall know hereafter. I am not therefore going into the mysterious and dark future this morning, although I have read this very interesting portion of the Word.

It is an interesting coincidence, and perhaps it is something more than a coincidence, that in the beginning of the Bible we have a description of the old creation, whilst at the end of it we have a representation of the new. We are told by Moses in the first of Genesis how the old heavens and the old earth were created, and here it is said in the first verse, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, The tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them and be their God." Now I shall not attempt, as I said before, to go into the deep and mysterious future which lies open before our Lord, but is concealed from all creatures. I am willing to stand and watch His hand and wait; for the vision is for an appointed time, and at the end it will come, and not tarry. Christ may come down and live a thousand years on this earth with His people, for aught I know. I am not dogmatical when I speak on those points. A good old minister once said, "If He should come and live here with us a thousand years, we shall be glad to see Him"; but whether He thus come, or not, there is this blessed declaration of Divine truth, "We shall be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we be for ever with the Lord." "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." It is certain that this refers to the future, because whilst our God is wiping away tears to-day, and has always been wiping them away, this promise has not yet been thoroughly and perfectly fulfilled; for He has not yet wiped away all tears from the eyes of His people; but the time will come when all tears shall be wiped away. We might have thought that God's dear people would never have had cause to weep, that they would have been free from pain and sorrow, that the sons and daughters of the Lord God would have gone to heaven in a smooth path, singing all their days.* Dear friends, the children of God shed more tears than other people. Others shed tears as creatures; the people of God shed tears as creatures and as Christians. Well, God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and elsewhere it is said, "from off all faces"—the minister's face, the deacon's face, the father's face and the widow's face—from off *all* faces. God has a soft and tender hand, and if He wipes away all tears, He must see them; and if He sees and notices them, His condescension, like Himself, must be deep and infinite. There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying. And He that sat upon the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new."

Now in making a few remarks this morning on this portion, I shall gather up a few points that appear upon the surface, mention them as I proceed, and endeavour to make some few observations upon each point.

It may be interesting and proper, in the first place, to take notice of the *Speaker Himself*. And He that sat upon the throne said, "Behold, I

make all things new." Critical observations are not required, and perhaps they would not be profitable; and therefore I shall not stop long to enquire whether the person here speaking was the Father or the Son. Permit me just to refer to the next verse for a moment. "And He said unto me," Who? "He that sat upon the throne said, Write, for these words are true and faithful. And He said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega. Now this name is not assumed by the Father, and it is never given to the Holy Spirit; it is one of the names of the Son of God. And therefore let it be understood at once that the Speaker is the Lord Jesus Christ. He it is that says, "Behold, I make all things new." He appears here as the Mediator, as the Lamb of God, glorified in the midst of the throne, and surrounded by His redeemed Church, for there is not an empty space before Him or round about His seat. He is now gathering together the purchase of His blood, the people of His Father's choice, the beloved of His heart, and around Him are the Church triumphant and the Church militant. There are degrees of nearness to the Mediator's throne, and blessed indeed is it to get near to Him here by faith. But there are degrees of local nearness, if I may use the word, to the throne of the Lamb of God. There are millions of happy spirits in heaven who are near to the throne. They see God in the face of Jesus, and will see Him there for ever. All the light of Deity falls upon them, all the personal and acquired glories of the Redeemer surround them, for the Church triumphant have entered into the Mediator's glory. Before they reach it they behold it, and they enter into it when they enter into heaven. Oh, the glory that surrounds the person of the Saviour is marvellous, and its mighty refulgence is wonderful, and it will be possessed for ever by the purchase of His blood, the beloved of His heart. When the immortal spirit has left the tabernacle and this world, and has passed into that eternal glory, it there and then constitutes a part of that branch of the Church which is called triumphant. But outside the glory of heaven is the Church militant, to which you and I at present belong. The Church militant are outside, but the Church triumphant are in it. Now look for a minute or two at this point. Some of God's dear people are coming up out of great tribulation, and the Lamb on the throne is their Saviour. He has by an invisible power a hold upon every one of them, by which they are sustained in tribulation, brought up out of it, finally washed and made white and clean, and conducted into the promised glory. Well, numbers are coming up out of this world, others are entering into it, and thousands are passing over the threshold of glory into eternal rest. How wonderful a work is going on before and around the throne, while He that sits there and directs all these operations says to those that are in heaven and those who are going thither, I make all things new. Our Lord has Divine authority, and an acquired power to make all things new. He has a right to do what He is doing, a right which He has earned, and well deserves. No other being deserves or can exercise this authority and mighty power. One being in the centre of heaven, in the centre of the universe, looking like a Lamb that has been slain, infinitely innocent, harmless, pure, and amiable, says, All are mine, and all things connected with my spiritual

interest I will make new; and He will make good His word and fulfil His promise, and accomplish His great design. The greatness of the Speaker, and the glory of His character are a sufficient guarantee for the future completeness and perfection of His work.

“ Give Him, my soul, thy cause to plead,
Nor doubt the Father's grace.”

When He turns the whole of His mediatorial work out of His hands, and proclaims that it is done and completed, it will be worthy of Himself, and worthy of the acceptance of His Father and our Father, and His God and our God.

Now it is absolutely necessary that Jesus, the speaker, should make all things new; for He cannot fulfil His Father's purpose, nor the hopes and expectations of His people, nor verify the statements made here without making all things new. The present state of things cannot be everlasting; in the nature of things it is terminable and will come to an end. Christ and the church will not always be divided and separated as they are now. The people of God will not always live here, in a state of imperfection and weeping, sickness and sorrow. All is to close in everlasting serenity, and terminate in eternal purity and peace: but before that happy and glorious period comes all things must be made new. And our dear Lord is progressing with His work—nothing can hinder, it and nothing can hurry Him. He uses His own instruments, and takes His own time. His arm is omnipotent, and He is infinitely wise and skilful in all the operations of His power; and at the appointed moment, and I know not whether it will take place suddenly or otherwise, events will occur and fall together in a mysterious and wonderful manner, indicating that a great presiding mind is influencing them all. Yes, events will so arise and become connected with one another, that page after page of the Bible will receive their fulfilment, and verse after verse of this Revelation will be verified, and the new heavens and new earth will appear. The work is progressing, Christ is bound to fulfil His engagements, and His Church is looking for a state of things superior to the present, and hence the promise, “ Behold, I make all things new.” The Speaker that has bought His people, that deserves His throne, that has earned His crown, that is worthy of His sceptre, and is conscious of His own greatness and worthiness, and that He deserves the praises of all the millions living before Him, says, “ I make all things new.”

In the second place, let us look at *the operation mentioned*; “ Behold, I make all things new.” Now, since the fulfilment of this promise lies in the future, I cannot go minutely into anything like an exposition. I tell you, however, what we may gather from it. We have here “ a new heaven and a new earth; the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea. And I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven.” It was a new state of things, entirely different from the old. Shall I mention two or three points? What do you think of the garden of Eden, the paradise, that Adam and Eve occupied before they fell? That was closed in consequence of the fall,

and will never be reopened. But we have a new Eden, a new paradise, a new garden of pleasures and delights in the blessed and finished work of the Son of God, and especially in heaven. And what do you think of the land of Canaan, the promised rest, occupied by a special people, the church, the Israel of God, who were directed by a multitude of types and ceremonies? That state of things is for ever past and gone; and now we have not the old Jerusalem, but the New Jerusalem which is from above, which is the mother of us all, and which John saw descend from God out of heaven. And what do you think of the temple, which was material and destructible, and was lighted up artificially? The divine Shekinah was in the first, but I believe it was not in the second temple. Well, that temple, and Jerusalem also, have been destroyed, and its citizens are in bondage. But we now have a new Eden, a new land of rest, made by Christ, a new Jerusalem, which is the bride, the Lamb's wife, and a new state of things altogether, for it is spiritual, mediatorial, gracious, heavenly and everlasting. The garden of Eden was possessed conditionally. It was forfeitable. Adam was in it for a time, and then was driven out; for his continuance in that state depended upon himself. All things so far have been made new for us by Jesus Christ; for here is a better state than that which was lost, and a higher and nobler kingdom than that which fell when Adam became a transgressor.

“He fixed my standing more secure
Than 'twas before I fell.”

We do not wish to return to paradise, and have never prayed that God would restore us to that state which existed in the first Adam. The second Adam is better, the new Land of Promise is better; and all is absolute, unconditional, unforfeitable, and eternal. “Behold I make all things new.” Our Lord, therefore, has partly fulfilled this promise; so say no more about paradise, Canaan, the temple and Jerusalem. Instead of the rags of your self-righteousness and your moral nakedness, think of the new righteousness you wear, which constitutes you new creatures: “for if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” The work is progressive. He has already given you a new heart and new laws. “To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which none knoweth saving he that receiveth it.” You have a new life, a new name, a white stone, a divine token peculiar to each saint, a new robe of righteousness and new garments of salvation, made by Him who says in the text, “Behold, I make all things new.” Now He has given us a new year; His mercies are new every morning, and His faithfulness is very great. But let us particularise a little.

How is He doing all this? In the first place this is done by His mediation. Sin is new, or rather there is something new in connection with it in the experience of persons convinced of it, and Jesus does this. When you were convinced of sin, it appeared to you as it never had appeared before, and your feelings in relation to it were altogether new,

inducing you to turn against it with deep abhorrence and godly loathing, and you felt that if it were not removed you must sink and be lost for ever. The Bible became a new book, and God became a new character in your estimation and experience. The world was seen in a new light, and your feelings in connection with these objects were altogether new. I repeat the Scripture for illustration's sake, If any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away, and, behold, all things are become new. Secondly, by His sufferings and death He has made all things new. Since our Lord was afflicted and suffered, affliction in relation to His people is not what it would and must have been had He not died for sin. The curse was in affliction, and Christ—and I trust I have a solemn feeling—Christ filtered all your afflictions and took the curse away, and therefore they are new; they are not curses, but bitter blessings, and not penal evils. The pain is not such as is felt in hell, or if occasionally it be so in some measure, the hand that produces it is not the power that inflicts punishment upon the lost. Desertion now is something new, for the very character of it is changed. My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? And since the Father forsook His Son in a penal way, the hidings of His face from us will always be corrective, and never penal. He cannot now eternally conceal Himself from you. Death also is new. We had never had the word “departure” for death, if Jesus had not died. Now, however, we have the words “departure,” “fallen asleep,” and “resting in Jesus.” All this is new; it belongs to a new kingdom, a new covenant and state of things, which Christ has brought into existence. Even the grave is new. It was a prison, and it is not a palace now; but surely there is something between a prison and a palace. It is neither the one nor the other, but a chamber, a resting-place, where the bodies of God's dear people shall rest until the whole of this promise be fulfilled by Christ. He makes all things new, by His union to us. If we are vitally one with Jesus Christ we are not what we once were: and we speak not in a pharisaic spirit here. We are not like our fellow-creatures about us. We walk to the house of God, and pass by drunkards, and swearers, and blasphemers, and persons whom it would be hell for us to live with, were we obliged to do so. We speak not boastfully, but to the honour and praise of undeserved grace and mercy. We differ from others, and to what is the difference attributable but the fact that it is—

“I in them, and Thou in Me,”
For thus the union stands.

He makes new creatures by uniting them to Himself. By His presence and blessing He makes all things new. Do you know what that means? I told you I would not go into the far distant future, because I did not quite know the meaning of it. The two disciples on the way to Emmaus experienced the influence of His presence. What communications are these which ye have one with another, as ye walk and are sad? Bless His name, He takes notice of our sadness, and it is that that draws Him towards us. After some conversation, the village was reached, the meal was prepared, the bread was blessed and broken, and the Saviour vanished; and then they began to talk about the new scene that had

been enacted and the new feelings that had been produced. Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked with us by the way, and opened to us the Scriptures? When the Lord opens the Scriptures to us everything is new, and when He opens our understandings it is by a new light from Himself. He opens a new world or heaven itself before us.

“ There’s my hope and portion fair,
My treasure and my heart are there,
And my abiding home.
For me my elder brethren stay,
And angels beckon me away,
And Jesus bids me come.”

So far, then, we see how He makes all things new. He will do it by His power and glory when He comes, again the second time, without sin, unto salvation. We shall perhaps have a word to say on that this evening. Whether the visible heavens will pass away to return no more, whether this world will be so burned up as that it will be destroyed and annihilated, are questions which I shall not attempt to answer, though there are wonderful scriptures in connection with them, and the text does not require us to speculate in these matters. It refers, I believe, to the church of God, the new Jerusalem, the Lamb’s wife. It comprehends the new state He has brought into existence for her, the new character He has given her, the new dress, the new provision, the new laws, the new protection, the new guardianship He has provided for her, and finally that heaven of glory and perfection which He has prepared for her, and will lead her into, and which we should not have entered if Adam had remained in perpetual innocence. I know some people say that Adam was destined after a season of probation to go to heaven, but I do not think so. I do not believe that Adam as an innocent person possessed the qualities, character, nature, life and power which the happy possession of Christ’s heaven requires. Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people; and the people prepared were lost, but have been redeemed, regenerated, and become new creatures in Christ Jesus. Thus we have a new city here, and new creatures in it, and a heaven there where all things will be for ever new. They will be always fresh, engaging, attractive, sweet and precious. “I make all things new.”

Thirdly, *the announcement*. “Behold, I make all things new. It is information, and we bless the Lord for it. It may be taken as a promise, and it binds Him therefore to a particular course of conduct. We know what to expect.

“ Here raise your expectations high,
’Tis sure and solid ground.”

All things. This universal word ought not to be lost sight of; and if all things be made new for us by and bye, we shall be free from sin, which will be new; we shall be filled to the brim with holiness, and not only filled, but the holiness of our persons, bodies and souls, will be apparent to all. All will see the holiness of all.

“ Nor shall a wrinkle or a spot
Its beauteous form disgrace,”

Which will be new. To be free from sin as Christ is free, and holy with the holiness of Christ, will be new. And then, to be in a happy state, when the serpent shall never hiss nor sting as in Eden of old. To be where there is no more temptation, nor sorrow, nor pain, nor trouble, nor anxiety, where all tears are for ever wiped away—will be new. Oh my brethren, the best is not *now*, but *then*; not *here*, but *there*. It is *good* to be here; it is *best* to be there. It is good to have grace; it is better to have glory. And all this is new; for nothing can separate or divide the grace from the glory. God will give grace and glory, and withhold no good thing from them that walk uprightly. Our friend gave out that beautiful hymn—

“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.”

This is not the place for confession; but if I get to heaven (and I hope I shall), I shall serve my Lord there as I cannot serve Him now. I often serve Him here with fear and trembling, and sometimes I am so fearful and so timid, and even so wicked, that I wish it were not service time, or that it were not the Lord’s day, or that I had not to preach. What a feeling to come to the house of God with! But it will all be new there. If heaven is my home, I shall be made ready for it, and enter into it with a joyful experience, and never wish it were not the Lord’s day, the Lord’s house, the Lord’s service; for

“Every power finds sweet employ
In that eternal world of joy.”

I have sometimes thought that there must be a great change wrought in some of us before we are quite fit for heaven, because if the employment of the blest in that world is spiritual worship, some professors of religion and members of churches must become much warmer in the holy exercise than they are now, or they will want a change or intervals of diversion. Prayer-meetings and other gatherings for divine worship are not attended by the people of God as I sometimes think they might be and would be if all their powers were sanctified and their souls filled with grace; but it will be all right there. All things new. A new heaven, a new earth; no more sea; and eternal righteousness will dwell in that state. May God command His blessing, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

THE NEXT SERMON WILL BE READY ON MARCH 15TH, 1882.

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

PRICE ONE PENNY.

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

May be had also of ELLIOT STOCK, 62, Paternoster Row, London.

THE LOVE AND LIBERALITY OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S DAY MORNING, JANUARY 29th, 1882.

"The thief cometh not but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."—John x. 10.

THE Saviour said to His disciples on one occasion, "It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but unto others it is not given." The mysteries of the kingdom are numerous and great, and many of them will remain mysteries for ever; for who "by searching can find out God? who can find out the Almighty unto perfection?" These mysteries include the essence, the character, and the personalities of the glorious Godhead, and also the complexity of the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Saviour further said to His disciples concerning the covenant work of the Spirit,—When I am gone I will send the Comforter to you, who is the Spirit of truth, and he shall lead you into all truth. He shall glorify me, for He shall take of mine, and show it unto you. According to that promise, the Comforter came, and proceeded to glorify Jesus, in the experience, and in the official work of His Apostles, and He has been glorifying Him in the experience of the living Church of God ever since. It is the work of the blessed Spirit to sanctify the mind, and fill it with spiritual life and heavenly power; to conform it to the image of the Lord, and bring it into holy sympathy with and union to him; to reveal the eternal love of the Father, and shed it abroad in the heart: hence the Apostle says, "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us." As a man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven; he can possess no saving knowledge of the Saviour's person unless it be given by the power and grace of the Spirit of God. We are dependent upon the Holy Spirit for our knowledge of Christ; for our conformity to Him; for our meekness for heaven, and for our daily progress and perseverance in a course of holiness. It is an unspeakable mercy to have been made savingly acquainted with the mysteries of the kingdom, and the Saviour took care to tell His disciples that it was given to them to know them. The eternal love of God is in Christ, who is the embodiment of salvation; the expression of all grace, and the medium through whom all our life perpetually flows. The outlets of love divine are the offices and characters Christ has assumed, and the names by which He is known. Sometimes we see Him as the great Prophet promised by the Father, and predicted by Moses, and love eternal flows from that outlet. Sometimes He is seen as the great High Priest of our profession, and in His sacrifice the love of God flows. Then He is beheld as a King, and out of that office

eternal mercy flows into our hearts. In the chapter out of which I have taken my text, our Lord appears as the Shepherd of the sheep, and also as their door. A twofold character he here assumes, and a twofold position he occupies in connection with salvation. He says in the ninth verse, "I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved; and shall go in and out, and find pasture." Christ is the door into the church, the door into life and peace; the door out of condemnation into justification, and the door of heaven through which we must pass into the world of glory. And Jesus is the Shepherd of the sheep as well as their door; and I believe I should be correct if I said that He is the Shepherd, the door, and the pasture of the sheep. In the verse, therefore, that precedes our text we read, "By me if any man enter in:" it is a blessing to have to do with Jesus, to enter into Him believingly, and to realize the fact that we are in the Lord. If we are in Christ, we may have pain; we may be deeply conscious of sin, we may be sorely tempted, and many almost crushing afflictions and sorrows may fall upon us; still, if we are in Him, we are as secure as saints in heaven. But what is the meaning of the expression. "If any man enter in, he shall be *saved*?" He may not be happy. He may not be free from doubts and fears; he may not be able to appropriate salvation: but "he shall be saved." This is the declaration of eternal truth; the testimony of the Lord himself; He shall be saved from all penal evil, from all moral evil, and ultimately from all circumstantial evil. Salvation is progressive, and is always flowing. The work of the Lord Jesus was finished, as to its meritorious branches; but spiritually and providentially, and graciously considered, salvation is a progressive work. God saves us by His eye, by His hand, by His ear, by His heart, and by the light of His countenance. I will guide thee with mine eye. Well "he shall be saved: and shall go in," which is security; "and out" which is liberty; and find pasture, which is plenty. What more can a sinner need or want? He shall go in, and be for ever safe; He shall go out, as a man goes out of his house, or as a flock of sheep go out of the fold into the pasture; "he shall go in and out, and find pasture." And have we not found satisfaction and plenty, and pasture in the Lord? "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

Perhaps we cannot do better—for simplicity is an excellence—than contemplate *the love* and *the liberality* of Jesus our Shepherd, for I shall limit my attention to the latter part of the verse: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

A few thoughts in the first place on *the love of Jesus*, as it is expressed in the text. He came that His sheep might have life. Although I intend to confine my attention to the latter part of the text, it may be as well to look at this part in connection with the former, and observe the contrast. The Saviour contrasts himself with a thief: the thief comes, and the Shepherd comes, both come; but "the thief cometh not but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy." What a difference between the thief spoken of, and the blessed Shepherd of the sheep! The thief cometh stealthily, silently, secretly, and wishes not to be observed. I am come publicly; all see me, all shall hear me. I am not ashamed of myself, nor of mission, nor of the work which I am doing. "The thief cometh not, but for to steal;" the Shepherd comes to claim His own sheep; to

put His mark upon them, to lead them out, and to lead them in; to feed them from day to day; and to guard, and preserve, and protect them. "The thief cometh not but for to kill." I am come, not to kill them, nor to injure them, but that they might have life. The thief cometh to destroy; but I am come to save them with an everlasting salvation. Having made these few remarks on the connection between the two branches of the verse, let us look at the latter part of it—the love of Jesus, as displayed in the great purpose for which He came into the world, that His sheep might have life. We will look at this in two relations. First, *in relation to Christ*, and secondly, *in relation to His sheep*. First, in relation to Christ Himself. "I am come that they might have life." This was the design of His incarnation, and advent into this world,—the great purpose for which He became a babe in Bethlehem,—the great object He had in view when He submitted to be spat upon, and crowned with thorns, and scourged, and nailed to the accursed tree,—the great end He intended to accomplish by bearing there the guilt of millions, until it was all melted away, and death itself, as a penal evil, was for ever destroyed. He came that we might have life. Look, first, at the *infinite benevolence* of the Saviour. He came to give us no ordinary life, but an extraordinary one; not a measurable life as to duration, but one that is eternal. "I give unto my sheep eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." When an army leaves one country for another, the soldiers go for the purpose of killing their fellow men. When, however, the blessed Redeemer came from heaven, it was for the purpose of procuring life,—of entitling sinners to live,—of acquiring for himself a right to give life, and of putting His beloved people into possession of this blessed and inestimable privilege—eternal, spiritual life. Some persons, though I do not care to be controversial, some persons suppose that since the Lord Jesus came, the condemnation of the guilty will be deeper than if that event had not occurred, owing to the fact that since He came to give life, and to die for sin, they will not accept His sacrifice, nor embrace His salvation. No; the result of the advent of our dear Lord will not be to intensify the curse, or to increase the sufferings of the lost. He came with blessings, without a curse,—with salvation, without condemnation,—with smiles, without a frown. He came to give us life, and not to render death more terrible. "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." I have sometimes thought, that if preaching the gospel to unconverted sinners might intensify their sufferings, and the curse of the law, it might be better not to preach to them at all, nor to send missionaries to the heathen world; for, if you preach to them, and they do not believe, and the fact that they have heard the gospel will intensify their sufferings hereafter, it seems to me that you may be doing them harm. No, my friends, there is enough in the law, and let me use a strong word very solemnly,—there is enough in a broken law to damn the sinner, without coming to the Gospel of the grace of God for the sinner's eternal ruin. I am come with the most benevolent intention and design—not to increase the torments of any, except it be the devil, whom I will cast out, and whose works I will destroy; but my loving visit and gracious work shall not enlarge the curse nor increase the power of condemnation and ruin. Christ came, 'tis true, but He brought nothing with Him but grace and love, and life; and these flowing from

Him shall rescue sinners from deserved ruin, and raise them to the glorious heights of heaven. "The thief comes to steal, to kill, to destroy:" I am come to claim my own, to give life, and to save. Blessed for ever be His name! He was prompted and moved by the most benevolent intention, and the most loving motive, when He left His Father's bosom, and came into this world of sin, and death, and woe.

In the second place, *the Saviour expresses His intention or design absolutely*. The assertion is not conditional. He did not come to make an experiment. Oh, away with all ideas and utterances that seem to indicate that our God is making experiments. Who would or could have thought that men would have attributed such a thing to Omnipotence? Does God ever try to do a thing? What did the Saviour come for? Was it to make life and salvation, and the possession of heaven possible? Was it to bring the power of grace to bear upon the power of sin, that He might ascertain which was the stronger of the two? This is not the way of life, nor the salvation of the Gospel. I am come, not to try to give them life; not to procure a conditional life for them; not to put them into a position to accept life; but that they might *have* life, and that they might have it more abundantly. And did He fulfil His design, and accomplish His purpose before He left the world, and returned to heaven? Was there any failure on the part of this great Shepherd who laid down His life for the sheep? I apprehend that during the three-and-thirty years He was here He procured eternal life for His people. No error, no wrong step, and no wrong feeling or thought, at any time marked His course. Our Lord left behind Him a path of living light and perfection; and having reached the end of the law, and its penalty, He saw eternal death sink into the sea of His blood, and said, "It is finished!" The sheep shall live! And He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost. My friends, the design was benevolent on the part of the Saviour, and His fixed purpose and resolution He never departed from. I am come that they might have life. Dear hearers, we are, as compared with many other congregations, a small one; but it does not follow that therefore we are in error, or that we do not hold the glorious truth of God. The day will come when the tables will be turned, and guilty creatures will believe that God is Almighty, and that His salvation is absolute, and not conditional. "Well, but the sinner may have life if he comes for it." Yonder is a cemetery, full of corpses, and can they come at the bidding of a thousand individuals,—can they come forth from the grave? "But if they desire to live they may live." They that desire to live are alive; for the desire comes from life, and there would be no desire without it. People do invert God's appointed and established order of things. Only desire, only pray, only believe, and you shall live. I say, and I have the Bible before me, and base my remarks upon it: if you desire to live, if you believe, if you are coming to Jesus as lost sinners, you are alive from the dead. And the fulfilment of that purpose of our Lord involved His sufferings and death. He could not give us life without dying Himself, therefore He says, "I am the good Shepherd," and "the good Shepherd giveth" and layeth down "His life for the sheep." The Redeemer came to destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil; to abolish eternal death, and then to bring in everlasting life. Well, penal death faded away, disappeared like a fog before a strong wind, like

mists beneath the shining glorious sun; it was extinguished by the Shepherd's atoning work. Thus the flood of everlasting life came flowing in; and where sin abounded, grace now much more abounds. The Shepherd died, and the sheep shall live. They are in my Father's hand, and they are Mine too, and none shall pluck them out of either His hand or Mine. The salvation of the flock involved the sufferings and death of the Saviour. He came to procure life, to entitle us to live, to put us in possession of life, and to glorify the life He imparts by His Spirit to His beloved people. He came to entitle Himself to give life, for He could not have given it had He not come; and indeed there would have been none to give. I am come that they might live. Dear Jesus, was it not possible for the sheep to live without Thy coming here. Couldst thou not have given us life in the bosom of the Father, or on Thy throne? Was it necessary that thou shouldst become a helpless babe, a few spans long, and a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. No, He could not give life without so doing. The sheep were His, and He was bound to redeem and to present them, not as dead, but as alive; not as an imperfect flock, but in faultless perfection. He could not do this without coming. "Hence, I am come." The porter has opened the door, and has admitted me, and I am come as a Shepherd, not to kill and destroy, but to give life, and to save; and to acquire a right to claim my sheep, and to fold them.

As time is going, and the subject is large, let us just observe one thing more—*That Jesus is our life.* He came that we might have it; and every living soul, therefore, belongs to Him. I like to preach the great things of God's law as well as I can, but I like also to descend into the low places where some of the little ones are. Every living soul belongs to Christ, however small, faint, and feeble that soul may be. Justice could not give life without Christ. Mercy could not give it without Him; the law of God could not give life; the sinner could not give it to himself, nor deserve it. If you are alive from the dead you may know most readily where your life came from. There is only one Life-bearer, one Life-bringer, one Life-giver, one Root of life. "When Christ, who is *our* life shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory." Dear friends, sometimes your eye moistens, whilst contemplating the things of God, and your hearts are full of sweet sensibility, having a savoury experience of the power and preciousness of eternal things. Oh how sweet it is to feel, for I despise not feeling, but wish there were more of it. If there were more faith perhaps there would be more feeling. Well, my friends, with sensibilities and with feelings, such as those which you possess there is life, and that life proves you to belong to Jesus. You are in contact with Him, connected with Him, and one with Him; you are a sheep or a lamb, for I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

Now, secondly, let us look at the subject *in connection with the sheep.* First, *what is the nature of this life?* What kind of life is it? It is spiritual; for He came that they might have spiritual life. There is a vast difference between natural and spiritual life; a great distance between the two. A fine robust, well-formed man or woman, brimfull and running over with natural life and spirits, and withal beautifully and attractively moral, is surely the person that has "the promise of the life that

now is, and of that which is to come." Nothing of the sort. The life which Christ came to bring was not a natural one, nor a moral one merely, but a spiritual one. To be spiritually-minded is life and peace; and there is a great distance and difference between nature and grace, between the natural and the spiritual, between the legal and the evangelical. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature," old things are passed away, and all things are become new." It is spiritual life, and its properties are unchanging and unchangeable. I mention one only. The life that Christ came to give is a holy life, and that is its prevailing, or one of its prevailing characteristics. It cannot be contaminated, it abides in the heart, but it does not become sinful. Gold cannot be changed or rendered worthless by lying in the dust, or being covered with the deep waters of the sea. It is gold even there, and so the life of God in the soul is ever a holy principle, a holy power; a pure and holy blessing. "It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." "To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not." "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." This life is unchanging in its properties, and it is powerful in its development. I do not know, for I am not a philosopher, yet I think I am not wrong in saying, that life is one of the most powerful principles in existence. Life! Cast a grain of wheat into the earth, and let it be buried five or six inches beneath the heaviest clods; the tender blade will force its way up somehow or other through the soil towards the sun. What a wonderful power there is in life. And there is power in spiritual life. It develops in the heart under the hand of God's Spirit, and sends its possessor to the throne in secret with God be merciful to me. Although he has only a spark of life that spark is sufficient to warm and influence his whole heart, and he must go to God. And then, though he has been a rough character and his heart has been very hard, and he has called everybody that wept a fool with soft feelings and a superficial nature, yet for the life of him he cannot now help weeping himself, rough, hard, and coarse, though he has been. Life in its development will fill the eye, open the mouth, expand the heart, enlarge the mind, and send the sheep that possesses it into some retired corner there to remain in close connection with God in humble prayer and hope until the blessing comes. The nature of it is spiritual. The properties of it are heavenly and holy, and it is powerful in its development. But some of you are thinking that I have scarcely touched the point yet. Well, the life that Christ gives answers to the death which followed the fall, and so we get rid of all the consequences of the fall, and find ourselves in possession of all the honourable consequences of the death of Christ. Man died legally as a criminal under the broken law. "The day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die;" and the sentence of the law must be executed. When a criminal has been tried, found guilty, and sentenced to death, he is dead in law. The sheep are by nature children of wrath, even as others, and under the sentence of a broken law. I am come to rescue them, and that they might have life. The law they have broken I am come to magnify, and make honourable, and to give them a righteousness infinitely better than that which they lost. The Redeemer magnified the law, and made it honourable, and wrought out a righteousness which is cast over the whole flock, and now

the law can curse no more. This is the life of *justification*—the end of condemnation. Then, secondly, man died a moral death. “You hath He quickened who were *dead* in trespasses and sins.” Christ came that they might have a spiritual life, as I said just now, and this is *sanctification*. The Holy Ghost enters the heart, and sanctifies the mind, and thus we have an internal life, and so we lose two forms of death. There is physical or corporeal death, or the death of the body, for that is one of the consequences of sin. “Thy brother shall rise again.” “*I am the resurrection and the life.*” This is the will of Him that sent me, that of all which He has given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.” Then there was eternal death and woe; but that also is for ever gone, and now we have or shall have eternal *life and happiness in glory*. A fourfold life from Christ instead of the fourfold death which was the consequence of sin. I must leave the subject, as time is almost gone, by just observing that this life is necessary. The sheep are in the fall; in its ruin, disgrace, degradation, and uncleanness, and Christ came to rescue them therefrom. God’s decree of conformity to Himself requires life. “He hath predestinated us to be conformed to the image of His Son.” Therefore they must have life, or they will not be like their Lord. Communion with God requires it. The sheep are to be brought near to God, and to feel they are near to Him, and to have fellowship and communion with Him in Christ and in glory, and that communion is to give them pleasure, and fill them with joy; and all this requires life, or there would be no feeling, no experience, and no fellowship with God. “I am come that they might have life.”

Then, consider their possession of life. That they might have it in themselves, and have it as they hold nothing else. Have it in their hearts, their faculties, and powers; their thoughts, their prayers, their feelings, their motives, their praises, and their services. If our services are not living services, they cannot be accepted; but some, I trust are so, for there are living prayers, a living faith, a living hope, a living love, and living joys. Christ came not that they might get life, or deserve it, or that it might accidentally fall upon, and into them, but that they might assuredly have it in themselves as they possess nothing else. If you have property, you inherited it, it may be from your father, or some relative now dead and gone, or if you did not inherit you have acquired it, through God’s blessing upon the labour of your hands or your hands, but that is not how you have this life. The clothes you wear are your own; they fit you, and you need them, and you bought and paid for them. You do not have life that way. Your natural life. It is said to be *your* life; it comes from nature under the providence and power of God. But spiritual life does not come that way. You were born not of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but by the will of God. You have a house. Having bought it, it is your own. But putting all things together, all these things are loseable, perishable. You must resign them all bye-and-bye; but here is a blessing that is altogether new, that comes in a new way, and is everlasting. “I give unto them eternal life.” We shall leave our garments, our houses, our families, our friends, and all of earth that we possess, and even this flesh worms will consume; but one thing we shall never lose if we are its happy possessors, and that is the life that Christ came to give us.

Now let us just look for a minute or two *at Christ's liberality*. I am come that they might have life, *and that they might it more abundantly*. I will just mention several points, as time is gone. More abundantly than *Adam* had life. His life was perfect, but its perfection and perpetuity were conditional. Our life is more sure, and more certain than His was. His life depended upon himself, but yours depends upon Christ. "Because I live ye shall live also." It is richer than Adam's life. That was the life of creature morality and conformity to the law. This is a spiritual life as we have already observed. The Paradise that this life opens is a better one than Adam lived in. He had the figurative tree of life; but we have Jesus the true tree of life that bears twelve manner of fruits, and will bear fruit for ever and ever. "Might have it more abundantly" than Adam had it. God "drove out the man, and he placed a flaming sword which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life." It was not God's intention to restore us to the state we had lost, nor to immortalise that we had fallen into.

More abundantly than *Israel* in Canaan. They had a spiritual life, and so have we; but we have in some respects more abundant light and knowledge than they. They had the type, we have the substance. They had the promise, we have the fulfilment. They had the prophecy, we have the blessings predicted.

Paul says in the 12th of Hebrews, "We are not come to Mount Sinai." It is well to go to Sinai, for wonderful things were there. The Lord was there; the law was there; the thunder was there; Moses was there; the elders were there: but we are not come to the mount that might be touched, and burned with fire, but we are come to Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, the church of the first born. And what else? To God, the Judge of all, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel. More abundant life than the Jewish church had.

Fourthly, more abundantly than formerly. Some of you have known the Lord ten years. You live more abundantly now than you did then. Some of you have known him forty or fifty years, and you live more abundantly now than you did at first. As somebody says, "There is life in an acorn, but there is more in the oak which the acorn produces. There is life in a grain, but there is more in the thirty-fold, sixty-fold, or a hundred-fold, produced by that grain." Now is our salvation nearer than when we first believed. The little sapling you plant has life, but when it has been growing twenty or thirty years its life is more abundant. Not only that they might have it, but that they might live more abundantly. O may God give us more abundant life. Be not satisfied with present attainments. Paul was all earnestness with regard to the future; he panted for more life, for more conformity, and that he might know Him. He did know Him, but not enough of Him. "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings." May I be found in Him. May we as a church, live more abundantly. We have life, for the Shepherd is here. May we live more abundantly than ever. May every individual member live, and grow in life and love abundantly every day, for Christ's sake. Amen.

THE GREATNESS, CERTAINTY AND FULFILMENT OF THE PROMISES.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,
ON LORD'S DAY MORNING, 12th MARCH, 1882.

"Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which Thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old."—Micah vii. 20.

THE cross and the throne of the Lord Jesus will ever be important to saved sinners. Our Lord is now at the right hand of God, and is represented as perpetually working there. The throne of God is variously described in the word, and every representation of it is important. God is revealed as ever reigning, and we are told there is a rainbow round about His throne in sight like unto an emerald. It is also said there is a river of water of life proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. This is believed by the church on earth, for this fact is felt more or less deeply by every saint. In this respect there is nothing new, for God said to His ancient people Israel,—“There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High.” It was predicted, however, that a fountain should flow from the house of God, which should water the valley of Shittim. That fountain has been opened; and ever since, its streams have been flowing; and one of the richest and sweetest of them is the forgiveness of sin. Is Jesus ours? Are we His? Are our names on His breastplate, whilst He makes intercession for all who come unto God by Him? Is He now pleading our cause, presenting our prayers, and representing our persons before His Father's throne? Pardon is an inestimable blessing, because sin is a barrier between the guilty conscience and God, which leaves the sinner perfectly helpless and almost hopeless. Some faint glimpses of the mediation of Jesus, create a trembling hope in the heart of a sensible sinner; but although he trusts in the mercy of God and his hopes are built upon the atoning work of the Redeemer, the guilt that stands between him and God remains, and he can neither surmount nor remove it. If that mountain be not removed, he will be separated from Jehovah for ever; and hence he stretches forth his hands, and says, “God be merciful to me a sinner!” and, “Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.”

The subject of pardon is very beautifully and solemnly introduced into the connection in which our text stands. “Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of
VOL. III. No. 24.—APRIL 15, 1882.

His heritage." Our pardon must come from God, and must have His signature. Some persons seem to steal pardon, and others appear to pardon themselves, taking it for granted that they are all right for heaven. Forgiveness, however, is a very solemn blessing, and it is very solemnly communicated and received. "Who can forgive sins but God only!" "He pardoneth iniquity and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage." Does He connive at sin, or wink at iniquity? or does He not see the guilt of His children? Sometimes a husband is blind to the faults of his wife, or a wife to the faults of her husband; and love may make them so: but the love of God is not blind. He sees transgression and iniquity; but when He passeth by them He has satisfaction in His hand and before His eyes. There is more in the blood of Jesus to cover sin and carry one to heaven, than there is in transgression to sink one into eternal woe. "He will turn again, and have compassion upon us:" so said the church in Micah's days. He hides His face for important purposes, but He changes not His mind; therefore He will turn again and have compassion upon us, and subdue our iniquities; and Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." Sin is loathsome to God and to the saints also. It is so hateful that God will not deal tenderly with it, though He so deals with the sinner. He casts sins into the depths of the sea; and what is cast there disappears and is lost. "Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob and the mercy to Abraham, which Thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old."

Let us endeavour, in the first place to *contemplate the promises as they are here presented*; secondly, to *look at the fact asserted*; thirdly, *the divine delays indicated*; and in the fourth place, to say a word, if we have time, *on the confidence expressed*,—Thou wilt do all this.

In the first place let us look at *the promise, or at the promises, as they are represented in the text*. By the truth to Jacob and the mercy to Abraham, we understand the promises which God gave to those patriarchs. And the church here says, although hundreds of years have elapsed since the promise was given, "Thou wilt perform the truth and the mercy." After these two or three expository remarks, I should like to place the promise before you as it lies in the text. I beg your attention to the beautiful order observed: first the promise is a mercy; secondly, the mercy promised is based upon eternal truth; thirdly, that is confirmed by God's eternal oath,—*"which thou hast sworn to unto our fathers from the days of old;"* fourthly (and do not lose sight of this fact), all this rests upon God Himself. Are you surprised, therefore, that the church in Micah's day, or in any other days, should say, "Thou wilt perform the truth unto Jacob, and the mercy unto Abraham?"

Just let us tarry here a few minutes. The promise given to Abraham, and through him to his spiritual descendants, was a mercy. It was so because it came from God's mercy, because it expressed His mercy, because it contained His mercy; and it was felt to be a mercy when it was received by Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob. And the promise is seen and felt to be a mercy when it drops as from God's own lips upon the poor, heated, burning heart of a tried and troubled child of God. God's word shall drop as the rain, and His speech shall distil as the dew. God's

wrath will rush like a mighty flood, and carry the guilty world away; but His doctrines and promises are not a rushing destructive flood, they "drop as the rain and distil as the dew, as small rain upon the tender herb." The promises of God, all of which express His mercy, fall from heaven upon the poor, tried and afflicted believer, and produce a holy experience; and one is ready to say with Jeremiah, "Thy word was found, and I did eat it, and it was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." If there is mercy in blood, there was mercy also in the promise of that blood, as there is in all promises; for all are designed to sustain and support ten thousand halting cripples, who are wending their way to the realms of eternal rest and glory.

But, in the second place, mercy without truth would be uncertain; for a state of things created by mercy, separated from truth, might not be enduring. If there were vibrations, so to speak, in the mercy of God, occasioned by the various shocks experienced here, we could not confidently trust in that mercy. But we have mercy on a sure basis, surrounded by eternal truth, and fenced in with the immutability and eternal righteousness of Jehovah. We have, my brethren, a refuge and a well-filled store house on a rock which is eternal truth; and that refuge and storehouse are God's merciful promises. I cannot, just now, forget the beautiful words of Paul to Titus: "In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie, promised before the world began." Look at the beautiful order of these words, and what do you see on the summit? The hope of eternal life. What is that hope based upon? The promise of God. What sustains the promise and gives solidity to it? God's truth. And who is the being that upholds all this? The God that cannot lie. Well might the Apostle, elsewhere, say, "God has given us two immutable things, that we who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us might have strong consolation. Sometimes persons sneeringly say of certain ministers and their preaching, "They are always talking about comfort and consolation." God is always speaking about it in His word; and in order that His people might have it, He interposed Himself with an oath, and made that which was essentially sure, if possible doubly so, by interposing His oath. My brethren, the promises are weighty, full, and important, and should one of them be broken, God would lose His character, and also the confidence of all His creatures; but they cannot fail, they cannot disappear, they cannot be broken; for eternal truth guards and secures them all.

In the third place, the promise of God is guarded by His oath: not, I imagine, because that was absolutely necessary; but in order that we might have strong consolation. He did not swear so much for His own sake, as for ours. For His own sake His word would have been a sufficient bond, for he cannot lie; nevertheless, His mercy is followed by His truth, and both are followed by His oath. Why is this? Because He said, as it were, guilty sinners will think the mercy too great, unless I express Myself in an extraordinary manner. The blessings I intend to convey and which I promise they will think too good for them; and therefore I swear by Myself, because I can swear by no greater, that in blessing I will for ever bless them with all spiritual blessings. And now can

you doubt? Yes, very readily we can, and very strongly too we doubt; not the immutability of God's mercy and truth, nor the inviolability of His oath; but we doubt whether that mercy, that truth, that oath relate favourably and savingly to us. Well, the vision is for an appointed time. It is something to have been brought to want, and to long for an application of the promises and for eternal things. Go into the streets and consider the thousands who sneer at these things, and concerning whom we may say, They see no form nor comeliness in the dear Redeemer. Your hearts are concerned. There is some feeling in your breasts. You are ready to say, if you had a world you would give it, for leave to call Him yours. All the promises are yours. "Do you think so?" I am sure of it, though I cannot make you believe it; and it is a good thing ministers cannot do this. I present the comfort, I try to show you its character and its form. Here is a cup of divine consolation, and it is large and full. Drink. "No, it is not for us; and you will put it away until God's time comes.

"The time of love will come,
When you shall clearly see,
Not only that Christ shed His blood;
But you shall say, for me."

You do not want me, I am sure, to preach your up and down, in and out, zig-zag experience for the glorious gospel of the blessed God. Oh, experience is well in its place, but its place is beneath God's oath. It is not so much our experience as the experience of Christ; it is what God thinks of us, what He has done, and is still doing for us. Well, in mercy He has given us promises, He has connected them with eternal truth, and sworn by Himself that not one word, one jot or tittle shall fail. Over all the promises hang these blessed words, "Heaven and earth shall pass away; but My word shall not pass away."

The covenant of grace, the promises and the oath of God have been further ratified and confirmed by a Saviour's blood. We sometimes say, we are saved by grace and not by works. Beloved hearers, we are saved by both grace and works. I preach a salvation which is of works, for the salvation which is all of grace to us, was wrought out by Jesus Christ. Hard and good was the work of the Saviour. That which is a covenant of grace to us, was a covenant of works to Him; and that which cost us nothing, cost Him His all; and when His precious blood flowed round about the oath, and the truth, and the promise of God, the great conditions of salvation were then fulfilled. God has taken His seat between the cherubims and says, "I will in no wise cast out him that cometh." This is a definition of the promise. It is mercy based on truth, truth based on the oath of God, and all ratified, confirmed and glorified by the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let me now notice that the promises of God are divine revelations. If we know anything of God it is owing to divine revelation. The sun is a self-revealing object, for when he is set and is below the horizon, he cannot be seen until he rises again. And God is pleased to reveal himself in the promises; for through them we know His mind and have the mind of

Christ. It is a great thing to see the mind of a person who takes a deep interest in our welfare, and to know what are his thoughts, intentions and purposes concerning us. If a friend of ours is very reserved, and we have reason to hope that he will do us good, and favour us in some important respects, we long to know his mind. God has spoken to us, and we have the very best reasons for believing that He intends to bless us for ever, for He has opened His mind in the words of His love. I read in them the sweet purposes, the merciful intentions, and the glorious resolutions of my God.

“Enough, my gracious God,
Let faith triumphant cry;
My heart can on Thy promise live,
Can on Thy promise die.”

The Bible is God's thought book, and every promise is a Divine thought of a Divine Father. “Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham.” The promises are revelations of the future, of which we sometimes say we know nothing. That is not quite correct. We know as much about the future as it is necessary to know. God has not revealed anything to gratify our curiosity. He is too good too wise and too great for that. And you who are parents are too considerate to reveal anything to your children, merely for the purpose of gratifying a dangerous curiosity. If you tell your children something, you intend the revelation shall be more or less substantially beneficial to them. Now God in His promise has not entered into details and minute particulars as to the circumstances of our every-day life. Still He has in His word revealed as much of the future as it is necessary for you and me to know; and hence take that long and broad promise which covers the whole—“I will never leave thee, I will never forsake thee.” Having such a promise as that, can you say you know nothing of the future? You know that God will be with you, that He must be with you, that He has bound Himself to be with you. Yes, but the rest of the future? That is in His mind, concealed in His bosom; but the great plain fact that you require to know God has revealed. “I will never leave thee, I will never forsake thee.” The promise is a divine revelation of God Himself, and a revelation of the future also.

Then the promises, are also a revelation of a better world than this. He hath prepared for them a city, whose builder and maker is God. The promise shows us that city, and the open gate, and the way to it, and that the city is our inheritance, we being heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. It shows us that we are immensely rich, but that we must go home to possess and enjoy all that God has promised. But you say, Shall I reach heaven? He will perform the mercy and truth, and take you there. There is no uncertainty about it. Only think of a whole kingdom for a poor sinner, who was by nature a beggar on the dunghill. Only think that the robe he shall wear will be a royal one, and that he shall be crowned with immortality and glory, and sit upon a throne of glory in heaven, his own home and inheritance. Well, the word is so

great, and the blessings promised so vast, that I am thankful God has secured them by His truth, so that mercy and truth are united in the person, work, and promise of our dear Lord.

Again, if I have not anticipated myself, the promise is a divine bond. "My word," one says, "is my bond;" which is all very well as far as it goes: but in important business transactions something more binding is required. It would not have been required of God; but He has been pleased to give us something more than His word; He has given us His oath, and His signature or name. You know, however important a document may be, or binding its conditions, it is but a piece of paper or parchment, until it is signed and sealed by the contracting parties. And God has signed His promises, and every one bears the seal and signature of Deity. I swear by Myself that I will be your God, and bless you as my people, for ever. I AM THE LORD. A divine bond. The promise, therefore,—taking this view of it,—shows us the lines upon which God will proceed, and He will never diverge from them; but upon them omnipotent power will work. And where do they lie, but in the pathway of every believer, and through the life and death of every child of God. The promises show us what shape God's conduct will take, and what gracious events will occur, what form God will give them, and what shall be their influence upon us as His children. The promises run through the water, and through the fire; they run over a wall and through the waste howling wilderness; they run through the Jordan of death and they terminate in the realms of eternal glory. "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee;" and through the fire it shall not kindle upon thee. How many promises refer to the conflict, the sorrow and the weariness of the pilgrim, who is on his journey towards another world. I will be with you in death; and finally heaven shall be possessed by all my heirs for ever and ever. "Thou wilt perform the mercy and truth."

Lastly, Christ is the great central promise. Perhaps some of my hearers have been listening for this, and here it is at last. The mercy promised to Abraham, and the truth to Jacob was, that in Abraham's seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed. Jesus Christ was the mercy promised and, the truth; and hence John says, "The law came by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." All the promises of God are gathered round this great one, the person of the Saviour. He was the first blessing promised, and the last one too. He is the first and the last: the first promise God ever gave was Christ, and the last that will sustain and comfort and help us through all, will be that of His dear Son. Christ is the centre, and all the promises cluster round His great Person. They are all in Him and receive their fulness from Him. Christ contains that which is required to fulfil them; so that all things are divinely simplified. To take a Bible figure,—Christ is the tree of life, and bears twelve manner of fruits; and is in the midst of the wood, and in the midst of the garden. Do not forget that He is in the wood: "As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons." I sat down under His shadow, in the wood, where there were beasts and dangers, with great delight; and his fruit was sweet to my

taste. He is the tree of life where we now are. Before we get to heaven we have this tree, and sit beneath its shadow. And then this tree of life is in the midst of the Paradise of God. Its fruit might be regarded as promises growing out of God's greatest gift, His Son Jesus Christ. His promise was fulfilled, when it was said, "Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." In Micah's days, they looked forward to the day of Christ, and said, He is coming: for, Thou wilt perform the truth unto Jacob, and the mercy unto Abraham." Read at your leisure the reference made to my text in the first chapter of the Gospel by Luke, and you will see that the Lord Jesus Christ is the great promised mercy and truth of our covenant God.

In the second place, we were to notice *the fact asserted*. Thou wilt perform the mercy and the truth. Now I will just say,—This fulfilment is absolutely necessary—necessary for God's glory. He cannot sustain and perpetuate His own character without fulfilling the promises He has given to His people. The promises of God are patent to all. They lie before angels, and before devils, and before saints; for they are scattered everywhere in the Bible for everyone to read. Angels watch the fulfilment of them, so does Satan, and so do saints; and should one be lost, or broken, or falsified, God would lose His character, and also the confidence of His creatures: and therefore, "Thou wilt perform the mercy and the truth. Take another thought, and I will leave this part of the subject. The promises may be regarded in relation to the past and the future. The past—what is there in the past as to promises? The scene behind you is occupied with fulfilled promises.

"Thus far my God hath led me on,
And made His truth and mercy known."

And what is before you but unfulfilled promises? Words that remain to be verified. 'Yes, but,'—Yes, I know that "but"—but God will do it—that is certain. He who has helped in troubles past, will help us in all future trials and afflictions, and will not leave you now. The past proclaims the fact that the future shall be filled with God. "Because Thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of Thy wings will I rejoice." I have said the promises went over walls and through troops; for David said, By my God I have leaped over a wall, and run through a troop. "He maketh my feet like hinds' feet, and setteth me upon my high places." "Fear not, thou worm Jacob." A worm might well fear amid so many dangers and crushing feet: "fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel. I will make you a new sharp threshing instrument, having teeth. But it is necessary to add another word there: "I will make you *into* a new sharp threshing instrument, having teeth; and thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small. Mountain-threshing must be hard work for men, for worms; but God has said, "Thou shalt thresh the mountains and beat them small, and make the hills as chaff." Thou wilt perform it, is the fact asserted. Well, before us, my friends, are promises that remain to be fulfilled; and behind us are divine words that have been verified.

Thirdly, *divine delays are mentioned here*. "Which thou hast sworn

unto our fathers from the days of old." What is history? sacred I mean, not secular, but a record of promises fulfilled. History tells me what God has done; the promise tells me what He will do. We have a record of the prophetic fulfilment of God's mercy and truth. The interval between the promise and its fulfilment is sometimes very long. Four thousand years elapsed between the promise of the Messiah and His advent into the world. "But God is not a man that He should lie, nor the son of man that He should repent." The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head; and four thousand years after that promise, the seed of the woman made His appearance; and thirty years afterwards He bruised the serpent's head. All came to pass according to the mercy and truth of God. Sometimes the interval between the promise and its fulfilment is filled with human difficulties, or crowded with seeming contradictions; and the child of God, who thought his faith was strong, looks at them with fear; and is ready to say with David in his haste, "All men are liars." He cannot see how this and that can be for the best, or how the word can be fulfilled. You see the oath of God has been added to the promises; for He knew such apprehensions would arise in the hearts of His doubting children. Human impossibilities shall melt away. Contradictions shall be falsified; for the Promiser on high is an almighty being; one obstruction after another shall disappear, and one event after another shall occur until the great outcome of all shall be the fulfilment of the mercy and truth unto Jacob and unto Abraham. I am but a weak believer myself; and therefore I preach a better, or rather a stronger faith than I myself possess; simply because I believe the Gospel requires me to do so. I trust my faith is a saving a divine, a spiritual faith; but I cannot always take hold of the great blessings for myself which I preach to others as the glorious gospel of the blessed God. Why is there an interval between the promise and its fulfilment? To try and prove the divinity and constancy of our faith? and to prove the faithfulness and immutability of God. God never loses sight of the promise or its fulfilment; He has His own word before Him, and the promises which He has bound Himself to fulfil: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My word shall not pass away."

Fourthly, *the confidence expressed*. God will do it. "Thou wilt perform the mercy and the truth." My dear friends we cannot do better than take God's promise as a plea, when we pray. God suits His conduct to His word. Do you shape your prayers according to the same model. Take with you words, and turn to the Lord; not your own, but His. Do as Jacob did and convert the promise into prayer. Thou didst say, "I will surely do thee good." Shape your prayers in this manner. Urge the promise as a reason why you pray, why you hope, and why you expect God will answer and bless you. He will do it for His character's sake. He will do it because he has begun to do it, and will never leave His work unfinished. He will perform it because the covenant of grace is ordered in all things, and sure; and He will do it because He cannot complete the salvation of His dear people without performing the mercy and the truth to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Amen.

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

May be had also of ELLIOT STOCK, 62, Paternoster Row, London.

THE LEPER CLEANSED.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, 9th APRIL, 1882.

"And there came a leper to Him, beseeching Him, and kneeling down to Him, and saying unto Him, If thou wilt, Thou canst make clean. And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth His hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will, be thou clean. And, as soon as He had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed."—Mark i. 40—42.

THE apostle Paul says, It pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell in Christ. All the fulness, therefore, of nature, of grace, and of that glory which God's people are entering, and which they shall possess and enjoy for ever, is in the Person of the beloved Son of God; and we shall never sufficiently praise the Father for this marvellously wise and glorious arrangement. The character of God is so deep and mysterious, His purposes and intentions are so grand and glorious, that they, together with the grace, and mercy, and truth, by which sinners are saved, required to be simplified, in order that they might be comprehended, or rather apprehended, by the minds of poor ruined sinners. We could not love or know God out of Christ; and grace and mercy out of Him could never reach the unworthy sinner. All the love of God is in Christ, who is its great embodiment; and thus the way has been made so plain and simple "that the wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein." Christ is the great Revealer of Jehovah, and of all His purposes and intentions. If we do not happen to be Greek scholars, it would be perfectly useless to put a Greek New Testament into our hands; and so we never should have been able to understand the mystery of God, apart from the Person and the mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ. God has translated His thoughts into a language which fallen men speak. He has so simplified His great ideas that if we cannot comprehend them, nor explore the mystery of salvation, yet there are times when we have some comfortable apprehensions of eternal things, simply because we have some knowledge of the Saviour. Again, all blessings were deposited in Christ, in order that we might have access to them. God, out of Christ, is too far off for man, who is a guilty, fallen creature. God in Christ, however, is near to us, and His great salvation also is said to be near to the lost; for Israel shall be saved in the Lord, with an everlasting salvation. What we want, we are, if believers, able to reach, at least, when we are assisted by the power and grace of the eternal Spirit. Pharaoh said to the Egyptians, during the famine, "Go unto Joseph, and whatsoever he saith unto you, do;" and the eternal God says, as it were, to every coming sinner, Go unto my Son, Jesus Christ; for I have no pardon to give but what He possesses; I have no love to shed abroad in your hearts, but what He is filled with; I have no blessings to communicate but what are in His

hands; therefore Go unto Him, and whatsoever He saith unto you do. And then again, all grace is in Christ in order that it might be absolutely safe and sure. We possessed much in the first Adam, but it was all lost; and therefore it pleased God that all His saving fulness should dwell in the second Adam. The first Adam made shipwreck; the second will never fail; His arm is omnipotent, and His heart is love divine; and as He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, that state of things, of which He is the foundation, will last as long as He Himself endures: Let us, therefore, thank our God for this infinitely wise and merciful arrangement. All that we now need, and all that we shall hereafter require, both in this world, and also in the world to come, we find and shall find in the person of our Lord. Now that which was deposited in Jesus Christ is constantly flowing from Him; and hence we have already received redemption, the grace of regeneration—a measure of the grace of pardon, and the blessings of salvation are still flowing from this great Rock of Ages, and hence “There is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God—the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High.” These blessings were constantly flowing from Him in the days of His flesh, and marvellous favours proceeded from Him in connection with the miracles which He wrought.

Having delivered His sermon on the mount, there came a leper to Him, beseeching Him, and kneeling down to Him, and saying unto Him, “If Thou wilt Thou canst make me clean.” Now I wish to direct your attention, this morning, to this portion of the Word, and shall take occasion from it to try to show a little of the experience of the saved sinner. I do not know that my remarks would be very profitable if I limited my attention to the nature of the disease called leprosy. I will make only one or two observations on that complaint, and then I shall try to carry your thoughts into spiritual matters, and lose sight of the particular individual who appeared before Christ on this occasion. The text easily and readily divides itself into three branches. We have first, *the sinner*; secondly, *the sinner’s Saviour*; and, thirdly, *the great salvation wherewith the sinner is saved*.

A few thoughts in the first place, on the *character of the sinner*. Now I shall keep upon the surface of the subject, and you may perhaps observe that it will supply us with several branches of divine truth. In the first place, the person that appeared before Christ was a *sufferer*; and every sensible sinner entering into the presence of the everlasting God is like this leper, a suffering sinner. Some people’s religion commences with joy and pleasure. They took it into their heads on some particular occasion, to give themselves to the Lord; and as soon as ever they did so they were perfectly happy, and were quite certain that they should reach heaven. This is not God’s method of mercy, nor the way in which God saves sinners. The heart is broken before it is bound up; the spirit is wounded before it is healed; tears of sadness and sorrow are shed before pardon, sensibly and experimentally, reaches the heart; for the child of God is first made sorrowful; consequently the promises, or many of them, are addressed to mourners in Zion, and to such as are of a sorrowful or a heavy heart. Now the leper on this occasion was a great sufferer. I will not tarry here, but I may make one or two remarks upon

it. In the first place, his physical sufferings were great. The character of the leprosy I shall not enter into. The leper was always a bodily sufferer, and generally all his life. Not only did he suffer physically, he suffered socially; for as the disease was so loathesome and so contagious, that he left his house, and his family, and became altogether an isolated individual. In the *third* place, he suffered in connection with civil matters, for a leper was not permitted to live in a walled town or city. As soon as leprosy was discovered in a person, whatever position in the city or town he might have occupied, he was obliged to leave it; and if he was sufficiently wealthy, a house was prepared for him in some isolated place: and this was the case with king Uzziah, whom the Lord smote with leprosy. Therefore the leper was a bodily sufferer, a social sufferer, and a civil sufferer. And then in the fourth or last place, the leper was a religious sufferer; for just as he was not permitted to dwell in a town that had walls, so neither was he ever permitted to enter into God's temple. That would have defiled the building, and for aught I know it might have been death for him to do so. Then, in addition to all this, according to the law affecting the leprosy, he had to place a piece of cloth over his upper lip, and cause it to drop before his mouth; and when he was in the road, and about to meet an individual, he was bound to cry, "Unclean ! unclean !" Now this was the person, or one of them, that met Christ on this particular occasion. "And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying, If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean." That is all I will say on the natural leprosy.

Every son and daughter of Adam is a moral leper. Depend upon it, my friends, we are leprous creatures from head to foot, and there is no spiritual soundness in us, unless we have been favoured with a visit from the Lord Jesus, and graciously and savingly touched by His Almighty hand. Now that which causes suffering in the sinner when he first applies to the Saviour, is life, which is, it may be thought, a marvellous fact. There is, however, no suffering in connection with the leprosy of sin, until the life of God is in the soul. What is the reason there is so much hilarity and apparent happiness and satisfaction in this poor dying world? All men are sinners, but almost all seem to be more or less happy, and this arises from the fact that they do not realise their loathesome and sinful condition. Man is not only a sinner, he is by nature dead in trespasses and sins. If he were not dead he would most surely be a sufferer. The life of God is communicated, and the Holy Spirit takes up His abode in the soul, and when this takes place the leprosy is discovered, and one feels himself to be guilty in the sight of God, and loathes himself, on account of his vileness and uncleanness; and such an individual is not offended with the minister, if he represents sinners as lepers, and speaks of human nature as polluted, ruined, and undone. He will not rise in a passion, and leave the place when a minister is faithfully preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ, and the necessity of those riches to wash and cleanse the leper, and make him white, and for ever clean. You remember the time when, with broken hearts and bruised spirits and weeping eyes, you first appeared in the presence of the eternal God. Guilt was heavy upon your consciences, and you loathed yourselves on account of what you knew of your sin. Feeling you were unclean, you realised the fact that you were a dying creature, and in appearing

before the Saviour you said, as did the leper, "If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean."

Now this is how, as a rule, the life of God first manifests itself in the hearts of His people. Joy and pleasure are not the first feelings; satisfaction is not the first state of mind experienced. Sinners are carried by the Spirit into the presence of infinite purity; and whilst the light of God's countenance falls upon them, they realise their condition, and confess the same before God, acknowledging also the pleasing fact that there is sufficient power in Christ's arm, and sufficient virtue in His blood to remove their leprosy, and make them whole and clean. The individual then was first of all a sufferer.

In the second place, the leper was not only a sufferer, he was also *a believer*; and that is an interesting fact. He came and knelt before Him, and said, "I know that if Thou wilt Thou canst make me clean." He was, therefore, a believer in Christ; and, consequently, he was a saved man: so he was on the very borders of the kingdom, and salvation was not far him. God had given him a living faith, which is a very important and precious principle. Let us observe here, that the faith of the leper was both limited and unlimited. It was limited: "If Thou wilt." It was also unlimited in another respect: "If Thou wilt Thou *canst* make me clean." His faith was limited: as to the willingness of Jesus to save him; it was unlimited as to His ability to do so. His faith had plenty of room as to the almighty power of the Saviour; but when he contemplated His will, his faith staggered and stopped; and he said in all humility, "I cannot say what Thy will concerning me and my case may be, but I do declare that should it be Thy pleasure to have mercy upon me, there is mercy enough in Thy heart and in Thy hand for me." He did not hesitate as to the depth of mercy, but as to His willingness to exercise it towards him. You observe here, that he was a believer in the sovereignty of Christ as well as in His almighty power. He felt that he had no claim upon the Lord, and that his cleansing or otherwise, must necessarily be referred to the absolute sovereignty of the Saviour. The leper felt that there was nothing that he was acquainted with to bind Jesus to have mercy upon him, therefore he fell down at His feet, and in great humility acknowledged that he was before a Sovereign, who had a right to do as He pleased with His own, but that He possessed almighty ability and power. Dear friends, we do not half appreciate salvation, unless we view it as flowing not only from divine power, but from divine sovereignty and love.

The man was a believer in the sovereignty of the healing Priest that stood before him. He also confessed by this his own unworthiness. "If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean." It is very proper and necessary to have a deep sense of our unworthiness, and if the Holy Ghost has led us into the presence of God we are truly sensible of that fact. I do not think the tears of wonder, of sorrow, or of penitence ever flow unless one has a measure of that feeling, I mean a sense of his unworthiness to receive blessings from the great and holy God. You first observe how rich and great these blessings are, and then you contrast them with your own unworthiness; and your heart is melted, and you fall before the glorious giver, and ascribe all the power, the praise, and glory to His mercy. If

one may speak for others, we require a deeper sense of this great fact that we are unworthy beings. Well, this was the experience of the leper before Christ, and it is the experience of every one that is saved by God. We observe here, that since this man was a believer he was in possession of that most important grace called faith, than which nothing on the earth is more precious. Why, its possession proves the sinner's interest in salvation. You say, that is inverting the general order of things. I don't mind that. If you possess faith, you are thereby proved to be interested in salvation. Faith is the gift of God, and He would never have given you this grace had there not been salvation in Christ for you. The things which you are brought to believe in, were in Christ for you, before you received faith. It was God's intention to give you saving blessings; therefore he gave you that living power in your hearts, by which alone those blessings are received in His good time. Hence faith is a precious grace. Besides, it is that which the world cannot give, and, thank God, the world cannot take it away. And we bless God there are times when our faith is sufficiently strong to appropriate the Saviour, and call eternal things our own.

Yes, there are moments when faith lays hold on the promise, creeps under the name of Jesus, rests upon His finished work, looks into the future, and sees no cloud, no uncertainty, and mounts on high as on eagles' wings, and contemplates the glory world with satisfaction and delight. I am not now speaking without the Book, nor going beyond the bounds or limits of the experience of a child of God. There are sacred pleasures, sometimes in the breast of a true believer, such as the world can neither give nor take away, or human eloquence describe. Doubtless this poor leper possessed this faith as a principle, though not its full assurance; and every living petitioner, the first time he appears before the throne, is in possession of, at least, the root of this mysterious power; so that if the Saviour said to him, *Believest thou that I am able to save thee?* he would say, "Yea, Lord, if Thou wilt Thou canst make me clean." Such persons would give all to know that Christ is as willing to save them as He is able. They know His ability is deep and unlimited, and they wonder whether He will exercise His great mercy in saving persons so wretched as they.

In the third place, the leper was not only a sufferer and a believer, he was a *worshipper*. Let me again direct your attention to the text, "There came a leper to Him, beseeching Him, and kneeling down to Him, and saying to Him, *If Thou wilt.*" He was a worshipper and a petitioner. It is interesting to observe that those necessities which are most severely pressing upon the heart and the mind, always appear in prayer; so that if you could put your ear against the closet-door, when the petitioner is pouring out his heart before God, you would be sure to ascertain what trials and troubles press most heavily upon him; for in prayer the bitterest grief comes to the surface. He makes the most of that, and presents that sorrow before God, with all the fervour he possesses, and with all the earnestness of deep necessity. I do not know whether this leper was rich or poor. Sometimes the rich became lepers. King Uzziah became a leper. Naaman, the Syrian, was a leper. But whether this man was poor or rich, whether he had many relations or otherwise,

he said nothing on this occasion about his temporal circumstances, they did not now press heavily on his mind. His poor dying body was covered with leprosy, which he carried wherever he went, and which made him a burden to himself. Whatever beauties appeared in the road, and whatever there was in the visible heavens to engage general attention, nothing alleviated his sufferings or eased his pain. He carried about on himself a mass of sores, and a weight of suffering, all of which disappeared in a minute or two, when he met the Lord. He did not refer to his poverty, privation, or hunger, but to his leprosy. "If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean." He was a true petitioner; and the word "beseech," together with his attitude, are introduced into our text. I think, notwithstanding what a certain writer says, that there was life in his heart, and that it was grace that brought him on his knees, that opened his lips, that revealed to him the greatness of the Saviour, and that gave him his unlimited faith in Christ's ability to save him from a living death. He was a petitioner.

Now let us apply all this to ourselves, so far as self-application is possible. Do we know what it is to appear in a suffering condition before the Saviour? Do we know what it is to exercise a heaven-given faith in the ability of the Lord to remove our guilt and to save our souls? Do we know what it is to hesitate concerning His willingness? I know He is able. I wonder whether He be willing. Can we go a little further, and say, yes, He is able, and He is willing too; for He touched our hearts, healed our souls, and led us forth into the enjoyment of liberty. One says, Yes, I think I can say this for myself, for I remember those two periods in the history of the Christian. I remember the time when I wondered whether He would save me. I knew He could if He would. I prayed Him to open His mind, and I fell at His feet, saying, "Wilt Thou have mercy upon me, and save my soul?" And I think I know something of the other period in the history of believers, when the Saviour said, as it were, "I will; be thou clean;" when He said, "Loose him, and let him go." Thus much for the leper, or for the sinner.

Now, let us look in the second place, at the *Healer or the Priest*. "Jesus moved with compassion, put forth His hand, and touched him." There are three or four points to be considered here. First, the Saviour's *pity*; secondly, His *power*; thirdly, His *word*; and, fourthly, His *touch*. In the first place, one or two remarks on His *pity and compassion*. "He was moved with compassion." What a word to apply to the incarnate God,—*"moved with compassion!"* How many persons had seen that leper that day we do not know. Not one of them probably had been moved with compassion; but here now was the Saviour, and here was the sinner. The sinner had opened his mouth, and spoken a few words, pouring forth all his heart; and the Son of God, who listened to him, was moved with compassion. Will you look at a point here for a moment? There was a terrible disease in the body of the leper, and the deepest sorrow in his heart; and at the same moment there were the deepest compassion and pity in the heart of the Lord towards him: and that is always the case, my friends. If I have a trembling sinner present, let him hear, that is always the case between the sufferer and his Lord. At the very moment the heart is full of sorrow, and running over with

woe, at that very moment compassion moves in the heart of Jesus. They are simultaneous; grief here on earth, and compassion there in heaven. Woe and suffering in our heart, and pity, affection and tenderness in the heart of Christ on the throne of glory. The compassion of our Lord is a saving power and excellency, whereas in us it sometimes makes us miserable. Sympathy in our spirits has sometimes rendered us truly unhappy, simply because we were powerless and helpless, and could not reach the sufferer, nor remove his pain, nor help to bear his burden. Our love is sometimes greater than our power. We are willing, but not able, and our very willingness torments us; but the pity of Jesus is saving, and never goes beyond the power of His arm. His ability and His willingness are co-equal. "If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean." And He was moved with compassion.

Then, secondly, we have His *will* and His *power*. "I will." The will of Christ moves His power, and His power executes His will. Our Lord is not doing all He could do, but all He *will* do; and He is the only being in the universe that can say, I will do all my pleasure." There are thousands of persons that are willing to help others, but are not able, and thousands that are able, but are not willing. Our dear Lord, however, is both divinely willing and divinely able. His ability is acquired, and it is essential to His own happiness. He will because He can, and He can because He will. "I will; be thou clean, for I have died for thee;" and the fountain of My blood has been opened for thy cleansing. I have acquired a right to give grace, and it is mine to speak pardon. I can, therefore, and I will save; "Be thou clean; and the leprosy departed from him."

Then notice again *His word*. The Saviour's heart was moved; His mouth was opened, and He spoke the words, "I will; be thou clean." It was a mighty word, and a Divine power attended it; and it is still a fact that diseases, storms, and tempests always obey the Master's commands. The leper heard Him, and the leprosy obeyed the word of the great Physician, and instantly disappeared before His powerful order; and immediately he was cleansed. The work of a Physician is progressive, even if He well understand His patient's case, and is treating it properly, and it takes a favourable turn. In a case of fever, for instance, the recovery is always gradual, requiring weeks or months to perfect the cure. But where the word of a king is there is power, and where the Word of the Saviour Jesus is, there is saving power; hence, immediately he was cleansed and made whole. He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and the leprosy departed.

It is very interesting to my mind that He put forth His hand, and *touch*ed him. This was the act of the priest, the great High Priest of our profession. The Jewish high priest was ordered to see persons that supposed they were in a leprous condition, and having examined them, he was to pronounce upon the different cases. If there was any measure of uncertainty the individual was to be shut up seven days, and examined again, and if the case proved to be one of real leprosy, the priest was simply to pronounce the person unclean; that was all he could do. He was either to say, "It is not, or it is the plague. If the latter, the

person left the town or the city, and took up his abode in an isolated place, and with his lip covered he cried, Unclean! The priest could not heal him. But our great High Priest put forth His hand and touched him. The leprosy was a contagious disease. It is a very humbling and instructive fact, that we can convey diseases to one another by a touch; but we cannot so convey our health. A healthy mother cannot convey her health to her sickly child, but an unhealthy one can convey her disease to her babe. Jesus is a holy Saviour and a holy Lord: He can neither commit sin nor convey it. He cannot convey this moral disease, but He can impart His own holiness or health to the diseased sinner. He did so on this occasion by a word, and by a touch. He touched the man, and said, "I will; be thou clean," and a cure was immediately effected. One thing more I should like to remind you of, as it may not have occurred to you, and that is, this poor man was on his knees when the Saviour touched and cured him. He came a leper, "beseeching Him, and kneeling down to Him," and whilst he was on his knees, presenting his petition to the healing Saviour, the Lord was moved with compassion, and touched the diseased sufferer, and communicated health and happiness.

This brings us lastly to notice *the salvation itself*. As soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed. Had we time we might look at this in two relations—first, *in relation to Christ*; it aggrandised Him, just as wonderful cures effected by a physician render him famous. Our Jesus saves the greatest sinners, and cures the worst cases of moral leprosy, such as the thief on the cross, and Mary Magdalene. There never was such a Saviour as our Lord, and He was made for Himself an everlasting name. Blessings on the Lamb that bore the curse for wretched man! *Secondly*, looking at the subject in relation to the sinner, let us say salvation changes almost everything. What was wealth, or riches, or landed estates, or even a throne to a leper! Whatever his possessions were, he was incapable of enjoying any of them. What did a cure do for him but change everything? There was no human cure for the leprosy; but if it left him by the divine blessing, everything was changed. In the first place, his flesh and person became healthy again. In the second place, the cure restored him to his family. Thirdly, he might go into a walled town, and live and build there. And, fourthly, he might go into the temple and worship there. What does salvation effect for the sinner? It saves his soul; it brings him into the church of God; it associates him with all the angels of God in heaven, and it restores him to God himself. The God of holiness, and the man that was a guilty, helpless, lost and ruined sinner, are brought together, and the individual so cleansed is clean for God. If the Saviour has thus cleansed us, we shall be found clean for Him and for heaven, and, by-and-bye, clean enough for the immediate presence of God for ever. The Lord add His blessing, for Christ's sake. Amen.

Printed and published by J. BRISCOX, 28, Banner-street, Bunhill-row, London, E.C.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

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

May be had also of ELLIOT STOCK, 62, Paternoster Row, London.

THE WORLD, ITS FULNESS, AND ITS OWNER.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, 14th MAY, 1882.

“If I were hungry, I would not tell thee; for the world is Mine, and the fulness thereof.”—Psa. l. 12.

OUR God is the speaker in this Psalm. No doubt it refers to the wonders and glories of the gospel dispensation; and God says, “I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt offerings to have been continually before Me. Every beast of the forest is Mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills.” I beg your attention to these declarations. It is your God that says, more than all His creatures can say, “I know all the fowls of the mountains, and the wild beasts of the field are Mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee; for the world is Mine, and the fulness thereof.” This declaration is a divine truth, and it is important to us all.

I shall, in the first place, contemplate the *fact asserted*; and, in the second place, *draw two or three inferences from the subject*.

In the first place, let us contemplate the *fact asserted*,—“The world is Mine, and the fulness thereof.” It is not my intention to offer any observations on the first clause of the verse,—“If I were hungry, I would not tell thee.” Our God is a spirit, and the Lord Jesus Christ on the throne of eternal glory is both God and man. All physical infirmities are for ever absent from His wondrous person, and hunger and thirst to infinite majesty in heaven are simply impossible. Our Lord never requires bread or water; and we bless His name that such is the present state of things, and the nature of salvation, that the blood of bulls and calves and goats is not required. However, He speaks in relation to His own conscious greatness, and says, “If I were hungry, I would not tell thee.” Thousands and thousands of beings on earth are hungry, and they receive their meat from Him; and thousands and thousands in heaven require the presence of Jesus there, and He satisfies and fills them all for ever. But whilst He is ever feeding the hungry, and satisfying the thirsty, and filling all the capacious minds that are glorified in heaven, He Himself receives nothing from any of His creatures; but He says, “If I were hungry, I would not tell thee.” I want, however, to limit my attention for a few minutes to the latter part of the verse,—“For the world is Mine, and the fulness thereof.”

VOL. III., No. 26.—JUNE 15, 1882.

I do not hesitate to apply these words to Christ, or to regard them as having been originally addressed to the children of Israel by the great Redeemer; and surely if they are His words, Christ is God; for who but the everlasting Jehovah can truthfully say, "The world is Mine, and the fulness thereof." The devil is in the world, and he said before God that he had been going to and fro, and walking up and down in it, but although he is here, and is perpetually busy, in a way that is quite in accordance with his own nature, the world is not his, nor does any part of it belong to him. Every stone and every mountain, every hill and every valley, every blade of grass and every tree, every bird of the air and fish of the sea, every beast of the field and every man, all are the property of God. Satan is the proprietor, the owner of nothing but sin and condemnation, and that which God hates and punishes. "All," says the Redeemer, "all is Mine, the world itself, and the fulness thereof."

Now let us observe, in the first place, that *the world is His creature*; and I am almost lost when I contemplate it as a creature. Beloved friends, how marvellous a creature is this world! When we speak of it as a barren land, as a desert, and as a waste howling wilderness, I suppose we have reference to sin and to circumstances, and no reference whatever to its materials, its shape, its position, its dimensions, or its natural characteristics. Man, only man, is vile, and, in consequence of sin, the present state is represented as a desert land and a wilderness. But try for a minute to contemplate the world apart from sin, and as one of the creatures of the great Creator, and are you not lost, and do not the words which I have spoken astonish you? not because they are my words, or because I have uttered them, but because they convey a very marvellous truth to your mind. This world is one of the creatures of our God, and how great and glorious must its Maker be! How large, how beautiful, how glorious, how wonderful is the earth! Oh there is much that is wonderful and godlike in what I will venture to call this old world of ours. Our God made it for us, and He is taking us through it; but He never intended it should be our final and everlasting rest. He reneweth the face of the earth, He giveth us all things richly to enjoy; for God is good, in nature, and in providence; and He is immensely good and rich in the wonders of His grace. The world is God's grand conception, for He first draws a plan, and then builds or works according to it. He first forms a purpose and design in His mind, which He executes and fulfils. "With whom took He counsel, and who instructed Him and taught Him in the path of judgment, and taught Him knowledge?" On His throne in the infinite depths of His own eternity, He conceived the grand idea of bringing into existence the world we live in, and having resolved to produce such a creature, He spoke, and the world came into being, out of nothing! He spake, and it was done. He commanded, and it stood fast. The world is God's conception, His creation, His workmanship. The house is large and beautiful and divine, and it is furnished in a manner that is worthy of its Maker, and filled with riches which are worthy of the great Creator. What a vessel is this world! How large, and yet how full! and it has been full ever since God formed it. He says, as it were, the world is My creature, an expression of My power, and a display of My goodness. "If

I were hungry, I would not tell thee; for you are My creatures, and the world is Mine, and the fulness thereof." And He that planned the world and actualised His own idea by creating and filling it, perpetuates and prolongs its existence; for He upholds all things by the word of His power. I pity the atheist, and everything approaching to atheism. I regard with contempt and hatred. A world *like this* without a personal Maker and Preserver and Protector! Oh we have not so learned God, nor the things of the great Eternal. "Before Me there was no God formed;" for "I am the first and the last," saith the Lord. The world came out of nothing at His bidding, and according to the good pleasure of His will; and He that produced it, and perpetuates its existence and fulness, will touch it by and bye, and set it on fire, and—I am not going to speculate—then that great universal destruction will take place, which is so frequently mentioned in the word of divine truth. Well, then, it is God's creature, for He made it. Having made it, what did He do with it? I am not going into astronomy; but some of my young friends, however, may catch a thought here, not of mine, but from a fact I will mention. How did God dispose of the world after he had made it? Well, the Bible tells us? "He hangeth the earth upon nothing;" and yet we are told by philosophers that the Bible clashes with scientific truth. Why, He hangeth the earth, the large world He had made, upon nothing; and science itself has never been able to express that astronomical fact with greater precision, or in a more descriptive manner. Another thought—I will just mention it, and pass on. What is the form of the world? Does the Bible indicate its shape? Yes, I think so. "He sitteth upon the *circle* of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers." It appears, therefore, that in the days of Isaiah the prophet, the form of the earth was understood, as well as the fact that the great Creator had hung the world on nothing. That is all I will say on that part of the subject.

I notice, in the next place, that the world is not only God's creature, it is *His residence*. "The world is Mine." That is to say, it is one of the residences of the great Jehovah. In one important and blessed respect, God resides in heaven, in the high and holy place, for there is a better world than this. Heaven is the metropolis of the universe, and the seat of Divine government, and there is God's throne, and God there unfolds His character, and reveals Himself, as He has never revealed Himself here. Christ dwells in heaven, in all His glory, and scatters infinite delights on all the happy minds there. I send my memory through this chapel, and think of beloved brethren and sisters who for years occupied seats here and there, and who used to listen to me with earnestness and prayerful attention, and I try to realise the fact that those very minds are now at home in glory. Those spirits, which used to drink in the word so feebly preached here, are now immersed in all the bliss of being above. Then I turn my eyes for a minute upon myself, and ask the question, Am I in Jesus? Is Christ in my heart, formed there the hope of glory? If so, I shall soon see them all again, and become united to them in glory; and, like them,

"Bathe my weary soul
In seas of heavenly rest."

Yes, He that made this world, and dwells in it, does not reside here, as He dwells in heaven above ; and yet there is a sense in which this world is His abode. Christ has several residences, and they are mentioned in the word. He dwells in Zion, which is His church and His beloved people. "The Lord loveth the gates of Zion, more than all the dwellings of Jacob. This is my rest for ever ; here will I dwell : for I have desired it." This is one of the numerous reasons why I am a member of the church on earth, why I wish to remain a member of it all the days of my life, and why I believe it to be the duty and privilege of every child of God, to become publicly and avowedly identified with God's church on the earth. My brethren, I think it is most important to dwell where God dwells, and to have a resting place where Christ says He rests. "This is my rest for ever ; here will I dwell : for I have desired it." Some persons say, they have made up their minds never again to join a Christian church, having belonged to two or three, and always suffered when they were in them ; and now, being free, they mean to be free all their days. They mean that they have taken a license to live in disobedience, and to go down to death out of fellowship with the church, although it is the residence and rest of God. Well, go on, and take all the comfort you can get in such a course. I am pleased and thankful to know that my Lord is not like you. If there are differences and disturbances in His church, He does not leave it, He still dwells there. "This is My rest for ever ; for I have desired it." Heaven is one of His residences, and the church is another, and He dwells—I do not know how, only I have some feeling and experience He dwells in human hearts. "To this man will I look, and with this man will I dwell, who is of a humble and contrite spirit, and who trembleth at My word." He dwells in heaven in all His glory; He dwells in His church by His grace, His Spirit, His word, and His providence; and He dwells in the heart by faith: There is another of His residences which I must mention, and that is hell; and there the presence of God is realised in the terrible forms of His justice and wrath, and the curse due to sin. But He *is* here. This world is His residence. "Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool;" and it is a blessing for the world that its Maker dwells in it. Another fact should be mentioned: Eighteen hundred and eighty two years ago the Maker of the world came into it personally, to pay it a visit, which was a long one, extending over a period of thirty-two or thirty-three years. He came into His own world, as His creatures enter it, by a woman; for He was made of a woman, and made under the law. He was born into it to fulfil the purpose of His visit. He came to tabernacle with men, and He did so. His visit was a redeeming visit. He put off His robes of glory, and left them in heaven; and for our sakes He became poor, that we, through His poverty, might be made rich. Having accomplished the purpose for which He came into the world, He went out of it at a door which He opened for Himself; and ascended to His God, and our God, and to His Father and our Father. Bless His name for ever coming into this world, and tabernacling here with poor lost and ruined sinners! It appears that Jesus Christ went everywhere to acquire a universal Lordship and dominion. He proved His dominion over the sea, for He walked

upon and controlled it. To obtain a peculiar dominion over this world, He came into it, lived in and overcame it. In order to acquire a peculiar dominion over the devil, He met him in this world, in the field of conflict, and conquered and spoiled him. "If I were hungry, I would not tell thee;" for the world is My creature, and My residence.

In the next place, the world *is the scene of divine operations*. God is always at work, and that everywhere; therefore He is always at work in this world. First, it is the scene of divine providence. "I will work, and who shall let it?" What is providence but God at work? And what is God doing, but all His own pleasure? "I will do all My pleasure." That person is usefully and profitably engaged, who is constantly watching the operations of God in providence. It has been suggested that he that watches providence, shall never want a providence to watch; and some persons do not think it right that Christians should watch the providence of God. Watch, for every child of God should endeavour to see the hand of his Father in all things; for it is to be seen in connection with all events, and God's hand is always worth seeing. It is connected with events that are painful and bitter, and with events that are stripping, and by which we are plunged into sorrow. And if I could be brought to believe that sorrow, anguish, and pain came to me independently of the eternal God, and proceeded from chance, I should be a miserable man. No, the world is the Lord's, and He is at work in it; at the north pole and at the south; where the sun rises and where he sets; on the sea and on the land. Hail and rain, snow and vapour, fulfil His word. In the second place—and this should lead us to look at the subject with peculiar feelings—this world, not heaven, and not any other world that I know of, was the scene of redemption. We do not know about other worlds in connection with Bible truths. Here was the cross where the Redeemer died; here He lived; here He laboured; here He was poor; here He became a curse; here He was condemned; here He was smitten; here He was enveloped in the flames of God's wrath; here He put away sin; here He unstung death; here He conquered the grave; here He was in conflict with the powers of darkness, and here He overcame them. The world is His, and whilst it is the scene of providential work, it was the scene of redemption also. Again, and this is an important fact, it is the scene of regeneration. The new birth takes place here. Surely there are a good many things in this old world of ours that tend to make it interesting. The new birth never took place in hell, and it never takes place in heaven. Ye must be born again, and in this world, which belongs to our Lord. A new-born heir of God cries yonder, and He that is in the world sees and hears it, whilst it feels and prays for salvation. Feel, did I say? Yes, I did; for no human being hears God's new-born child feel for mercy. The Maker of the world, and the Redeemer of sinners, is present here, and knows the desires of regenerated souls, and will fulfil their wishes, whether uttered or unexpressed. Once more, this world is the scene of the pilgrimage of the church of God. This is not our rest; we are going home; being on our way to a better world than this. Now they desire a better country. You know the word better is comparative, and it follows, therefore, that there is something good here,

but infinitely much that is better there. Indeed, let us say that heaven is best of all. Well, God's people are wending their way through His world, therefore do not again say that you are in an enemy's land; for the world is the Lord's, and you are not in the territory of the devil, nor under the dominion of an enemy. This world is the Lord's, and you are going through it to that better one, which the blessed Redeemer has taken possession of for you; though while we travel forward we meet the devil, the powers of darkness, and their fierce temptations. Although you know I am older than some of you, and not so old as others, I tell you I am a disappointed man. I thought between forty and fifty years ago, that long before this I should have been perfect, or nearly so, and should have been able to overcome all spiritually hostile influences; but I seem to be worse, or more sinful than ever, and instead of being stronger, I am weaker, at least that is my feeling. There is still something in my mind, I cannot describe it, which is exceedingly traitorous, and would open the door to the devil, and admit the powers of darkness into my very breast, were it not for the Owner of the world, and the Saviour of the people, and the keeping power of divine grace. The world is His, but it is a scene of turmoil, conflict, and suffering. Well, here we have miseries, but we have mercies also; and let us when we talk about our miseries, not forget our mercies. I do not think, my dear friends, we have much reason to complain. In the day of prosperity be joyful; in the day of adversity consider; for the Lord hath set the one over against the other, to the end that man should find nothing after him. As a rule—and there may be exceptions—prosperity casts a peculiar light upon adversity, while adversity tends to sweeten prosperity. It is not all prosperity, it is not all adversity. Our miseries are of ourselves; our mercies are of the Lord: and the miseries which are of ourselves are overruled by Him, whose we are, and whom we serve. And here is the scene of the ministry of angels. "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"

Fourthly, *this is only one province of the dominion of Christ*. This world was made for creatures; hell is prepared for sinners; heaven is prepared for new creatures. All are holy in heaven. All are unholy in hell. There is a mixture of sin and holiness in this world, which is only a province of the vast and universal dominion and empire of our great and glorious Lord.

Now just a word *on its fulness*. "The world is Mine, and the fulness thereof." What is the nature of its fulness? Well, it is a natural and a material fulness, suited to the requirements and necessities of God's creatures; but it is an unsanctifying and an unsatisfying fulness; for He who has most of the fulness of the world is, if destitute of divine grace, an unholy being. There is nothing of the world, and nothing in it, that can ever sanctify or satisfy the mind. The world was not made by God to satisfy and fill the mind of man; and since that was not His original intention, men have never found satisfaction here. Only the great Creator can fill the capacious minds of His human creatures. What is the extent of this fulness? Just now we are painfully agitated about the unemployed, and books have been pub-

lished to prove that in the course of time the population of the world will be so great, that it will not be large enough to hold them. Depend upon it, my dear friends, our God is an infinitely wise Builder, and the house will always be found large enough for His creatures, and to contain enough for them all. "The earth is Mine, and the fulness thereof." The fulness will be sufficient for His creatures, and always sufficient to answer the great purpose of the Creator Himself.

Now let me pass on, and *draw one or two inferences from the subject.* The first is this: *God has a peculiar, a special interest in this world.* There is a world within a world; a family within a family; an eternal abiding interest in an interest, which is perishing and passing away, namely, His ransomed church. Here they are brought into natural existence; here they receive spiritual life, and here they are fitted and prepared for their home. They are led by their saving God in this world, through which they are gradually wending their way; for, as we said just now, this is not their rest. Heaven is their predestinated and everlasting home. Secondly, and I beg attention to this, *the fulness of the earth is distributed by its Author.* "The world is Mine, and the fulness thereof." You say there are many poor creatures who are so pinched and straitened, that when they have had one meal they know not where the next is to come from. I do not deny that there are mysteries in the government of our God which I cannot explain, and depths in His providence which I cannot fathom. Nevertheless, it is not for me to deny the pleasing fact, that the fulness of the world is God's property, and that its great owner distributes it according to His own will and pleasure. I say nothing just now, for I cannot descend into those particulars—about the providence or the improvidence of creatures; all that is over-ruled by the Lord our God. Let us look at the wicked and the righteous in the world. God's dealings with them often puzzle many of His dear people. "I was envious at the wicked, when I saw their prosperity," said one. Now it is a mystery to many of the children of God, that they should be so tried, and that their circumstances should be pinching; while their neighbours, who curse and blaspheme almost everything that is divine, should be rich, or in circumstances much above theirs. This perplexes many of God's people, and they say: Why is it so? we rise early, and sit up late; we eat the bread of carefulness, we look at a sixpence half-a-dozen times before we lay it out, and yet we are constantly going back, perpetually burdened, and always tried. Near to us there is an enemy of God, and of holy things, in whose hand everything appears to become gold. God seems to bless him and all his labours, whatever he may do. How is this? Well, I do not know, and can only speak the word which the Saviour has put into my mouth. "Thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus his evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented." My brother, it is infinitely better to have an interest in the God that made the world, and to be able to call Him your Father, than to be interested in a province, in a country, or than it would be to own the whole world, and have no saving interest in its Maker. If our cups are a little larger than those of our brethren, we owe God a greater debt than they. Let us never, however, forget

that we are fallen creatures and guilty beings, and that if we have a sufficiency from God's fulness in the world, we have more than we deserve. Having food and raiment, house and home, and wherewithal to carry us down to the grave, O for grace to be content! for we are in good hands. Thirdly, *this world, it appears, is connected with heaven.* This truth is taught in the book of Genesis. Jacob dreamed, and he saw a ladder, the foot of which rested upon the earth, and the top of which reached heaven; and God Himself stood above it, and spoke to Jacob: "In all places whither thou goest I will be with thee." A ladder is still standing. I do not mean the literal one which Jacob saw, but the Great Mediatorial Ladder, the Lord Jesus Christ. You know a ladder connects two or more points, and the Lord Jesus connects God's throne with the world in which we dwell. We are going gradually and safely up this ladder into glory. A ladder is a temporary way, and when the purpose for which it was raised has been fulfilled, it is lowered and removed. So when the great purpose for which Christ came from heaven to earth has been fulfilled, and all His people are saved, then the present state of things will cease. Till then "The world is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof, and He will continue to reside in it." Lastly, infer from this *the safety of God's people.* "The world is Mine, and the fulness thereof." Speaking of the world morally, the Saviour said, "In Me ye shall have peace: in the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." Now if this world is the property of your Saviour, and He reigns over it, and rules in it, then

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

He said to His disciples, The world is Mine; go into it everywhere and preach the gospel. You will be opposed, but you have My authority. Go and preach the gospel to every creature. God's ministers have a right, founded on the Master's authority, to preach the gospel everywhere; and those powers and laws which are opposed to the preaching of the Word, are opposed to the authority and command of the Maker of the world. Well, my friends, ministers are safe, and the gospel also, in the hands of Christ. The Lord will accomplish His mighty purpose. The little flock, the feeble lambs here and there, are wending their way in perfect safety to their distant fold, and to the pastures of eternal glory above.

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

Grant me

"Safety on earth, and after death,
The plenitude of heaven."

Amen.

THE NEXT SERMON WILL BE READY ON JULY 15TH, 1882.

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

PRICE ONE PENNY.

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

May be had also of ELLIOT STOCK, 62, Paternoster Row, London.

THE REDEEMER IN ZION.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JUNE 18th, 1882.

"And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord."—Isa. lix. 20.

THE holy experience of the saints of God is the result of the indwelling and operation of the Spirit. He always works in intimate and inseparable connection with the Son, and with the Father. The Father's love is shed abroad in the hearts of saved sinners. The blood of Christ is sprinkled upon their consciences, and His righteousness justifies and adorns them; and the almighty power which works in them is the power of the Holy Spirit. The principle of divine life in every believer is of the Holy Ghost; and hence the graces which proceed from it are designated the fruits of the Spirit. These graces are like the life out of which they arise, and hence, faith, and hope, and love, and all the other fruits of the Spirit, are living graces; and, like their Author, they are holy and pure. It is most important that ministers should in preaching set forth the person and operations of the Spirit; for, just as we should have had no Saviour, had it not been for the Father's love, and no justification, had it not been for the blood and righteousness of Jesus; so neither should we have had divine life in the soul, without the operations of the Spirit of God. The Bible is a revelation of God and of His will, its promises must be fulfilled, its doctrines must be verified, and all the declarations of divine love and justice must be made good. The church of God is profitably employed when its members are found sitting at the feet of Jesus, watching the operations of His providence and grace, whereby He fulfils the word of divine truth. But the word of God must, in a great measure, be fulfilled in the experience of the people of God. I say in a great measure, because certain portions of the word relate to creation, to nations, and to the future. All spiritual things promised shall be communicated to God's people, and they shall realize the fulfilment of all that He has revealed; and, therefore, the important words, which immediately precede my text, shall be made good in their experience. God speaks positively and absolutely: "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." Notwithstanding God's omnipotence, and His determination to save His people from all evil, it is a wondrous fact that He permits evil in the world, and enemies to prevail to some extent. He could, if He pleased, so chain the devil, as to prevent him

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from tempting, and so bind every hostile power, as to prevent it from moving ; but although Satan is bound, his liberty is very considerable, and he is permitted to exercise, in a very great degree, his diabolical power. The enemy is constantly going round about the camp, examining its weak points, and watching for openings there, that he may come in like a flood. If no opening appears, he is sometimes permitted to make one ; but our God is on His throne, and beholds all He permits to take place, and when the enemy has reached a certain point, the Spirit of the Lord appears with a standard, saying, "Thus far mayest thou go, but no further ; and here shall thy power be stayed." The enemy sometimes comes in as a flood of doubts and fears, at other times as a flood of error, at other times as a flood of persecution, and sometimes he comes into individual souls in floods of evil thoughts and unholy feelings ; but the Lord does not leave His people, for they are dear to Him as the apple of His eye, and are loved with all His heart. Their salvation is essential to His glory ; and since He has made a perfect arrangement for saving them, it is said, "The Spirit shall lift up a standard against him." Some great and gracious men believe that in these words we have a view of the Triune God. We have the Spirit as the standard-bearer, the Lord promising or the Father, and the Standard, which is Jesus Christ, whom the Spirit reveals and applies. Whenever the Spirit of God opposes the devil, and the rising and raging evil within, He does so by manifesting the person, applying the blood and righteousness, and communicating the grace of the Redeemer. "The Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against Him. And the Redeemer shall come to Zion and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord."

Let me direct your attention to the two branches into which the text divides itself, first, *the glorious title of our Lord*, the Redeemer, and secondly, *the merciful promise concerning Him*. And the Redeemer shall come to Zion and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob ; and all this shall be verified ; for it is added, "saith the Lord."

A few thoughts in the first place, on the glorious person exhibited in the text, or upon the *glorious title of our Lord—the Redeemer*. The names of Jesus are always precious to Him who gave them,—I mean the Father, and to Him who unfolds their meaning,—I mean the Spirit, and to Him who bears them, Jesus Himself. But His names will always be precious to all poor sinners who feel their need of what those names indicate. He is a Prophet, Priest and King. We bless Him for the light He has brought from heaven, for the information he has brought from His and our Father, for it is good news from a far country. The Bearer of that good news was our saving Lord. We thank and bless Him as our Priest, for all our holy and happy hopes of heaven are based upon His priestly character and work. And we bless Him as our King ; for under the shadow of His throne we are safe ; His laws and precepts we revere, and pray for grace to follow and obey them, for His name is precious, and every Bible representation of Him is sanctifying and savingly important to our souls. I do not know, however, a more precious or important title than that which is in our text this morning ; "and the Redeemer shall come to

Zion." Let us confine our attention to this title. Jesus is the Redeemer. Oh that we might be able to say, the Redeemer of Israel has redeemed us, and is progressively carrying us through all evil.

Let us notice first, *the relation in which He stands to His people*. You have heard of Jesus Christ as our *Goel* or "near kinsman." He is very closely related to us. He is our near kinsman and the right of redemption was His. I would not go too far, nor speak otherwise than with reverence, and yet I think I am within the limits of truth, when I say that Jesus Christ was bound to redeem His people. Think of that word as I did before I used it, and I have used it with some solemn feeling. Jesus, our *Goel*, our near kinsman, was bound to redeem us. When Naomi returned with Ruth to Canaan, negotiations were entered into for the purpose of redeeming a parcel of land. Boaz was closely related to Naomi and Ruth, and the right of redemption was his. He received the intelligence of his relationship to Ruth with peculiar feelings, and acknowledged the obligation arising out of it. Howbeit he said, "There is a kinsman nearer than I. If he declines to redeem thee, I will do the part of a kinsman to thee." So the Lord Jesus Christ is bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh ; our near kinsman, and the right of redemption was His. He did as He pleased about entering into covenant engagements, but He took our nature and became our Brother, and willingly and cheerfully took obligations upon Himself, which were wondrously solemn, and solemnly binding, and when His brethren fell into universal ruin, He was held bound to redeem them, for He was their near kinsman ; and hence, "the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression, saith the Lord." My dear friends, we are not beholden to a stranger for our comforts, our privileges, and our mercies. Sometimes a benefactor is anonymous, his liberality is great, and scores or thousands are benefited by him ; but he conceals his name, and never wishes his friends to know to whom they are indebted. But our Lord is not anonymous, our dear Redeemer has not concealed Himself. We are not beholden to a stranger for the tears of sorrow we shed, for our brokenness of heart, or for the precious blood that is applied to us ; but to our nearest friend, our nearest and greatest relation. I do wish I could impress upon the minds of my hearers, generally, that I am not speaking figuratively, that this is not hyperbolical language, but a divine and actual fact, that we are indebted for our redemption to our nearest and dearest Friend, who is next of kin to us. You think your wife is very near to you, or she thinks the same of her husband. Fathers and mothers think their children are very near, their own flesh and bones and blood ; but there is no being in heaven or on earth so near to the saints as Jesus Christ. He is our next of kin, our great and glorious *Goel*, and in one respect He came from heaven from necessity. I trust I shall not be misunderstood, for He had identified Himself with His brethren, having become one with them. This relationship is ancient. The first that ever existed between God and man, and that shall exist for ever and ever. He became one of the people, allied Himself to them, identified Himself with them, and so rendered Himself liable to pay their debts, to redeem their persons, to

liberate them from captivity, to set them eternally free, and to save them in Himself with an everlasting salvation ; and, if I mistake not, the Saviour referred to these early arrangements, when He said to the disciples on the road to Emmaus, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory." He put His hand to the deed, He signed the covenant, and bound Himself to come ; and having done so, He assumed saving obligations and responsibilities, and hence ought He not as Eternal Truth, ought He not as the immutable One, to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory ? From the moment (if I may speak of moments in connection with eternity,) the Father had received Christ's engagement to save, He kept His eye upon Him, and when the Redeemer left His heavenly glory and came to Zion, Justice looked to Him only for payment. Justice did not look for payment to the people. Christ had taken that obligation from them upon Himself, and had bound Himself to pay their debts, to save their souls, and to redeem them from all evil. The people were poor, ruined, empty, and had nothing ; while He who became their Redeemer, and responsible for their salvation, possessed all things. Justice, therefore, followed Him from His heavenly glory into the world, from the manger to Jordan, from Jordan to Gethsemane, from Gethsemane to Calvary and from Calvary to the grave. Justice followed Him everywhere, demanding of Him only the payment of the debt. The Redeemer never hesitated, but went about His work like our God, knowing that His character was involved in the perfect fulfilment of His engagements. He left behind Him a path of shining brightness and glorious light. With hard labour He went straight on towards the cross, and bare our sins in His own body on the tree, where He suffered till they all disappeared, and passed for ever away, and then He said, "It is finished." Then He appeared as the actual and practical Redeemer of His beloved people. The great Redeemer was related to His dear people before He died. This fact is fought against and trampled underfoot ; but let us hold it fast here and at similar places ; for it is a divine fact, and absolutely certain that He redeemed all His relations, and not one of them shall be lost. Make out your fraternal connection with Jesus, and I will undertake to make out to you as plainly and clearly as possible that you are redeemed. If you can only ascertain the fact that Jesus is your Brother, your *Goel*, your near kinsman, it will follow, as a matter of course, that you are eternally redeemed. He did not leave a brother unredeemed. No ; not the least, the feeblest one. He spread the influence of His name and atonement as a Redeemer over the whole family, and covered and comprehended them all, and left not one in eternal captivity and bondage.

Let us notice secondly, *His eternal sufficiency for the work of redemption.* He came prepared and armed, and with a deep and fixed determination to fulfil every jot and tittle of His covenant engagements. He forgot nothing when He left heaven, but brought all that was required with Him. It pleased the Father that in Him all fulness should dwell. It was necessary that our Redeemer should be capable of suffering, bleeding, and dying, and He took a nature that could bleed and die. It was necessary that that nature should, in a mysterious manner, be associated with

infinite worth, greatness, and dignity; and Christ did not become inferior to Himself, when He was made flesh and dwelt among us in Zion, and we behold His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of God, full of grace and truth. The Redeemer, then, that came to Zion, brought with Him that which was required to obtain eternal redemption for us. No other being bled, nor assisted Christ in His obedience, nor helped Him to bear the burden, nor introduced a single thread into the seamless robe which He wrought out and brought in for the justification of His people. All the merit that God demanded, all the worth and excellency that Deity required, were found in that one Being, the Redeemer that went to Jerusalem, and that actually appeared in the temple there. He assumed the title of Redeemer, because it was His intention to redeem. He did not come to make experiments, nor to make us redeemable or salvable. He came to redeem and save. He came not to conduct an experiment, but certainly to accomplish His work; and His future enthronement and honours depended upon the manner in which He carried out the grand intentions. He came prepared to redeem His people. The greatness of our Lord was required by the nature of His work. A workman's genius and ability frequently appear in his work, and the greatness of our Lord Jesus as a Redeemer, appears in the redemption which He accomplished. What has He redeemed us from? All penal evil, or all the woeful consequence of sin, guilt, and transgression. My brethren, we do not half believe this with our hearts; our judgments accept it, our understandings receive it, and our minds adhere to it; it is an article of faith which we hold fast and love very dearly, but we cannot half believe it for ourselves. O that we lived every day under the influence of the pleasing fact that hell to us is impossible, and that curse can never fall upon us! O that we could believe that legal bondage and captivity, in relation to us, are for ever ended! Oh we cannot always believe this; I mean with all our heart. We would believe it feelingly and joyously. O for more of the Holy Spirit's energy and influence! Do, Spirit, come and take the things of Christ, and show them unto us. All evil, that is what He has redeemed us from; but what has He redeemed us unto? I do not fully know. My authority, the Bible, tells me, that He has redeemed us to God and to heaven. We are ever free, and Christ has raised us to an immeasurable height. "Thy gentleness hath made me great, and Thy salvation hath set me up on high." Made nigh to God. Oh what a position is this for creatures, for guilty beings, to occupy! Made nigh to God; made nigh by blood; and by the blood of such a Being, and such a character! Redeemed from the depths of abomination and guilt, where we were, to the heights of grace and glory. I am speaking of the greatness of our Lord. How many have been redeemed? I do not know, and cannot dwell on that point. It is a number that no man can number. What I am trying to set before you is a fact, that the greatness of the Redeemer is demonstrated by the work He has done. He has redeemed from all evil, redeemed unto all good, and the numbers saved are millions and millions of immortal beings. He that could do all that, must have been glorious and great. This God is our God for ever and ever; He will be our Guide

even unto death. Some benefactors injure themselves by benefiting others; their benefactions are sometimes too large for their means and circumstances, and hence occasionally we have heard such a one has injured himself very considerably by his lavish kindness and generosity. Our dear Lord has not injured Himself by redeeming His people. He did not ruin Himself, although He gave Himself an offering for a sweet smelling savour unto God. Exhausted Himself! The work of Christ is not so great as Christ Himself; for He that buildeth the house is greater than the house, and He that performs a work is greater than the work He performs. I love Hart's hymns; but the accuracy of one sentiment of the good man may be questioned, where He says that the Lord of life

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

I do not think our Lord exhausted Himself; for He was, is, and ever will be, the inexhaustible and infinite God. He became poor, it is true, to make us rich; but His voluntary poverty never injured His character, nor diminished His fulness of sufficiency. He became poor in order that, through that opening and outlet, eternal riches might flow into the hearts and homes of His poor and needy people.

Thirdly: What is the work done? It is that of redemption. He has liberated the family, and set them free from legal bondage, and taken them out of the hands of punitive Justice. The Redeemer put the ransom price into the hands of Justice, who was and is perfectly satisfied therewith, and who delivered to Him the key of the prison which held the captives. Our Lord's redeeming work comprehends the whole of our persons—bodies, and souls. It includes all our powers and faculties. Jesus has a right to our souls, not only on the ground of creation, but because He is our Redeemer, and has bought them. He has a right to our affections which He has acquired by purchase; and sometimes when they are bound to the earth, and grovel here below, He sends some terrible blow, and sweeps away that on which they were set, for He claims them for Himself. "Set your affections on things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God." I suppose I have a right, and every member of this church has a right, to be loved by every other member; but I do not know that I have a similar right to the affections of other persons. But Jesus has a right to be loved, a claim upon our supreme and best affections; for He has bought our hearts, and redeemed every faculty from bondage and from death. And all this, my friends, is eternal, and will never end. He has entered within the veil, having obtained eternal redemption for us. Just one word more on the Lord's title, and then I will offer one observation on the second branch of the subject.

The place mentioned. "And the Redeemer shall come to Zion." Zion is a new state of things, introduced by Jesus. It means literally, the hill of Zion upon which the temple stood. Mystically and spiritually, it means the Church of God. Zion is a new state, therefore arising out of, and based upon that work out of which it proceeds. This new state

comes out of the sorrows and sufferings of Christ the Redeemer; and blessed is the man who, as a believer, watches the marvellous process of a living, beauteous, justified, glorified church, arising out of the reconciling sufferings of the God-man Mediator. Well, here is Zion, and the Lord hath founded it on His own purpose, and on the blood of His Son. Zion is a dwelling-place for the Redeemer and His redeemed people. "Here will I dwell, for I have desired it;" and Christ, therefore, it is said, shall come to Zion. This naturally leads me to the second particular.

The promise. "He shall come to Zion." This is definite, and it might be taken in relation to His first advent. He put on our flesh, and appeared in the form of a servant, to redeem His people, as we have already said. I want you to think where He came from. Love existed before He came, and from that eternal love He proceeded, and when He came He brought love with Him; He demonstrated and expressed it: "Herein is love," not that we loved God, but that God loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. He brought the love of God into Zion in His own person, and from His wounds it flowed with His precious, fragrant, and meritorious blood. He came to make an equitable channel for eternal mercy to flow in, so that grace reigns through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Him.

"Oh how sweet to feel the same,
Passing tribulation's flame!"

The ancient love of God to us is now present and nigh, by the fact that Jesus has brought it down, and the Holy Ghost sheds it abroad in our hearts. But Christ comes spiritually to Zion now, and He will come again the second time, without sin, unto salvation. There are one or two points upon which I will not speak positively; yet I am not a time-server. I know whom I have believed, but what I should believe in relation to the final gathering of the Jews, I do not yet quite know. I sometimes think they will not be savingly gathered to the Redeemer, while at other times the Scriptures seem to tend very much in that direction. The apostle Paul quotes this text in the 11th of the Romans, "And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob." But let us notice His visits to His people. They are occasional. We are always thankful for them. There are no visits like His. He never comes at an inconvenient moment. Friends sometimes call upon us when it is not quite convenient, and seriously derange our matters, but the Redeemer always makes room, and obtains a welcome for Himself. He takes possession of the heart at once, however one may be employed. I have a thought in my mind, and do not think it too common. Some of our female friends who are, Martha-like, troubled about many things, and have not time for this and for the other, can lay aside their cares if Jesus Christ is pleased to visit them. If they are immersed in household work and duties, the Lord is always welcome. His visits are necessary. What would Zion be without Him. What dearth prevails in that church which is not visited by Christ. And he will come in connection with revivals

of religion. I am thinking just now not of modern men and their vain excitement, but of that wonderful revival which took place when that great and godly man Luther stood forth and preached the glorious gospel of God's grace. Did not the Redeemer come to Zion then? Was there not then a shaking of the kingdom of darkness. What was it that enabled one man to shake the whole religious world from the topstone to the foundation, but the Redeemer coming to Zion? May He come to us and to all His churches also. Lord revive us while we pass through this barren land. Truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter. The religion now on earth, and which prevails almost everywhere, is a wonderful mystery. I do not know what it is composed of. How God I think must loathe much of it. What we need, brethren, and let us pray for it, is another reviving visit from our Redeemer.

The characters benefited by His visit. Them that turn from transgression. What is this but one of the results of redemption? We turn from transgression because we are redeemed, and the redemption of Jesus Christ secures this change. Turn from it how? With loathing, with fear, with wonder, and with prayer. And what then? The Redeemer shall come to such persons, for He has redeemed them, and the Spirit has turned them from transgression. Let me ask the question, are we among those persons that turn from transgression in Jacob? If so, we are interested in Christ, and His sacrifice for sin; for we should never have turned from transgression if our guilt had not been imputed to Him. Therefore the very fear and anxiety you are the subjects of, are a proof, and with angels a satisfactory proof, that Jesus loved you and gave Himself for you.

"Ne'er had ye felt the guilt of sin,
Nor sweets of pardoning love,
Unless your worthless names had been
Enrolled to life above."

Your sins were imputed to the Saviour, and He put them away by the sacrifice of Himself. Sin turned from was imputed to Christ. Sin loathed was suffered for by Christ, therefore all that are brought to loathe and hate it, are interested in the Lord's redeeming work. And what shall be the result of all this? To God eternal praise, and to the dear Redeemer, many crowns, and to you and me

"Safety on earth, and after death
The plenitude of heaven."

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

THE NEXT SERMON WILL BE READY ON AUGUST 15TH, 1882.

Printed and published by J. BRISCOM, 28, Banner-street, Bunhill-row, London, E.C.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

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

May be had also of ELLIOT STOCK, 62, Paternoster Row, London.

DIVINE MERCY AND COMFORT FOR TRIED BELIEVERS.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,
AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,
ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JULY 16th, 1882.

"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."—2 Cor. i. 3, 4.

The Apostle had no doubt concerning the genuineness of his call by grace, nor did he hesitate for a moment when speaking of the application of the atonement to his heart; and he had no misgivings with regard to his call to the ministry and the office which he filled, as one of the apostles of Jesus Christ. He always possessed the greatest confidence in relation to his office, and therefore in this first verse, he says, "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God." You observe that he spoke positively, for He was satisfied that he was what he was by the grace of God, and that he was a preacher of the gospel according to God's will. It is a great mercy to know God's will, an unspeakable favour to receive grace and power to do it. When we are reconciled to the way of God, and can say with all our hearts, before our heavenly Father, "The will of the Lord be done," we are in a good position. Ministers feel they are safe when they are assured that they are what and where they are, according to the will of God; and when you, beloved brethren, feel that you are acting in accordance with that rule, you proceed with a measure of comfort and confidence in your course. Paul was an apostle of Jesus Christ, and he went to Corinth by the will of God, and therefore he was justified in confidently praying for the presence and blessing of the Lord. He was not what he had been, nor what he would have been, and he was not all that God intended he should subsequently be; but he was a saved sinner, a justified believer, a saint of the most High, a minister of the Gospel, an heir of God and a joint-heir with Jesus Christ; and he was all this by the grace of God.

"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God, and Timothy our brother." The young man Timothy was united with Paul in the work of the ministry in Corinth, and united with him also in this letter. The Apostle was aged, Timothy was a young man and minister of the gospel. The apostle was mercifully free from pride, or, if the root of that evil was in him, the grace of God so reigned that he did not express it, in connection with other ministers of the Gospel. "Timothy our brother." Grace brings all its subjects into one position, they all occupy the same level; the rich are made low, the poor are exalted; and hence "Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted, but the rich in that

he is made low. In social life there are, and always have been, distinctions, and I suppose they will prevail until the end of time. I have no idea that the religion of heaven was intended to level all distinctions in social or political life; but in the church of God all are one. There the poor and the rich meet together on the same platform, for the same purpose, before the same God, interested in the same covenant of grace, and bear the same relation to one another, and to the great Head of the Church. "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low." And the kingdom of grace is one fertile, living, verdant plain, where all the flock of the Redeemer meet together.

This letter was directed, not to the church of Corinth, but to the church of God which was at Corinth, and which met together for worship in that city. There were saints in that city, and at an early period a Christian church was formed there, having many gifts and considerable influence. The apostle tells us that, in everything, the members of that church were enriched by Christ in all utterance and in all knowledge. It is a great mercy to have the mind filled with good thoughts, and no small favour to be enabled to express them. Sometimes an empty mind is attended by a ready flow of words, while at times a well-filled mind finds no power of utterance. It seems, however, that the Corinthian believers were thoughtful saints, and that many of them were gifted with ability to express their thoughts. But where is the Corinthian church now? The church is scattered and has ceased to exist, and the city is under the power of Mahometanism. The candlestick has been removed out of its place; a total, dismal darkness prevails there. Everything in this world is changeable and changing. Christian churches rise and flourish for a few years, then circumstances arise which have a withering influence upon them and they diminish and pass away. Nevertheless, God is on His throne, and His work never stands still. He will work, and who shall let it. All His purposes shall be accomplished and all His decrees fulfilled. He will not lose a child, and the Shepherd will not lose a sheep. A dead lamb has never been found in the fold, nor in the wilderness. "I give unto My sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand." "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." I am not quite sure that the gospel has not been preached in all the world. It has been preached in Asia, in Africa, and in Europe. It is preached in America. It was once preached in Corinth, in Colosse, in Philippi and in many other places, which are now in a state of moral barrenness and destitution. However, there was a green fertile spot in Corinth, in Paul's days, and this letter was directed unto the church of God there, and all the saints which are in all Achaia. Grace be to you and peace, from God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort, and so on.

I want to direct your attention, this morning, to three things. In the first place, we have *the character of God*—the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort. In the second place, *we have the condition of His servants here*; they are in trouble, they are comforted by God in their trouble. In the third place, we have *God's*

peculiar method of dealing with His people in this world. He comforts ministers in all their tribulations that they may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble with the comfort wherewith they are comforted of God.

A few thoughts, in the first place, on *the character or title of God*, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort. I shall not make any critical observations on the relation existing between the Father and the Son; for I do not think that if I were able to dive deeply into that subject, it would serve any very spiritual or important purpose to do so. Nevertheless, we may just say here that God is first of all described as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; and if Jesus is our Lord, our Jesus and our Christ, then His God is our God, and His Father is our Father. We here have the personal, the official, and the acquired names of the Son of God. He is Jesus, for He saves His people from their sins; He is Christ, for He is the anointed of the Father, and He produces Christians,—our Lord who rules and reigns and governs. Can we lay the hands of our faith on these precious names and say, He is our Lord our Saviour, and our Christ? Oh! the time, and some of us remember it well, when the scales fell from our eyes, and the chains were removed from our souls, and our prison doors were opened, and Jesus was seen in His glory as our Lord, God and Saviour; and we were enabled by the Spirit to embrace and address Him, not only as Jesus Christ the Lord, but as our Lord Jesus Christ.

“ Sweet was the time when first I felt
The Saviour's pardoning blood,
Applied to cleanse my soul from guilt,
And bring me near to God.”

I think I know a little about what is called the pleasures of sin, although I know not how to define it; but some people believe there is a pleasure in sin and sinning; and if there is, I have tasted it; and I have also tasted that the Lord is gracious, and been made joyful in His house of prayer; and I am quite prepared to say, most confidently and unhesitatingly, that all other pleasures fade, and sink, and die, before that sacred pleasure experienced by the believer who can say, “He loved me, and gave Himself for me!” You tell me this is fanaticism. If it be so, it is very purifying, very elevating, and very ennobling. Take the very opposite of this whatever that may be, and show me whether it can ennoble, dignify, and purify the mind, like this hollow, empty, nonsensical theory as the things of the great God are called. No, my friends: if religion is a fiction, it is a holy profitable, spiritual, purifying and saving fiction. The world's facts never did half so much good as the church's fiction, supposing religion to be an empty, a cunningly-devised fable. But we *know* it is not a fable, nor an empty theory. There is a God and He is what this Book declares Him to be, He is our God, and the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; and as the Lord liveth there is such a thing as nearness to His throne, fellowship and communion with him, and as having one's heart bathed even here in His everlasting love. Oh, this religion carries its possessor in safety through the desert; it carries him fearless into Jordan; it carries him victorious through death, and

lands him on the shores of eternal perfection and peace. Christ was the first object beloved, and we are loved in Him. Is it not said, "That the love wherewith thou hast loved Me, may be in them, and I in them?" and, "Thou hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me?"

"Christ be My first elect, He said;
Then chose our souls in Christ our Head."

Christ, the first Son, and then all the church of God, or His younger brethren. Christ was the first object of eternal love, and then all the brethren were loved in Him; Christ was the first that was filled. It pleased the Father that in Him all fulness should dwell, and of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." Christ was the first that rose from the dead, not in order of time, but in order of majesty and power and glory." "Christ the firstfruits, afterwards they that are Christ's at His coming." Christians are following Christ. Saved sinners are following the redeeming Lamb. Subjects are following the King. You and I are following behind the Forerunner, who has entered for us within the veil, even Jesus, made a High Priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedec.

And now, in the second place, God is represented as "the Father of mercies and as the God of comfort." My dear friends, everything that is really a mercy comes from God; and this simplifies a great many matters. Salvation is not a complicated arrangement; but a divinely simplified affair, from beginning to end. The wisdom displayed in its arrangement is wonderful; the knowledge and foreknowledge of our God manifested therein are marvellous; but God's knowledge, wisdom, grace, and power are all united to simplify that which was in itself complicated. Now the mercies of God are numerous, the need of mercy is deep, and the reception of mercy by God's people is a pleasing, blessed fact, and its properties and qualities are indescribable; but, combined, they are God's mercies, and the matter is divinely simplified. All mercies come from one Being, though they flow in ten thousand streams, and roll in millions of places, and carry millions of beings into perfection and bliss. If the streams are numerous, the spring is one only,—the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of all mercies." And He is as delighted with His mercies as a father is with his child; and hence it is said, the Lord delighteth in mercy. It proceeds from Him, it represents Him, He guides and governs its operations, and like a dutiful child, God's mercy obeys its Author; He speaks, and it is done, He commands mercy to flow, and it flows; He orders it to flow in a certain direction, and in that direction it goes. As a parent presides over His children, so the Father of mercies presides over all the operations of mercy; and, permit me to be plain and earnest, there is no such fiction as a disappointed God, no such thing as mercies flowing from God and failing to accomplish His purpose. Your child may and does disobey you; or its obedience, though it be earnest, may not be full or sufficient; but the mercy of God must always obey its Author, and its operations must always fulfil the mighty purposes for which He gives them. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is the Father or the spring of all mercies. Wherever the streams flow, the spring

is in heaven ; wherever mercies may be scattered about, the Hand that scattered them is invariably divine. Angels may bring them, they bring them from God ; ministers may bring them, they bring them from the Father of mercies ; a deacon, a husband, a wife, a friend, a child may bring our mercies,—God supplies them all. They may be in the pulpit, the pew, the sick chamber, the family, the workshop, whoever may be the messenger, and whatever may be the form, the character, the size, the shape of the mercy, God is invariably its Author and Spring ; He is the Father of mercies. He can and He does turn our miseries into mercies, or constitute them blessings. He can bring good out of evil, straighten the crooked, smooth the rough, make the uneven plain. The most untoward circumstances are managed and controlled with infinite ease and satisfaction by that God who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Father of all mercies. You cannot create a mercy, or overrule a single event, so as to bring it into the shape or form of one. Mercy is from the God of mercy, its only source, fountain and spring. Now God gives birth to His mercies, they exist in divine decree, before they exist in visible forms, and God gives birth to them as His people require them. You were cast upon a bed of affliction, and for what ? That God might show some special and peculiar mercy to you there. You were bereaved by the wonder-working hand of God, and for what ? To make room for some special favour and mercy from your God. The decrees of God instead of being dreadful, terrible and repulsive, are big with mercy ; and at the appointed time and in the appointed place they bring forth, and you have been heard to say, again and again, “This is the Lord’s doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.” Divine mercy has cost very much, and hence I think Dr. Watts speaks correctly and scripturally when he sings.

“There’s ne’er a gift His hand bestows,
But cost His heart a groan.”

The mercies of our God are flowing in the world, and in the church. The world is reprieved, not pardoned. The church is pardoned and justified, and saved, and eternally blest. Temporal favours flow in abundance into the homes and hands of persons that curse their Maker’s name. Temporal blessings combined with spiritual favours flow into the church of the living God. God’s common and ordinary mercies are abundant. God’s special and saving favours are abundant and wondrous ; but they are limited to those that believe in His name.

What is the nature of those mercies ? Let me say, that mercy existed before misery, it will exist and triumph when misery shall have passed away. As soon as the world fell, mercy was needed, but not expected. God, however, was neither surprised nor nonplussed by the fall. There was then no hesitation on the part of the infinite God. He had constituted Himself the Father of mercies, and laid up all grace and salvation in the person of His dear Son, and was therefore perfectly prepared for what took place when man became a fallen creature. Then God opened new resources and mercy in a thousand forms proceeded to flow. It flowed in one channel and through one medium ; for the Father of Christ is the Father of mercies. Christ is the embodiment of all mercy

and the channel in which it flows from the Father's heart to the hearts of His beloved people.

Again, the text represents them as parental mercies,—not only the mercies of a God, but the mercies of God considered as a Father. We read in God's holy Word, "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." You know how a mother comforts her child, and how a father loves, and protects; and blesses it. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." You who are disposed to do good to a fellow-creature, do it with the feelings of a fellow-creature or of a neighbour; but you who are parents are resolved to do the best you can for your dear children, and you do it with peculiar affection. The feelings of a parent are wonderful; they are such as no person that is not a parent possesses. God is the Father of Christ and the Father of mercies, and the Father also of the persons for whom His mercies are intended. The mercy is divine and parental and it never ceases to flow. My Christian friends, it is time we began to talk more about the mercies of God and less about our miseries. Ministers of the gospel should not always preach misery; neither should the conversation of God's people have for its only theme the miseries, pains and disappointments of life; as if they were the only streams that flowed, or the only facts that existed.

"Without Thy sweet mercy,
I could not live here;
Sin soon would reduce me
To utter despair."

We need mercy everywhere; in every circumstance, and in every condition. Mercy for the past, mercy for the present, and mercy for the future. Mercy for the past, to clear away all our sin, or the iniquity of our heels. Mercy for the present, to comfort and sustain us. Mercy for the future to open a bright and glorious prospect, and inspire us with peace and confidence in relation to what is promised.

"There is my home, my portion fair."

Soul mercies, body mercies, social mercies, church mercies, ministerial mercies.—Do I mention a large number of mercies?—We want mercies in this church, I want mercy as a minister. And if I followed you to your homes I know that I should see some of your beloved friends, your wives or husbands on sick-beds, and your houses full of sorrow and affliction. You want mercy at home, mercy in the business, mercy in the church, mercy for the body and the soul, and He is the Father of mercies, and He comforts us in all places and in all our tribulation.

But what are God's operations in relation to tried believers? He comforteth us in all our tribulation. Look at the order of things expressed in the text. First, God is the Father of Christ, His dear Son is before Him, and His beloved people are united to Him. Mercy flows from the Father, through the Son, into the hearts of the children. And then we have the fact of comfort. The Father of mercies is the God of all comfort. One person may give large sums of money to another, but he cannot give him comfort with the money; you may give a person houses

and lands in abundance, but you cannot give him comfort with them. And that young man, and that young woman yonder, who are about to marry, may become husband and wife, but they cannot insure comfort, without the mercy of which I am now speaking. There is no comfort in this sinful world apart from the blessing and mercy of God. There is not a drop of holy joy for the saint, without God's presence and blessing ; but let me come down to ordinary matters ; there is not a drop of real natural comfort without the mercy of God. Places are to us just what God is pleased to make them. He has only to withhold His mercy, and the devil will come in and convert the friend into an enemy, and the place where we were safe and happy into a place of danger. If, however, God is with us in a place, and mercy surrounds our friends and preserves their friendship, then we shall prove individuals and positions to be comforts ; for He is "the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort."

Secondly, *the condition* of God's people here. They are in tribulation. Now, tribulation fulfils great and important purposes in the government of God. I know God could have taken His people to heaven, and saved them for ever in Himself, without permitting trouble to exist ; but it is through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom. It is impossible to avoid trouble. There is no other road to heaven than a strait, narrow, and thorny one. We must go through the wilderness in order to reach the Canaan which our God has prepared and promised. Trouble, as I said, makes way for mercy. Sorrow makes way for comfort and weakness makes room for the strength of our God. God waits to be gracious. He waits for a particular time ; waits until the occasion is sufficiently deep and large to receive the mercy that is ready for us ; and therefore the comfort may not come when the trouble is first entered. The affliction arises, and it works itself deeper and deeper, and wider and wider in the heart, in the family, or in the church ; and when the occasion is sufficiently wide for God's purpose, the mercy then comes, and the comfort is received. It is the Lord's doing, it is said, and marvellous in our eyes. It is a state and condition of tribulation. Cowper has very beautifully expressed this idea.

"Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take ;
The clouds ye so much dread,
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head."

The troubles you expect, the events which are just before you, and which you dread, are fraught with mercy, according to the loving arrangements of your gracious God and Father ; and thus, if saints have trouble, they have comfort also ; for God comforteth us in all our tribulation. Tribulation exhausts us, but it does not exhaust God, who is never limited as to His resources, whatever the tribulation may be. The sea may be wide, the water may be deep, the fire may be hot, and the stripping providences may be terrible, nothing can limit the operations of mercy, therefore He comforteth us in all our tribulation.

Just a word or two on God's *method of proceeding*, and then we will close. "That we may be able to comfort them which are in trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." I refrained

until the present moment from saying anything about the work of the Christian ministry, because I thought it was not necessary for me to do so ; but the Apostle Paul is here speaking of the manner in which God comforts His ministers and of the purpose for which, generally speaking, He does so. He comforteth *us* in all *our* tribulation, that *we* may be able to comfort others. Now a minister is nothing to the people without God. And whatever His sermons may be, and they may have been well studied and well thought out, well arranged and delivered in a very proper manner, they can never convey a drop of comfort or consolation to the minds of his hearers without God. Dear friends, when you come to the house of God, look beyond the pulpit. The pulpit is here, and the minister is in it; but yonder is a throne, and God is seated thereon. Look, therefore, beyond the pulpit to the throne, and beyond the minister to the Lord ; and remember that the blessing must come from Him. Now this implies hard work for a minister, and I will tell you why. During the week a minister finds himself in some terrible temptation or conflict. A thousand doubts spring up in his mind, and perhaps unbelief so far prevails during the week, that he feels as if he could not preach on the Lord's day. Thus he has to go before his people sometimes into the field of battle, or into the water, or into the fire, or to meet Satan; not, it may be, so much for his own sake, as for the sake of the people. "Who comforteth us in all our tribulations," that we may be able to comfort others. I would not say a word against young ministers, but you see that experience in a Gospel minister is essential to this work of comforting in tribulation. He that has not been tempted, knows not what it is, and cannot explain it ; he that knows not what trouble is, cannot explain it ; he that has not been in conflict with the world, and has not mourned an absent God, and he that has not deplored the hardness of his heart and the depravity of his nature, cannot set them forth. Neither can he experimentally speak of the preciousness of that name and blood that sets all things right within, and reduces all confusion and disorder to harmony and peace. Knowledge enables us to commend the things of God with confidence. I can say concerning divine comfort, it is strong, and real, and substantial, and it fulfils most important purposes, I know, for I have received it myself. Thus a minister of the gospel should be able, when speaking of these mercies and comforts to say, I know this bread of life is good, for I live on it myself ; I drink that water and wine, and they refresh me. He commends the garments of salvation as one that wears them. Leaning himself on God's arm, and resting on His faithfulness, he says, I know He will never leave you, and that His comforts and consolations are infinitely greater than all your miseries, for I have found them to be so: hence, the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. The Lord command His blessing, for Christ's sake. Amen.

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

PRICE ONE PENNY.

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

May be had also of ELLIOT STOCK, 62, Paternoster Row, London.

THE BELIEVER'S SAFE RULE.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,
AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,
ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 27th, 1882.

"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him."—Col. iii. 17.

ORDER and harmony universally prevail in God's infinite mind, in His perfections and purposes, in the visible heavens, which the Holy Spirit has compared to a "curtain," and "a tent to dwell in," and in the innumerable worlds which the great Creator has made. We are poor mortal beings, creatures of a day, with knowledge exceedingly limited; yet since God has been pleased to reveal His character, and the nature of His operations, we are bound to believe that order prevails everywhere in His government of the world. Order prevails also in the operation of Divine providence. It is true, "He putteth down one, and setteth up another." "He hath His way in the whirlwind, and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet." But the very fact that He has His way therein secures the perpetual existence and reign of Divine order. God presides over all the events of time, and over all the circumstances by which creatures have been or can be surrounded, and

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

Order characterises God's moral government. It was apparent to Adam and to Eve, when they appeared before God as innocent, upright and holy beings. The order, however, of God's moral government, is the reverse of that which he has been pleased to appoint and to observe in eternal salvation. In Eden, and under the law, the precept preceded the promise, and it had to be obeyed in order that the promise might be fulfilled. God, as a Lawgiver, said, Do and live. This order of things is changed, in the glorious gospel of God's grace. The precept follows the promise. God has given us the promise of eternal life; and having given us a new and everlasting life, he says, Go your way and do whatever I command you: so that the precept follows the promise in His new state of things. Yet order, most beautiful and divine, still prevails.

The apostle, when he wrote this letter to the church at Colosse, was

VOL. III., No. 29.—SEPTEMBER 15, 1882.

divinely inspired to set before the people, some of the glorious doctrines of Divine grace; and to conclude the epistle with a considerable number of important exhortations. He first lays down doctrines, which are essential to the gracious and declarative glory of God, and to the eternal salvation of men; and having done so, he proceeds to build upon them a number of exhortations. In the first verse of the chapter, he says, "If ye, then, be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." This implies that Jesus Christ is risen. Bless His name, He is in heaven; upon the highest throne in that world, and wearing the brightest crown of glory there. Yes, Christ is risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept. But the apostle introduces a supposition. If ye, then, be risen with Him; Jesus and His people are for ever one, and there can be no separation between Christ and Christians; no separation in the thoughts of God, in the operations of God, in the providence of God, and no separation in the life and sufferings and death of the Son of God. Christ and His people were regarded as one, when He was born and laid in a manger; when He became the end of the law for righteousness; when He was on the tree, and when He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself: then we were—I say "*we*," for I desire to be included in that happy and honourable number—we were regarded as having been saved with an honourable and everlasting salvation. When He was buried, they were buried; when He rose from the dead, they rose; and when He went to heaven and took His seat at His Father's right hand, He representatively carried them all with Him. And now He ever liveth to represent them, and to make intercession for all that come unto God by Him. If ye, then, be risen with Him. Are we risen with Him? Are we Christians? Are we vital believers? Are Christ and we for ever one? If so seek those things which are above. Is this exhortation now necessary, and was it necessary in the days of Paul? Is it possible, that persons who are risen with the Lord Jesus Christ, can love earthly things; that they can set their affections on things that are inferior in their character and even sinful? The apostle thought so, and he said, "Seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God." And in this manner, he proceeded to urge upon believers a number of exhortations, until he said, "Let the word of God dwell in you richly, in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

I fear that we sometimes sing with but little grace in our hearts, or when grace is not in lively exercise. Oh how important it is that the heart should be in tune, and that the mind should be in a hallowed and heavenly frame! How important that the influence of the great Object of praise, should fall upon the mind and upon all those divine graces which the Holy Ghost produces in the hearts of true believers, when we sing the worthy praises of our God. I have sometimes thought, and said, that I feared many of God's people regard singing His praises as a somewhat inferior exercise. Prayer is deemed to be exceedingly important, and preaching is believed to be important also; but singing God's praises, is by some, I fear, thought to be a subordinate

spiritual exercise. God is to be praised as well as prayed to, and the singing of Divine praises, is not an inferior exercise to prayer. There should be as much of the heart engaged in singing, as in earnest and spiritual prayer. It is not a more important thing to pray, than it is to praise the great God ; and therefore, in that form of prayer which our Lord has given us, we have ascriptions of praise, as well as petitions to the Majesty of heaven. "When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name;"—and then the prayer closes with—"For Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever. Amen." Let us not drop into that position, in which I fear some professors of religion are found, where it is thought that praise is inferior to other acts of worship. Singing with grace in your hearts unto the Lord. The minister cannot preach without grace, the petitioner cannot pray without grace ; and the singer cannot sing without grace ; and with regard to the importance of this exercise, be it never forgotten that we shall not pray in heaven, nor ever appear there in the character of petitioners but as singers for ever and ever. We need grace to sing here, and we shall be filled with praising power in yonder glory. Having given this exhortation, he proceeded to say, "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him."

I shall not attempt to make any critical observations on this portion of the word ; but I want to bring out of it a few plain and profitable things, if the Lord will help me so to do. I preach Christ and Him crucified, and what He has done for His beloved people ; but I am to say a few words this morning, on what His people are exhorted to do ; and this is important in its place. I am not a legalist, and those who best know me, will accept the statement as a fact ; but I have no objection to the word *duty*, as it occupies an important place in the creed of true believers. I do not, however, use it in a legal sense ; but it is most important that the people of God should sometimes hear a little about what Christ deserves from them, or about the debt which they owe to their great and glorious Lord.

In the first place, let me try to show you *the import of this exhortation* : "And whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." What is it to do all that is done in the name of the Lord Jesus? First, it is to speak and to act *by His authority, or according to His word*. It is most important that the children of God, and especially ministers of the gospel, should speak and act according to the word of their great Master. Our Lord said to His disciples. "All power in heaven and in earth, is given unto Me ; Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." They had Divine authority for preaching, and for preaching in all the world, and to every creature. They had their Master's authority for pursuing a course, which was considered by the nations as a breach or transgression of their laws. I trust I shall not be misunderstood in this matter. The disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ were charged with breaking the laws of the various lands in which they preached. It could not have been otherwise, for those countries were idolatrous, and their laws were opposed to the kingdom of Christ ; and

therefore the people had some ground for saying, "These that have turned the world upside down, are come hither also, and teach customs which are not lawful for us to receive, neither observe." This their Master had given them authority to do. The idolatry of the world was hostile to the law of God and to the interest of holiness and heaven. As they had received qualifications and authority from their Master to preach the glorious and saving gospel of His grace, they were perfectly justified in their conduct, though it was contrary to the customs and course of the people to whom they preached the word. They received their orders from their Lord. Now, beloved friends, it becomes a question of great importance to you and to me—Have we the Master's authority for being where we are? Have we His authority for doing what we are doing to-day? Have we His authority for expressing the thoughts which we are now delivering? It may be thought by some, that these are somewhat unimportant matters; but depend upon it, the authority of the great King of the world cannot be despised or trampled upon with impunity. His arm is long and strong; His dignity and greatness are Divine. His will and His word are Divine law, and it is impossible that the Christian especially can trample upon them without incurring His displeasure, and being sooner or later visited with tokens thereof. I know that the Master's love does not depend upon our obedience, and that His salvation does not depend upon our merit. But I also know that there is such a thing as displeasing God, and being visited with tokens of the displeasure of our heavenly Father. Therefore the apostle says, "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." The authority of Jesus prevails in heaven, among all the angels of God. His name prevails with the Father Himself, and you here have an explanation of that petition in the Lord's prayer,—“Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven.” The Christian who consults the authority of his Lord, abides by His word, and shapes his course and conduct by the gospel of His grace, may be said to do the will of God on the earth as it is done in heaven. Our brethren before the throne find their highest pleasure and their richest heaven in perpetually honouring the authority of Him that sits upon the throne. The slightest violation of the word or will of God on high would destroy all the joy of the blest, and leave a perfect heaven utterly impossible. Therefore whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all by Divine authority.

To do and speak in the name of Jesus, is to do it *in humble and prayerful dependence upon His name*. Permit me to advert to myself. I am afraid that I sometimes lean upon my own plans and depend upon my own arrangements, and rest upon some scheme which I have laid. I am also afraid that not a few of God's people depend upon some event in connection with what they say and do, and their trust is limited to something in the future which they expect will arise; while others, perhaps less thoughtful, hope that some favourable occurrence may accidentally take place to fulfil their desire. My beloved friends, this is not to do all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Are we doing and resting on our schemes? Are we doing and depending on our plans? Can we foresee, or think we can foresee, some event in the future on which we are trusting?

That is not doing all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Are we walking and speaking according to the word and by the authority of Jesus, and whilst doing so resting on His promise, and leaning upon His strength, going through evil and through good report, humbly holding Him to His covenant engagement, and expecting His approval and blessing whatever the event may be? If we have the Lord's authority for what we do and say, let us trust and not be afraid, for His word shall stand and prevail. And what cannot be done in this way, ought not to be done at all. Those words which cannot be spoken, and those steps which cannot be taken in the name of Jesus, ought not to be spoken and taken at all. Oh, that this rule which is so prominent in the word were ever before our eyes! I am a man of like passions with my friends, being no better than my neighbours and brethren, and what I now address to you is applicable in every respect to myself. That which I cannot speak without violating the Master's authority, I had better never utter, and those steps which I cannot take without breaking through the word and trampling on its Author's name, I ought not to take at all. This is a safe rule, and he who walks according to it will in the main have a quiet conscience, a justifying Bible, and an approving God. 'Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of Jesus.'

Look at *the extent* of this exhortation. It appears to be unlimited, "*whatsoever ye do in word or deed.*" Then look at the pronoun, *whatsoever ye* do. And then look at it in connection with what follows: wives, husbands, servants, ministers, masters and so on. Why the extent of his exhortation is great, it is unlimited. In every place, in the church, in the house, in the family, in the closet, in the counting-house, behind the counter, in the shop. Are we then to be always thinking about Christ? That, perhaps, is impossible here. A man is on a journey going to a particular city, and the main thought in his mind is his journey's end, the place to which he is going. He pays attention every day, more or less to the objects he is surrounded by; but his principal idea is his journey's end. You are Christians, followers of the Lord Jesus; and that fact is not to be forgotten, by the living children of God, wherever they may be, at home, or abroad, on the land, or on the sea. "Whatsoever ye do, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. You did not know that high doctrine people, as we are represented to be, could preach so practically; or that we hold such practical views of the gospel of God. Oh, the religion of heaven is God's best gift, and when it works according to its own nature in the heart, the character of its possessor is approved by God and accepted in the Beloved. The child of God, being animated and influenced by the grace of God, desires every day to harmonize his words and his deeds with the holy gospel of grace. What different churches we should have, humanly speaking, if all their members followed this injunction! Do all and say all in the name of the Lord Jesus. What different preachers we should have in many respects, if they all followed this order! "Whatsoever ye say or do, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." "A new commandment give I unto you." Some have said there are now eleven commandments, because Christ said, "A new commandment give I unto you." Well, what if this should be that new commandment given by Christ and

referred to by John. It is in perfect agreement and harmony with the other ten. "Whatsoever ye do, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." Adam was not thus addressed. The name of Jesus was unknown to him, he was not the character contemplated by the apostle here. Therefore this new commandment is connected with a new dispensation, is inseparable from a new life, and calls for a new kind of obedience, from persons who are new creatures in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, in the second place, just a word or two on *the fact the text implies*, the infinite greatness of the Saviour's name. "Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." He is divine, and the honour and glory of His complex person are ineffably great. It is possible to praise the creature too much, but it is not possible so to praise the Christ of God. "On His head were many crowns, and His throne is the highest in heaven. His name is great, and hence the apostle says, "Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus," which is above every other name. Christ's name is above every other name in influence. In its influence with the Father, in its influence with angels, in its influence upon all in heaven, in its influence upon millions here on earth, and in its influence too, upon the powers of darkness; for the name, the authority, of the great Judge of heaven and earth reach and restrain all His enemies; and hence, "Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." This is the name petitioners take to the throne of grace, the name they offer to the great Hearer and Answerer of prayer, the name by which as a rule they close every petition they offer to God, and the name the influence and glory of which the Father cannot resist. His name is the greatest in majesty and mercy, and the union of both in this name makes it so sweet, and hence Watts sings, and the good man makes no mistake,—

"Sweet majesty and awful love
Sit smiling on His brow."

The majesty of God is sweet because it is combined with love; the love of God is awful because it is combined with majesty. Majestic mercy and merciful majesty constitute the name of Jesus divinely sweet. Persons may sneer at us, believing that we are fanatical when we speak of the sweetness of the name of Jesus, but we experience it. Not long ago I was sitting in this pulpit, dark and barren, and wondered what I should say when I arose to address the people. You, or the friends were singing a hymn, and two lines of it dropped upon my heart with a sweetness and a power which convinced me they were divine. My mind was fertilized and my heart warmed and melted, and I felt no longer dark and dreary; for,

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

Yes, there is a fulness of influence, a greatness of divine power, in that name, which is more expressive and more comprehensive than any other name in the universe. "Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus."

Now, as time is going, let us in the third place, offer one word or two

on the spirit in which this exhortation is to be acted upon. "Whatsoever ye do ; in word or deed." You have heard of a legal spirit, and also of a filial spirit in connection with the things of God and eternity. The spirit which animated Adam in his obedience was legal, yet that spirit was then accepted, and his obedience was approved. But he obeyed as a sinless, a righteous, an innocent creature. He was not driven by tormenting fears into obedience, for no terrors surrounded him ; yet he was not animated by that heavenly, that peculiar spirit which influences a Christian, or a living child of God.

"Law and terrors do but harden,
All the while they work alone ;
But a sense of blood-bought pardon
Will dissolve a heart of stone."

Whatsoever ye do, do it not *for* life, but *from* life ; not that God may set His love upon you, but because He has done so. Jesus is the Lamb of God, and His people are represented as following Him whithersoever He goes ; and Peter says, "Ye are not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold, from your vain conversation, received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ. A person redeemed from slavery by silver and gold, does not necessarily love his redeemer. The Word of God, speaking of a slave, says, "He is his master's money ;" but although, a slave is bought with money, His master cannot buy his affections, his heart, or his sympathies. "Ye are not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ." Oh ! had Christ bought us with gold and silver, we might not have loved Him, nor been concerned to do all in His name ; but since He has bought us with His blood, and that was the price of our redemption, He has peculiar feelings towards us, and we have a peculiar sympathy with Him, which we should not have possessed, had the price been less wonderful than His precious blood. Here is a bleeding Saviour making a way of blood, and leading His blood-bought followers through dangers and death to eternal glory. Let service be rendered in His name, because it is great, but serve Him in a filial and gracious spirit.

Now fourthly, *this will entail a peculiar experience.* I will mention only one point, as time is advancing, namely self-denial. We have sometimes found it more difficult to refrain from speaking than to speak. And hence the child of God has, when surrounded by difficulties and dangers, said, "I know not what to do, and am at my wit's end ;" and then he has proceeded to do something. Hence the necessity for the exhortation. Some of us are impulsive creatures, and having consulted our own feelings and thoughts, we at once resolve to execute our plans and carry out our ideas. Oh the blessedness of having a perfect rule, a perfect guide ! Well, this will entail the necessity of self-denial, and hence the Saviour says, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." It appears to me that self-denial is one of the most difficult works the child of God has to perform—to deny self, to take up the cross and carry it cheerfully, for the sake of the name of Jesus. Oh the importance of sinking self in Christ, and of being nothing, that

He may be all. Oh the importance of going against wind and tide, when the name, and word, and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ require us so to do !

This brings me to notice, in the last place, *the advantage of this course*. "Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." In the first place, this course is a *safe* one. It may lead us in a rough road, and self-denial may be very deep and bitter, and we may have to go through evil as well as through good report ; but what of that ! We are strangers and pilgrims on the earth, as all our forefathers were. It is a blessing that our God calls upon us to deny that which, if it were not denied, would estrange us from Him, leave us in darkness, harden our hearts, and make bitter work for repentance. Oh, for grace to lean upon the Master's arm, to tread in His steps, and to be followers of them who through faith and patience now inherit the promises ! In doing this, my Christian brethren, we may have to shed many tears ; our hearts may often times be broken, our friends may forsake us, even branches of our own families may regard us angrily ; yet we cannot but be safe in observing this Divine injunction, "Whatsoever ye do, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus." But, after all, this is a *pleasant* course, for wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and her paths are paths of peace. Hear David : "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want ; He maketh me to lie down in green pastures ; He leadeth me beside the still waters ; He restoreth my soul." How sweet is the peace enjoyed in His presence, and how sweet is the rest we experience in connection with the service of the sanctuary. "I would rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." Religion is not bondage ; conformity to the Word of God does not curtail one's freedom, nor one's pleasure ; for he that has most to do with the Lord of life and glory, enjoys the widest liberty and the richest possible freedom. Then to do this, is to do what is *acceptable* to God. "Whatsoever ye do, do it in His name." Here is an altar—let us lay all we have upon it ; it sanctifies the giver and the gift. Here is a nail fastened in a sure place, and all the glory in our Father's house hangs upon it. Let us hang our words, our lives, our conduct, our sermons, our prayers, and our praises on this nail ; for God always accepts all that is offered under the influence of His Spirit, in the name of His well beloved Son. May the Lord command His blessing, for Christ's sake. Amen.

THE NEXT SERMON WILL BE READY ON OCTOBER 14TH, 1882.

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

PRICE ONE PENNY.

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

May be had also of ELLIOT STOCK, 62, Paternoster Row, London.

THE KINDNESS AND LOVE OF GOD OUR SAVIOUR.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,
AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,
ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, OCTOBER 1st, 1882.

"But after that, the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared."

Titus iii. 4.

It was the will of God that the children of Israel, as His people should always remember the land of Egypt, out of which He had brought them; therefore, we find Him saying to them again and again, "Remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt;" that thou wast a stranger, and that thou wast in the iron furnace, and under the dominion of an enemy who would have crushed and destroyed thee had it been possible. And it is the will of God that His saved people should always remember what and where they were, when grace first met them; and saving mercy reached their hearts, and His Holy Spirit took possession of their souls. Worldly people are in the habit of saying, "Do not tell us what we have been, but tell us what we are now." This remark, however, is not at all applicable to the church of God, nor to sinners saved by grace. It is important that God's people should know what they are now as saved sinners, and it is perhaps equally important that they should not forget what they were before they were manifestly His children. The apostle Paul was a very conspicuously saved sinner, and his name as such is recorded in the gospel of God; and it will be mentioned by God's people till time shall end: but the apostle never forgot that by nature he was far from God, a proud Pharisee in religion, and a bitter and cruel persecutor of Christ and the people of God. He remembered these facts for the purpose of enhancing the majesty, greatness and glory of that mercy by which he was saved; and therefore we find him, on various occasions, saying, "But I obtained mercy:" I went far into sin, I was overwhelmed in corruption; nevertheless, "I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly and in unbelief." And God having saved Paul in so miraculous a manner, employed him as a preacher of the gospel, and as one of His apostles, and therefore he was divinely inspired, and on certain occasions he was so filled with the Holy Spirit, that he communicated to the church and to the world in an infallible manner some of the thoughts, intents and purposes of God. That the religion of heaven is not antagonistic to good order and government appears abundantly in the chapter out of which I have taken my text. "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work." The religion of heaven is purity itself. The grace of God is the best gift that can possibly be conferred on a child of Adam. It finds him an enemy, and converts him into a friend; it finds him in a low condition, and of

a depraved disposition, but it does not leave him so. Put them in mind to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers ; but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men. My friends, there is room for improvement, and for growth, not only in knowledge, but in practical godliness, and religion. "Showing all meekness unto all men ; for we ourselves,"—and here the apostle proceeded to remind them of what they had been,—“for we ourselves were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.” And surely the apostle felt that he had been a very hateful character. He certainly could say that he hated others for the sake of Christ, of grace, and of salvation, and his hatred took a most practical and bitter form ; and therefore, he was not speaking too strongly when he said, “I was exceeding mad against the church of God.” Well, he includes himself ; but he proceeds to say, “But *after that* the kindness and love of God, our Saviour, toward man appeared.”

Now I want to call your attention to this interesting portion of the Word ; and, in doing so, I shall notice some points which lie upon the surface of the subject, and take them up one by one, offering a few remarks upon each of them.

The first thought or fact that deserves attention is *the nature of God's love*. I am not at all disposed to make any critical remarks this morning, but I may, however, just observe here that God the Father is, in my text, called God our Saviour ; for the apostle Paul is not here speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ, nor of the Holy Ghost, but of God the Father, and therefore He is called our Saviour. God, in His trinity of persons, is mentioned in these two or three verses ; and the salvation of Jesus Christ is mentioned in the 6th ; and therefore, in the 4th verse, where God is said to be our Saviour, we have salvation in its source ; and when Jesus is said to be our Saviour, we have salvation in its course and channel, and when it is said that the Holy Ghost is shed upon us abundantly, we have salvation as to its personal application to the soul ; so that in these verse we have a full and comprehensive view of the salvation of our souls. Let me, however, call attention to the nature of God's love. Now, this love is divine, parental and saving. It is a very pleasant thing to be interested in the love and warm affections of worthy persons. I do not think that it is any particular credit to be loved by certain individuals ; but to be interested in the warm affections, and tender pity and compassion of persons whose character is worthy, is most pleasant. It is very pleasant to be interested in the natural love of a fellow-creature, and it is very pleasant to be interested in the love of a fellow-christian, and to know that there is not an angel in heaven but what loves us, if we are lovers of Jesus Christ ; because angelic affections always follow the affections of their Maker, and angels love where God *loves*, and whom God loves ; and, therefore, if you and I are interested in the love of God, and that love has been made manifest towards us, there is not an angel who sings God's praises, but what loves us ; even Gabriel, who stands before the throne of God loves us, and will do so for ever ; and if he be commanded to fly from the realms of glory to do us some good, he comes with delight ; not only from motives of love to his Maker, but from motives of love to you and me. “Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister

for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" And there are happy millions in heaven, and they are as happy as it is possible for them to be; for heaven is a world of unstained holiness, and therefore, a world of uninterrupted happiness; and perfectly holy characters in that holy world are lovers. Such a feeling as hatred cannot enter there. Anything like imperfection as regards sentiment cannot enter heaven. Heaven is full of holy fire, and every heart is warm; and every creature in that glory world loves whom God loves; and therefore, dear friends though you speak of your insignificance and nothingness, it must be pleasant for you to reflect upon the fact that you are loved by Christian brethren in heaven and by angelic beings there. But what is it to be interested in the natural affections, in the affections of our brethren, in the affections of angels and that is very pleasant, and it goes far, and serves to make us very buoyant; but we must go beyond all that, for angelic love and brotherly love are not saving nor sanctifying. I may love my brother-Christian, because he is a Christian; but my love can never satisfy him, neither can it very much contribute, under certain circumstances, to his happiness; but the love of God on His throne, is the love we have to talk about this morning.

"After that, the love of God our Saviour appeared." Oh! the appearance of Christian and angelic love is interesting; but let us soar as high as we can to the throne of Deity, to the highest throne in the universe, and contemplate God the Father seated in His essential majesty, loving countless millions of the fallen sons and daughters of Adam; and whilst we stand before the throne, and meditate upon this, may the Holy Ghost be shed upon us abundantly, that we may realize our interest in that marvellous affection and pity, and kindness of our God, and realize the meaning of God's own words. May we hear then from the throne, "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore, with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." This love is Divine, not human, not angelic; and it is not only Divine, but it is parental love, the love of a Father. How soft, how gentle, how considerate, how inventive, how constant and warm is the love of a parent! it is a forecasting love, a love that goes as well as it can into the future, and tries to connect the future with the past; and such is the love of the Divine Being on His throne towards men, towards you and me. The love of God the Father invented and contrived, and yet doth He devise means that the banished be not expelled from Him. The love that constituted us children, constituted Him a Father; it was a love that went into the future for us, and took possession of us, and carried us into the bosom of Deity, and united us for ever to the eternal God. And this love appears in all-sufficient forms, and it is this fact which, among others, constitutes the supreme and perfect happiness and pleasure of our God. I am speaking considerably and advisedly. Some facts are necessary to constitute the perfect happiness and pleasure of Jehovah; and if His love were not an all-sufficient love, a self-sufficient love, and an almighty love, its very existence in His breast would cause Him grief and suffering. Your love and mine is towards certain objects deep and warm; we feel as if nothing could quench it; and we love them so deeply and so well, that we would do almost anything for them: but when they come into certain circum-

tances, in which they require the aid of our love and affection, then perhaps we find that though we love them well we cannot do them good, or meet their condition ; they are beyond our reach, and we stand and look on, conscious of our helplessness ; and the very fire of love that burns in our breasts occasions us suffering and pain. Now, this is not the case with our God and Father ; His is an all-sufficient love and a self-sufficient love. It goes on gradually and progressively fulfilling its own behests. Whatever God desireth, even that He doeth ; and therefore when He saw His people hateful, and hating one another, serving divers lusts, afar off, abominable and vile, He manifested His love in forms so marvellous, that He drew them effectually and triumphantly out of that condition, and made them new creatures in Christ Jesus for ever. It is profitable sometimes to dwell upon the earliness of God's love, for He is the first Being who loved you. The first human being who ever loved you was, I suppose, your mother ; she gave birth to you, was the first being who ever loved you, and probably next to her was your father ; but the first Being who ever loved you was your God, your Father. He loved you before you were born, else you had never been born again. He loved you before the foundation of the world, before time began ; for, all before the foundation of the world was eternity. Time commenced with the operations of Divine power. Well, when God lived alone, having no angels to sing His praises, then He pleased His infinite mind with His own thoughts of love concerning you and me ; and that love was secret, concealed in Himself. It afterwards appeared, but it was early in God ; indeed, there never was a period in connection with eternity when God did not love His people. I wish I could better explain the mystery of God's eternity ; He dwells in His own everlasting *now*. The tenses, my dear friends, as we call them, are for creatures. Many things with us are past, many things with us are future, many things with us are present, although I hardly know what. Is there such a thing as the present ? The present moment, well it is gone. You stand on the bank of a river, and see straws and light floating objects, they are going from the past into the future. Well, God dwells in His own everlasting now ; and what we know to-day, and what is a fact to-day, was known to the infinite mind of God before days began ; and what shall take place hereafter was known with infinite precision, and accuracy, and comprehensiveness by God, before the foundation of the world ; and, therefore, He loved you when He lived alone, before time was born, before Satan fell, before there was creature music in heaven, He loved you with all His heart, and "afterwards the kindness and love of our God towards man appeared."

This love is also an unchanging and unchangeable love. Some things occasionally damp our affection. Love, however, is a very peculiar power or principle ; yet there are facts which occasionally check it, so that it rises and sinks, it becomes warm or cold in you and me, if one may speak for others ; and I am not now speaking of Divine or spiritual love only, which ebbs and flows ; but the love of our God burns in equal perfection, fulness, and glory, through all the ages of time and through all the illimitable ages of eternity. He will not love you with a warmer love when you are loving Him better than you do now, than He loves you to-day. When you are in heaven, singing the praises of your

loving God with all that buoyant happy throng, so many of whom you once well knew here on the earth, then you will be interested in the love of God ; but God's love towards you even then will not be warmer and deeper than it is now. God cannot love you more, He cannot love you less. His love cannot be higher, it can never be lower. It is the love of God, and God is love. He might not have manifested it, but afterwards the kindness and love of God appeared. It is an unchanging love, and the apostle says God is love ; therefore all love comes from Him, all worthy love ; yes, every little fire of love. God lights even that love that exists between animals—love in its lowest form—that little spark was lighted by God. Natural love—what a dark, tempestuous, miserable world this would be without love ! The fall swept away every moral excellency, but it did not quite quench the fires of natural affection, and hence there is such a love as conjugal love, parental love, maternal love, filial love ; and we thank our God that the terrible waters of sin were not permitted to quench these forms of love. Natural love is a fire that is lighted by the God of love, and it would cease to exist if He withheld His influence and His blessing. Spiritual love. Yes, the love of God's dear people towards one another is a fire that is lighted by the God of love, and if I love God it is because God first loved me ; and the fires of love that burn in heaven are all lighted by Him. But who lighted the mighty fire of love that burns in Him ? Oh, He loves for His own sake, and because He will love, and nothing can increase or diminish it. "God is love." He loves Himself, and He is perfectly right and justified in doing so. Self-love in the Deity is an excellency. If He did not love Himself, He would not be worthy (I speak with reverence), He would not be worthy of being loved. But He is worthy of being loved ; and He always loves where worthiness appears, and He loves Himself, and loves His Son, and will love Him for ever. Mine elect, My servant whom I uphold, and in whom I am well pleased. He loves His law, and will have it honoured ; and He loves His gospel, and will have it fulfilled ; and He loves His people, and will have them with Himself for ever and ever. Now He did not love us for the sake of society or company, or for the purpose of increasing His own blessedness. When it is said that God loves Himself, everything that is essential to the glory of God has been said. God loves Himself, and He might have found enough in Himself to love for ever, without diffusing His love, and causing it to flow in ten thousands channels. In loving Himself, He loved an infinite Being, and an infinite Being might have been satisfied eternally with His own infinity ; but it pleased Him to diffuse His love, to spread it abroad towards man,—when His kindness and love towards man appeared.

In the second place we have to notice *its manifestations*. The kindness and love of God our Saviour *appeared*. It had been concealed from the foundation of the world ; it was a fire that burnt underground from all eternity, or a river that had been flowing underground from eternity, and it appeared in due time. The flame broke forth, the river burst up from its concealment, and flowed in ten thousand streams every one of which is intended to make glad the city of the Lord our God. It appeared—where ? It appeared in Christ. After that the love of God ap-

peared in Christ. It could not have appeared anywhere else, or in any other way ; it could not have appeared in the law, because that was broken, and it cursed us. It could not have appeared in connection with any other person. There was one person, and only one, who was capable of bringing down love Divine from heaven into this world, and that one Person was the blessed Christ of God, and thus the love of God towards man appeared in Christ. And how did it appear ? First in the form of a helpless infant. "Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." And did He look like a Saviour ? I do not suppose He had a halo of glory around His head as He lay in the manger, as He is represented by painters and others. Oh no ! He was poor, and His parents were poor, and He was laid in a manger, and He was made in all things like unto His brethren. Yet, that little and apparently helpless babe, a few spans long, embodied the whole of Deity, and all the love of God was there bound up in Him. After that the love of God our Saviour appeared in Christ ; appeared not only in the Babe, but in the serving and obeying Man ; not only in the law-fulfilling steps and sorrows of the blest Redeemer, but in Gethsemane ; and it rolled on to Calvary, where it burst forth in flames such as angels had never seen before. There love Divine broke forth, and carried away our guilt and sin, our transgression and vileness ; there love triumphed over hatred, and holiness over sin, and righteousness over iniquity, God over the devil, and heaven over hell. After that the love of God towards man appeared in Christ the babe, in Christ the sufferer, and in Christ the conqueror of death. Let me refer you to some place where the love of God to you first appeared. You know whether it was in yonder shop, or in the street, or yonder farm, or house ; whether it was in your chamber, or in your parlour. After that—oh that course of sin and iniquity in which you had lived—after that the love of God our Saviour appeared to you, took hold of and arrested you, and you felt you were being held by a power from which you could not release yourself. No visible hand was seen, no visible form of power appeared ; still there was a power, and it brought you down upon your knees with the prayer, God be merciful to me a sinner ! You had previously said, "I will never be one of those moping, praying professors." Now you pray,—now you shed tears and mourn over sin. God's love appeared in Christ, in the gospel, and in your own salvation ; and it has further appeared in connection with that sweet sense of pardon which through infinite favour you enjoy. When things went crossly and crookedly, Luther was accustomed to say, "Smite, Lord, I am pardoned." No penal blow can ever fall from God's hand upon a pardoned sinner. He may smite, He will smite ; but the chastisement is that of a Father and of love, not that of a judge or of justice.

Thirdly, *the object* of this love : "*towards man.*" The love of God towards man appeared—not towards the devil or fallen angels. He took not on Him the nature of angels, or took not hold of the nature of angels. When angels sinned, Divine justice drove them all out of heaven into hell, and bound them all in chains and darkness unto the judgment of the great day ; and the love of God did not intervene between falling angels and eternal destruction. No, it is towards man that the love of God has appeared. My dear friends, this gives us a view of two or three

facts. First, that God's love flows out of eternity into time, and flows quite through time, and that when it has accomplished all the mighty purposes of Jehovah, the little island of time will sink down and disappear in the vast ocean of eternity. When love flowed out of eternity into time, it flowed out of heaven in the world, and it flows out of God's heart into your heart and mine ; and surely when love Divine flows into the heart of a poor guilty sinner, that heart is softened and purified, and one says with happy John, "We love Him," yes, we do, and blessed is the man who can express himself in that manner—"We love Him, because He first loved us."

"Why was I made to hear His voice,
And enter while there's room?"

What an excellent nature that of the devil was—I mean considered as angelic ! How far superior is the nature of angels to that of man ! But the love and kindness of God do not appear towards fallen angels, but towards guilty men, vile transgressors, persons whose experience of sin and salvation is sometimes indescribable. Oh I like to not *feel* so much about sin and sinnership, and guilt and guiltiness, though I like to have a due measure of feeling in that direction ; for, certainly, salvation could never be appreciated unless there is a proper measure of feeling concerning sin, and our own blackness and vileness in God's sight. How amazingly great is the love of God my Saviour, when contrasted with my own unworthiness and defilement ! It is as I know my poverty that I appreciate the grace that has made me rich. It is as I know my guilt that I appreciate the blood that has put it away, and washed me clean. It is as I know my unworthiness that I value the grace that reached me, unworthy as I was, and raised me from the dust and the dunghill, and placed me among the princes of God's people. Angels looked on, and still desire to look into this mystery.

The fourth point, and that is *the mystery of love*. "After that" I take to mean, after we were sometimes disobedient, foolish, deceived, serving divers lusts, and so on. *After that*—most surprising and wonderful—after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour appeared. Now here are two points : Divine permission and Divine intervention. Divine permission. Why did God permit so much evil to prevail before He manifested His love ? I know not. Still the question arises in the mind, and I do not think it is a sinful one, or that it proceeds from a sinful principle. There are limits beyond which we have no warrant for pushing our enquiries. Still this question may arise, Why did God permit so much sin to exist and prevail, before His kindness and love appeared ? Manasseh. Why, how much blood he shed before Divine love appeared ? Magdalen ; how defiled she was before love appeared, and how long she lived in gross sin ? Why ? Perhaps we shall never know. The thief. Perhaps the love that saved him might have prevented the dishonesty and the disgrace and wretchedness of his character. *After that*, the kindness and love of God appeared. Saul of Tarsus. How was it that his saving God permitted him to go so far in cruelty, and to shed the blood of the saints. We know not, for these are some of the mysteries of our God. Paul says, after that the kindness and love of God appeared. But I obtained mercy. After having persecuted God's people, and made havoc of the church, who

would have thought I should have obtained mercy ? Nevertheless, I have. Then we have Divine intervention. Sin with all its woes, miseries, curses, and consequences, came into existence ; and then something else came into manifestation, namely, the love and kindness of God our Father or Saviour intervening between all these horrid evils and guilty men ; and as there is more in love to save the sinner than there is in sin to sink him, the great salvation of our God which then appeared rolled over all the sin and evil, and put it all for ever out, and so we are saved with an everlasting salvation. The mystery of the Divine interposition.

I thought I would have said a word in the next place on the measure of love. You are to measure the love of God by estimating the greatness of God Himself, and if you know how great He is, you may measure His mighty love. Estimate, if you can, the number of sinners loved and saved ; measure the love of God by estimating the woful and terrible sin, and guilt, and condemnation from which sinners are saved. Well, what were the designs of love ? Was the love of God towards man manifested as an experiment ? Did God endeavour to accomplish a great work, or did love divine appear for the purpose of making salvation contingent upon human will or human works ? No, after that the love of God our Saviour appeared for the purpose of saving him, and as that was the specific design of eternal love, and that love was all-sufficient, the purpose intended was fulfilled, and we are saved with an everlasting salvation.

I thought I would have drawn a few inferences from the subject, but I will close by just observing that the text may be considered as *an expression of surprise*. After so much sin,—hell, curse, and ruin ? No, no. How surprising ! What then ? After that, kindness and love,—surely the text is an expression of surprise. Secondly, it may be considered as the language of adoring gratitude.

“ Pause, my soul, adore and wonder,
Ask O why such love to thee ;
Grace hath put thee in the number
Of the Saviour’s family ! ”

Thirdly, it may be taken as the language of encouragement to poor guilty sinners, who think their sins are too numerous to be pardoned, and too great to be forgiven, and that as sinners they are too far gone for the mercy of God. After that—read the 3rd verse, and heap evils upon evils, and crimes upon crimes, and then read my text. After that the love and kindness of God appeared. No sinner has ever been too great as a sinner for the amazing mercy and sovereign grace of the Lord our God. And then, my dear friends, that which was manifested in Gethsemane and on Calvary, in the person of our Lord, will be progressively manifested in heaven for ever and ever. Amen.

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

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"IN HIM THAT IS TRUE."

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, 22nd OCTOBER, 1882.

"And we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ."—1 John v. 20.

THE apostle John was a very interesting character. We are informed that he was the disciple whom Jesus loved, and was favoured to lean upon the Master's breast at supper time. It was John that said to Jesus in response to Peter's beckoning: "Lord, who is it that shall betray thee?" in answer to which the Lord said, "He it is to whom I shall give a sop when I have dipped it." John, together with Peter and James, witnessed the agonies of our Lord in the garden, and he also went to the Judgment Hall with or behind his Master, and was on the hill of Calvary apparently the whole time the Lord suffered there. Moreover, it was John who recognized the Lord when He appeared on a particular occasion to His disciples when they were fishing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus said, "Children, have ye any meat?" and "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find:" and John said it is the Lord. John heard the Master's charge to Peter; and it was concerning this highly favoured apostle, that Peter said, "Lord, and what shall this man do?" The Lord had informed Peter that he should die a violent death, for the sake of the truth and of Himself; and immediately Peter was curious to know what should happen to *John*. Peter, remembering that John had leaned on His bosom, and been very intimate and familiar with Him, apprehended that some extraordinary and special blessing would be communicated to him. The Master, however, said to Peter: "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou Me." The saying went abroad that that disciple should not die. All the other apostles were martyrs; John only died a natural death. We are told he was taken to the city of Rome, and then banished to the Isle of Patmos. When, however, Nerva came to the throne, he released all that his predecessor had banished; and John, now an old man, returned to the city of Ephesus, where a worshipping church was gathered together. John survived the destruction of Jerusalem; and his years were so numerous, and his infirmities so great, that during the latter part of his life he was carried to the place wherein the church met together. His sermons were very short, and the substance of them was the love of God to His people, and the importance of Christian love, or that Christians should love one another. John had great confidence concerning his own interest in eternal things, and also concerning the interest of a considerable number

of persons whom he knew; and addressing the little children, the young men the fathers, he said, "We are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life."

I desire to make a few observations this evening on the three points which appear in the words I have read. We have in the first place *a great and glorious person*, "Him that is true;" in the second place *the church's union to Him*, "We are in Him that is true;" and in the third place, *a very blessed expression of confidence*, "We are in Him that is true."

Let me in the first place endeavour to make a few remarks upon *the great and glorious Person* indicated in the text—the Lord Jesus Christ, who is said to be the true God and eternal life. Now truth is infinitely important to Jehovah, and to all in heaven; it is infinitely important to all God's people here; and, in a sense, it is unspeakably important to all the creatures of God. Let me, however, look at the Lord Jesus in connection with His beloved church and people. Now the Redeemer is represented as the True One, and I notice first that He is *personally true*. He is true as God, and true as man; for He is truly God and truly man: God and man in one person, the great complex Redeemer and Mediator, possessing the two natures that are interested in the great matter of eternal salvation. He has all the attributes of God, and possesses all divine perfections in all their fulness and glory; for the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily in Him: so that He is the true God as well as the eternal Life of His people. We cannot possibly afford to ignore the divinity of our Lord, or the Godhead of the great Redeemer; for without His Godhead there is no rock to build upon, no stable ground to rest upon, and no eternal resources for sinners to draw from. We are thankful, and sometimes adoringly grateful, for a revelation of the fact, that He that agonised in Gethsemane, and died on Calvary, and put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself was truly God. He is man as well as God, and possesses all that is essential to humanity, all that is essential to our bodies, and all that is essential to our souls; all is found in Him and will be found in Him for ever in all its fulness and perfection. How these two infinitely dissimilar natures are joined together I do not know; but they are united in the person of the great Son of God. Deity will for ever shine in this great and glorious man, and human nature will be for ever exalted and glorified in the blessed God. Deity will pour His light and glory and joy down upon countless millions through the Man Jesus Christ for ever and ever. Friends, it is a blessing to be united to such a person as this,—a favour to be found in Him. There is salvation here, and all that immortal minds can possibly require. Out of Christ all is death, error, darkness, and confusion; and therefore the good old John gratefully said, just before he went to heaven: "And we are in Him that is true." But Jesus is not only true, He is truth itself; and therefore if we are in Him we are in the truth. Sometimes you hear persons say a great deal about being in the truth, and certain individuals are referred to as not being in it. Well, he that is in Christ is in the truth; for he that is one with the Son of God is in harmony with God Himself, in harmony with His justice, righteousness, and eternal truth. "We are in Him that is true." Now let us observe that Christ is emphatically and universally

true. There is a measure of truth in every son of God, in every glorified spirit in heaven, and in every angel of God. A measure of truth is in them all ; but all truth is not to be found in any creature : all the truth of God, and all saving truth, is to be found only in the glorious person of the Saviour. If there is grace in your hearts, a measure of truth is there ; but there is also much sin, depravity, and vileness, and much that you mourn over ; but in Jesus Christ there is nothing but truth,—truth unmixed and complete. All the truth of the gospel, of God's law and of His grace, and all the truth of "eternal glory," is in the person of God's beloved Son ; and we are in Him that is true. Christ is immutably true. There was truth in Adam, but he lost it. There was truth in Satan when he was an angel of light, but he sinned and abode not in the truth ; but the truth that is in Christ, and Christ Himself, the Truth, are abiding, unchangeable, and eternal ; for He is Jesus Christ the same yesterday to-day and for ever. What He was before the foundation of the world, that He has been to His people ever since the world was founded ; and what He is to His people now, that He will be until the end of time, and will be their salvation, their satisfaction, and their all for ever. Moreover, the truth that is in Jesus Christ is suited to the state and condition of lost and ruined men. There are many truths in existence ; but every branch of truth is not suited to the condition of man as a sinner. Legal truth, abstract Deity, and general truths are not suited to the condition of men as guilty sinners. The truth, however, that is in Jesus is adapted to our circumstances, it is suited to our wants, and it meets our case. We need blood to atone and to wash us clean, and a justifying righteousness to establish our character, and we have them in the person of the Son of God. There are truths of more or less importance round about us, but they are not sanctifying, satisfying, nor saving. The truth of salvation is in Christ, and also all which you and I as guilty sinners require to set us free, to cleanse us for eternity, and to prepare us for the presence of God ; and we are in Him that is true, and our Lord is eternal Truth. We have experienced many changes ourselves, and persons who formerly were our friends have ceased to be so. Changes are perpetually taking place in the church and in the world ; but here we have a divine rock or eternal stability. Jesus will abide for ever ; He will never fail. Souls built on Him cannot be smitten by God's justice, nor cursed by His law. Here there is life and peace, perfection and eternal glory.

We notice, in the second place, that our Lord is *mediatorially true*. He is between God and man, and we are in Him. There Christ is true, in opposition to the types and shadows of the ceremonial law. He is the *true* Lamb of God, the *true* High Priest of our profession, the *true* prophet of the church, and the *true* King of grace and glory. Other prophets, other priests, and other kings were shadows, and their seats and thrones were but types of that upon which He sits. The blood that flowed under the ceremonial dispensation was typical blood. "The law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, could never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect ;" and hence the immortal Watts sings :

“ Not all the blood of beasts,
On Jewish altars slain,
Could give the guilty conscience peace,
Or wash away the stain.”

Every spiritual Jew, when he saw a lamb slaughtered, and the blood flow, and the victim burned upon the altar, looked forward into the future, and contemplated the Lamb of God, that was provided, and promised and coming. His faith and expectations went beyond the shadows that appeared upon the ground floor, to the great substance the Lamb of God, that should come to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Again, Jesus is the substance of every promise and of every doctrine; for they shall be fulfilled by and in Him. What are promises and doctrines without Him? The doctrine that does not centre in Christ and is not connected with His glorious person will never prove bread to the hungry, water to the thirsty, nor bring spiritual unctuous light into the mind. The promise that is not connected with the Son of God can never sustain the heart, nor encourage hope, neither will it be fulfilled. The promises of God are in Him, and are yea and amen to the glory of God by us. And the Lord as Mediator was true to His Father. When the cup was filled and presented to Him in the garden of Gethsemane, He received and emptied it, for His Father's sake, and for our sakes; that we might have eternal life and salvation. He was true to His Father's honour and character, law and claims. He honoured God and upheld the Divine government, and brought a revenue of glory to Him who smote Him. We are in Him that was true to His Father. Besides, He was true to Himself; He had entered into covenant engagements, and obliged, or bound Himself before the foundation of the world to suffer and to die. I can never forget the time—forgive me for adverting to myself—when I first saw my sins upon the suffering Son of God, and felt that He bled and died for me. “I sat down under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste.” How small the world then appeared! and how empty all earthly things became! Nothing more was then required to satisfy me than what I had realised of my own personal interest in the blood and righteousness of God's beloved Son. My friends, I sometimes feel and fear that there is too little, so to speak, of this experience in the day in which we live. The cross is ignored; the sufferings of Jesus are passed by; the blood of Christ seems not to be wanted; and God's eternal truth in connection with the agonies of Christ and the atonement which He made for sin are matters of secondary importance. When, however, a poor sinner is convinced of sin, and his heart is broken, and he wants salvation, Christ and His work are everything to him; and he cannot under such circumstances find peace until he is able to say, “I am in Him that is true.” We were in Him before the foundation of the world by eternal purpose; in Him when He entered into covenant with His Father, and bound Himself to put away our sin; in Him when He obeyed the law and made it honourable; and in Him when He died. Oh how blessed to realise the fact that we were in Him on the tree, in Him when He was smitten, in Him when He overcame; in Him that is true to His Father, to Himself, and to His beloved people! Has He ever given you a promise? You say there are many

written in His word, and recorded in the gospel. Yes, we read them there ; but there is such a thing as a Divine application of them. The word of God is applied to the heart by the eternal Spirit. Has He given you a promise and made it yours, causing your hearts to hope in the word He has spoken. He is true, and cannot deny Himself ; He is not man that He should lie. You may at times forget the promise, or pass over and lose sight of it, when it is dark and you are in trouble ; but the application made will never be forgotten on the throne, and the responsibility incurred by giving you the promise will never be lost sight of there ; for He is true to Himself, to His people, and to His word. And this constitutes the foundation of peace and the basis of satisfaction. We rest not only on the work of the Lord, but upon His character also. Were it possible for Him to change, what frightful fears and doubts would fill your mind and mine ! But fickleness in Him is impossible. Change in Him can never take place. Where He has spoken a promise once, the eternal grace is sure. The child of God needs stability, and that which is underneath him to sustain and support his faith is rock. "Trust in the Lord for ever ; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength."

Now the truth that is in Christ *is saving*, and persons who want to know other branches of truth must go elsewhere. Jesus Christ is a Saviour, and the fulness that is in Him is a saving fulness. The truth that is in Him is powerful, and it transforms sinners in three or four respects. In the first place, it transforms character. We are all condemned by nature ; and when that fact is realised, hell seems to surround the mind. Christ, however, has wrought out a robe of righteousness, which being cast upon the guilty sinner, constitutes him righteous in the sight of God. "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." It is a blessing to have a good character, such a character as saved sinners possess ; such a character as God can accept ; and such a character as shall reflect the honour and praise of Christ for ever. It is a mercy to possess a character which elevates its possessor into a higher position than Adam occupied before he fell. His righteousness was good, great, and perfect ; but it was loseable, though it was true. The righteousness of Jesus is great, good, divine, and eternal ; so that he that has passed from condemnation into justification shall never be condemned. "We are in Him that is true." But in the second place, there is sanctification. Justification establishes one's character, brings him into harmony with God's law, and reconciles him with the claims and character of Jehovah. Sanctification changes the heart and transforms the mind ; and the power that does that is divine, and emanates from Christ our Lord. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature : old things are passed away ; and, behold, all things are become new." Have our hearts been changed ? Have we experienced the regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit ? Do not forget the portion I read at the commencement of the service to-night, "Except a man be born again he cannot even see the kingdom of heaven." He may be a nominal Christian ; he may be a very prominent professor of religion ; his views of Christianity may be scriptural and correct, and his morality may appear to be faultless ; out of Jesus Christ there is no salvation, and without a change of heart there is nothing whatever for God or for eter-

nity. Do not think I am too severe. Do not say, The preacher spoke with considerable bitterness to-night. I am bound, to the best of my ability, to speak the truth as it is in Christ, and as the Lord liveth there is no saving truth out of Him, and no such thing as eternal life, but in union to His glorious person. If your heart has been changed, and a new life has been communicated to your soul, you are one with Him, and being in Him you are as safe as Gabriel in heaven. A third change awaits us. First we have passed from condemnation to justification; and secondly, out of a state of nature, into a state of grace; but by-and-bye we shall pass into eternal rest, into all the light of heaven, and into the glory of Immanuel. Immersed in that glory, we shall be at home, in our element, in our rest and perfection for ever and ever. There will be no fear, no darkness, no tears, no death, no prayers, no desires, no hopes there. Then shall we know the full meaning of what we sometimes sing:

“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.”

I cannot preach this sinless state. I am unable to describe it, having no experience of it yet. I am a sinner. I know and feel it. If one may speak for others, we sometimes seem to grow worse and worse, and viler and viler. Heaven, however, is coming, and eternal perfection and joy are not far off. We shall soon lose the last stain and trace of sin, and the last scar of the wounds which it has caused, and pass into the world where all is eternal perfection. There our joys will for ever abide, and our pleasures never die; our songs will be perpetual, and our raptures such as it is impossible for us here to describe, for we are in Him that is true, and His truth is transforming. But ere long time shall end, and He that is true will come the second time, without sin unto salvation; and then He shall raise His people from the dust, and form and fashion their bodies like unto His glorious body, catch them all up to meet Himself in the air, and so shall we be for ever with the Lord; for are they not in Him that is true. Now since this is the character of our Lord, all rest upon it. The Father reposes, trusts, and confides in Him. Angels feel they are safe in connection with the blessed Christ of God. I suppose that our true and glorious Christ was the faultless occasion of the false Christ or antichrist. Error follows truth; and antichrist follows Christ Himself. We, however, are in Him that is true, having been saved in Him with an everlasting salvation.

Now let me notice one or two things in the second place in connection with *the union indicated*. “We are *in Him* that is true.” There are many of God’s people on the earth who are not yet able to say they are in Christ. They are not what they formerly were, and they feel they can never again be what they once were. But it is impossible for man to persuade them that they are in the Lord Jesus Christ. They tell you they would give a world, if they had one, to know confidently and correctly that they are in Christ. Well,

“The time of love will come,
When all shall clearly see,
Not only that Christ shed His blood;
But *each* shall say, for me.”

God tries the faith of His people, and many wait a long time for a Divine revelation. "They shall not be ashamed that wait for me." But how are God's people in Christ? and what do we understand by being in Him? Well, the saints are in Christ in all respects. In the first place, they are in Him representatively. He is a common person, the great Head of the church, and He is to His people what the Jewish high priest was to the whole Jewish nation. He put on the breastplate, upon which were twelve names, the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, and when He appeared in the holiest of all before the mercy-seat, on which was the Divine Shekinah, He represented all the millions of the children of Israel. The whole nation, even all the people were in Him. And what the Jewish high Priest was to Israel, the true High Priest is to all His church and people. God sees you in Christ and nowhere else, and He always sees you there. You are for ever accepted in the Beloved. I am not preaching mere figures and metaphors. Now the word of God abounds with descriptions of this great and glorious fact, that Jesus is the true and perpetual representative of all His beloved people. He pleads their cause; He represents their persons and their character; also He is in Himself what God requires them to be. The Jewish high priest was what God required the nation to be, and Christ as our High Priest represents us before God with all that which God requires for our salvation. We are in Him representatively and federally. But we are in Him *vitally*. Have we life in our hearts, or grace in our souls? "I am the vine, and ye are the branches," said the Lord Jesus. Now if we are united to Christ, as the branch is to the vine, we have the nature, the life, and the name of Christ, and are interested in the same proprietor. "I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman. And it is so that if living Christianity is in our hearts we possess a life that can never be destroyed, by virtue of union to the Son of God. Brethren, we have nothing for death nor for heaven if we do not possess this principle or life. Oh to be able to say before we enter the waters of death and the swellings of Jordan: "We are in Him that is true:" in Him representatively, and in Him *vitally*. True religion is not a mere theory. Christianity is more than a name. It is a principle, a divine power in the heart. Religion is something more than notion; something must be known and felt; and as the sap in the branches is from the root; so the life in the Christian comes from Jesus Christ with whom the Christian is one. The life in the Christian is as to its nature and properties like that which is in Christ Himself; and therefore, "Because I live, ye shall live also." In all respects they are in Christ and represented by Him. He pleads their cause and bears their names before His Father's face. They are in Him by purpose, and in Him by power; in Him by realisation, and in Him by a profession of religion. I have put the profession last, because it arises out of all the rest. There are professors in Christ who are one not with Him *vitally*, and hence he says: "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, He taketh away;" so that there are branches in Christ by a mere profession, which are unfruitful, because they are dead. Contact or a nominal connection with Christ is not sufficient; we must be in Him as the branch is in the vine, as the member is in the body, and as the body is one with the head. We are in His eye, in His hand, and in His heart; in all respects believers in Him that

is true. How important is this union; for as we have already said life, our honour, and our safety are the results of it. There can be no heaven without it. All depends on the union of the soul to the blessed Christ of God. If I have a minister of the gospel here to-night, perhaps he will permit me to say, that he cannot possibly make this truth too prominent in his ministry. This is a great root-doctrine, and one of the most important in the Bible—union to Jesus Christ. Paul said concerning himself, “That I may be found in Him.” Salvation, the promises, the love of God, a title to heaven, and all that God and man require are in Jesus; and therefore Paul prayed that he might be found in Him. To be united to Christ, is to be interested in all that He is interested in. Is He beloved? all in Him are beloved too. Is Christ accepted? all in Him are accepted also. Is Jesus interested in providence and in the promises? so are they. Is Christ elevated beyond condemnation? so are they.

Now, lastly, just one word on *the confidence expressed*. *We are in Him* that is true. I notice here that this is all of sovereign grace.

“Why were we made to hear His voice,
And enter while there’s room?”

And

“Pause my soul, adore and wonder;
Ask, O why such love to thee?”

All our fellow-men are not in Him. The majority of them blaspheme His name, and hate those that are in the kingdom of God’s Son. We can remember the time when we were with them, and loved their company, and said when we mentioned religion we would never become united to them; but our thoughts were not the thoughts of God, neither were our ways His ways. In due time our eyes were opened, our enmity was killed, and we were brought into vital connection with the true and blessed Christ of God; and although Satan may at times have almost forced us to curse the day of our birth, we have never cursed the day of our second birth, nor repented of our repentance. We have blessed the Lord, more or less deeply, that He did not pass us by. Now with regard to confidence, let me just say—and I speak to the saint—you know that you are in Him. Every believer in God’s house to-night knows that he is in Him. Now you are ready to say, you have said too much and gone too far. If you are not in Christ you are living in sin; and if you are living in sin, you love it. Are you loving sin, rolling it as a sweet morsel under your tongue. Is it carrying you farther and farther from God; and are you pleased to be at a distance from Him? Oh, such thoughts are terrible! No; sin is hateful to you. You mourn over the depravity of your nature; you long for purity, and you would be like the Saviour. You are, in the kingdom of Jehovah, what you prayerfully and spiritually desire to be; therefore, if it be the unconquerable desire of your hearts to be like the Saviour, and to be free from sin, you are in Him, and may say with all confidence as did John, “And we are in Him that is true.” May the Lord command His blessing, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

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

PRICE ONE PENNY.

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

May be had also of ELLIOT STOCK, 62, Paternoster Row, London.

GOD'S KNOWLEDGE OF THE HEART.

A Sermon—

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, 26th NOVEMBER, 1882.

"Shall not God search this out? for He knoweth the secrets of the heart."
Psalm xliv. 21.

OUR Redeemer in His intercessory prayer to His Father, before He left this world said, "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." There is such a thing therefore as spiritual knowledge on the earth, and there are such persons in the world as followers of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ. "No one can know God without God," so says an old writer; for God is a self-revealing being. The glorious sun of nature which is one of His creatures, is self-revealing, and its great Maker reveals Himself to men. If a man knows God, he has been taught by Him; if a person trusts in Him, the Lord has given him faith; and if he leans all his weight as a guilty sinner upon the person of the Mediator, the Holy Spirit dwells in his breast; for no man can call Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. It is life eternal to know the true God. "There are gods many, and lords many; but to us there is but one God the Father, of whom are all things and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him." It is not enough that a person knows the true God, he must also have a spiritual and saving knowledge of the person and work, and worthiness of the Son; for, "there is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." A true knowledge of the living God comes through Christ into the heart, and His servants appear in the presence of the Father through the mediation of His beloved Son. If it is eternal life to know the true God, then one's knowledge must embrace the attributes and perfections of Jehovah. Not that one can ever have a full or an exhaustive knowledge of Jehovah and of His perfections, yet there can be no salvation and no eternal life in the heart without a spiritual knowledge of Him. He that knows God, knows something of His holiness, His justice, His omnipotence, His everlasting love, and His mercy; and he is always ready to say with the Apostle Paul, "By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." God's attributes are essential to His being, His Godhead, His greatness, and His glory. One attribute is not greater, more prominent, or important, than another; all are equally glorious, and equally important to God Himself; and if our hearts are taught of Him, they are all equally important to us. Some saints are perpetually dwelling upon His love; others are constantly mentioning His mercy, and not a few speak of His mercy as if it were the favourite perfection or the darling attribute of Deity. I imagine and believe that God's justice is as important as His mercy, and that it stands out

as prominently as His mercy and His love. It is important that we should know that all God's perfections meet in the person of Christ, and that they are all brought into sweet and everlasting harmony, by the sacrifice and salvation of the Son. There is no clashing between justice and mercy, and no collision between eternal peace and righteousness. God is wholly and universally reconciled in the person and by the work of His dear Son, and countless millions of sinners shall be finally and for ever reconciled to Him and to all His perfections. "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about them that fear Him." The church of God is surrounded by the eternal attributes and perfections of Jehovah, so that His omnipotence and omnipresence, and wisdom, and love, constitute the bulwarks of eternal safety, by which the saints are protected, and the church is preserved from age to age. Now among the various attributes of God, that which is very important to every saint, and indeed to every son and daughter of Adam, is His omniscience; and hence it is said in the text, "If we have forgotten the name of our God, (see preceding verse,) or stretched out our hands to a strange god, shall not God search this out? for He knoweth the secrets of the heart."

It is my intention to make a few observations to-night upon the latter part of the text: our God is said to know the secrets of the heart. I cannot tell what has induced me to bring this text, or what has led my thoughts to drop upon it. It is of a character such as I do not usually select for pulpit exercises; but the fact is, I am not my own, my Master is in heaven. I think I try to ask Him for texts, as I endeavour to ask Him for sermons; therefore I trust that my mind has been directed by God Himself to this most solemn portion of His Word,—God knoweth the secrets of the heart. I shall mention a few points which appear to me to be suggested by the subject, name them as I proceed, and make a few remarks upon each of them.

In the first place, let us try to contemplate the text *as asserting a glorious fact*. God knoweth the secrets of the heart. This is a fact, and Bible facts are great and most important things, and they will be so until the end of time, and many of them will be so in eternity; and I do not know of a more important truth than that which is asserted in my text that the Almighty God knows all the secrets of all hearts. Notice in the first place that this is God's prerogative, God only knows the secrets of the heart; probably there are thousands of beings surrounding every one of us, but among them all there is only one that knows all the secrets of our hearts. The devil is near at hand (for I suppose and believe that most of my hearers, or all of you, are believers in the existence of the devil;) but religion has got in the present day into so strange and mysterious a position, that the devil has been somehow or another forced out of existence altogether. There was however such a being as Satan when Adam and Eve were in the garden of Eden; there was such a being in the days of Job; there was such a being when Jesus was forty days and forty nights in the wilderness, passing through terrible temptations; there was such a being when Jesus on the cross spoiled principalities and powers, and triumphed over them all; and there was such a being when the Apostle Paul wrote his Epistle to the church at Rome, and said, "The very God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." Yes, there was such a being as Satan, when Paul said, "We intended coming to you, but Satan

hindered." There was a devil, when you and I were far from God by wicked works, and yielded to a mysterious power, and followed a mysterious influence, which were presided over by the *Prince* of the power of the air. Yes there is such a being as Satan, and we are taught to believe that he presides over a multitude of other spirits, how many we know not, and if we did know, it might not be profitable or edifying to dwell upon such a theme. However, there is a mighty enemy and there are principalities, and powers, which are presided over by one great mind ; for the mind of the devil is evidently great. He was once an angel of light and therefore he possesses a greatness which, now he is an enemy, constitutes him a terrible foe. He presides over principalities and powers, and every saint and the whole living church is surrounded by those powers. But though the devil can tempt sorely and severely, though he can damage character, and derange and spoil one's reputation, though he can inject into the mind a thousand hateful and abominable things, it is a fact that he cannot search the heart. He knows not all the secrets of the immortal mind. Like man in this respect, he has to wait for words, for actions, for steps, and for conduct, before he knows the secrets of the heart. These observations will in some respects apply to the greatest angel in heaven. No, there is only one Being that knows the secrets of the heart, and that Being is Jehovah. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." And then the question is asked, "who can know it?" There is Satan the greatest in darkness, and there is Gabriel perhaps the highest in light ; but neither knows the secrets of the heart. There are millions of angels sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation ; but they know not the secrets of the heart. We are surrounded by and connected with many good men and women, saints of the Most High, beloved brethren and sisters ; but they cannot tell the secrets of our hearts, neither can we tell the secrets of theirs. It is God's prerogative to know them : God, and God only, searches the heart, and tries the reins of the children of men.

Beloved friends, may we not regard this as a great mercy, and an important favour ? What would be the state of the world if the secrets of the heart could be read ? What would be the state of the professing church if every member knew the secrets of the heart of every other member ? If you knew all the secrets of my heart, and I knew all the secrets of yours, would there—could there be, in depth and confidence, the sentiment and excellency of Christian brotherly love ? No, there is a veil—so far as creature power is concerned—over every heart, and every mind is, in a great measure, concealed from every other mind, save that of the great and eternal God. "I, the Lord, search the heart, and try the reins of the children of men." What a sight evermore appears to Jehovah ! What a world ! and I would not misrepresent matters,—What a world of moral abomination, which must necessarily be detested by God, appears beneath His high and holy eyes. God sees what is good in the heart, and He also sees all that which is vile therein. Is there such a thing as corruption ? our God sees it ; such a thing as depravity ? He knows it all ; such a thing as abominable evil ? Jehovah knows and comprehends it all. Sin is ever working, ever rising, and ever sending forth its poisonous influences beneath the holy eyes of that holy Being whose purity is such that "the heavens are not clean in His sight, and

He charged His angels with folly." You talk about the patience and long-suffering of God ; here is the proof and the illustration of their existence and exercise. He bears with what He hates, and perpetuates the life and comfort of beings, the secrets of whose sinful hearts He is intimately and thoroughly acquainted with. We sometimes sing—

"Since, therefore, I can hardly bear

What in myself I see ;

How vile and black must I appear,

Most holy God, to Thee."

We turn our eyes within, and view, as well as we can, the state of things existing there, and then, before one another and before God, ask the solemn question, "Can either God or good dwell there?" Well, God knows and thoroughly understands the secrets of the heart. He and He only knows them, which is our mercy. I sometimes wonder how we should feel if we knew, even in a very small measure, the secrets of the hearts of one another. Is it too much to say that we should fear and shrink from one another. I am thankful you do not know all that is in my breast; and you are thankful the minister does not know all that is in yours. Yet although there is a Being that knows them all, that knows them thoroughly and exhaustively, and hates all that is vile, yet you are not, as believers, afraid of Him. On the contrary, the fact that His all-seeing eye is upon you, sheds a measure of comfort into your minds, although their sinfulness appears more vividly through the wondrous light He casts upon your understanding. He knoweth the secrets of the heart.

This knowledge is essential to the character of God, as a Judge, as a Saviour, and as the supplier of all our wants. It is essential to His character as a Judge. How could He judge the world, open the books, bring every secret thing to light, and place all secrets before assembled worlds, did He not know the secrets of the heart. The time is coming when every hidden thing shall be laid bare, and every secret of every heart shall be exposed to view ; for the great Judge on the throne will pour shining and divine light on all immortal beings. If this is so, then God must necessarily know the secrets of every heart. Moreover, this is essential to His character as a Saviour. If He did not know all the secrets of the heart, how could He save us from them, or from their power and their consequences? How could He save us from the love of lust and the love of self, did He not know the secrets of the heart? Salvation is a stream that shall run wherever sin flows. It circulates through the heart and pervades the mind, and it follows sin, and ultimately removes it from every opening, every faculty, and every power. It was intended that the salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ should meet all the requirements of hearts, vile and ruined. The time is coming when all the secrets of our hearts shall be spiritual, holy, heavenly, and divine, and when we shall appear as transparent and pure before a holy God as He can possibly require us to be, for He knows all the secrets of the heart, and will sanctify us wholly. Natural, moral, and spiritual secrets, He knows them all. Every mind in heaven—and mighty minds are there—is naked and open beneath the eye of God, with whom it has to do. God sees the mind of Gabriel through and through, and never discovers therein a crooked thought, an irregular feeling, or a base affec-

tion; and He looks on that spirit with satisfaction and delight. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are there. They had secrets in their hearts when here, of which they were ashamed, besides many, of the existence of which they knew nothing. They are all now gone, and they are purged and purified, and their great Maker and Saviour looks upon them with satisfaction and delight. And there are minds in hell—Satan, of whom we spoke just now. His mind is open before God, and he cannot conceal himself from the great Judge and Ruler of the universe. “Hell is naked before Him, and destruction hath no covering.” The eye of God looks through the universe of worlds and the universe of minds in heaven, on earth, and in hell, for every thought of every fiend, and of every other being, good or bad, is comprehended by Jehovah.

In the next place, let us look at the text as *indicating a very solemn reality*. This fact is deeply solemn. He knoweth the secrets of the heart. He is not an outside observer merely, but an inspector of the interior of the whole mind. He looks into its profound and mysterious depths. Do you not feel in some measure solemnised by the fact that the greatest Being in the universe, even He before whom you must one day stand, knows your hearts, and that nothing can possibly be concealed from His eye. Is not this a most solemn fact? Let me quote another portion of the Word. David says: “Who can understand His errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults.” There are heart sins, and head sins, and lip sins, and many others also. Every sin is not, perhaps, a heart sin. When Peter denied his Lord and Master: was the denial a sin of his heart? Did he love and habitually practise it? Was he not hurried and surprised into it, suddenly so, by the power of the devil, who was permitted to sift and toss him for a time? Was his heart wholly, universally, and delightedly engaged in it? He was surprised into it, and Paul, in the Epistle to the Galatians, says: “If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.” But there are heart sins, and there are secret sins; and perhaps our secret sins are blacker and viler than those which are open and known. God, however, knows the fountain, as well as the streams which emanate therefrom. “Who can understand His errors? Cleanse Thou me from secret faults.” But how could God do that, if He did not know the secrets of the human mind? Yes, He knows all, and every secret requires an application of powerful blood. The heart is so thoroughly depraved and universally sinful, that it must be permeated, as it were, by the precious blood of Jesus Christ. Not merely washed from sins which lie upon the surface or just beneath it, the whole heart must be immersed in the cleansing blood of Jesus, in order to purge and purify it, and make it whiter than snow. He knows the secrets of the heart; and, blessed be His name, this knowledge does not embarrass or perplex Him. Our knowledge of men and things, and circumstances, sometimes embarrasses us. That which we know ought not to be remains in existence, notwithstanding our knowledge; and that which we would remove and feel ought to be removed, is stubborn and deeply rooted; and though we mourn over it and loathe it, yet it remains where and what it was. Our God knows the secrets of the heart, and is not embarrassed. He has a salve for every sore, a remedy for every disease, an antidote for every poison; and before He has done with you in a way of grace and salvation,

He will make you fit for heaven and so fit for glory, for He Himself has used the word "worthy," saying, "They shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy." And we read of some who are "counted worthy to obtain that kingdom." That worthiness cannot be of ourselves, neither can it arise out of anything we possess or can do. It must be the result of the doing and dying of Jesus, and of the work of God the Spirit in our hearts. We are worthy in Him, He is worthy for us, and He is our Lord. If you can take this great worthy Christ in the arms of your faith, and are dressed in His righteousness, and washed in His blood, you shall enter heaven for His sake, and be for ever blest; for He is worthy for you. This is a solemn reality.

In the third place, let me notice that the text *indicates a great spiritual comfort*. He knoweth the secrets of the heart: that is a comfort, not to all, but to some persons only: a comfort, not to few, but to many; for I apprehend that although the flock of Christ is said to be a little flock, if all the little flocks gathered together here and there, are taken all together, the number will be very considerable, and it is a pleasing and comforting fact to all the flock, and to every sheep, that their Shepherd knows everything. The greater the knowledge of the parent, the safer, in some respects, the family are; and if his power and ability be equal to his knowledge, it is all the better for the children. Now our God cannot know too much, and we are glad that His knowledge is infinite. He knows Himself. He is the only Being in the universe that thoroughly knows Himself. As He knows Himself, the Infinite one, He knows all that is finite. We are finite, our enemies are finite, and all our circumstances are finite; and all are at once naked beneath the eye of that God with whom we have to do. What a comfort to all the children of God! The church of God is a hated and persecuted body, and it may be that many clandestine enemies are round about, laying their plans, forming their schemes in darkness, and rejoicing that no eye sees them. Their plans are formed with the skilfulness of bitter enemies, and some desperate plot may be ripe for execution against your character, your reputation, your interest, and your future. I know not—who does know—how bad the world is, or how many wicked people are in it, or how much wickedness there is among professors? Who knows what plots are ripe for execution against you and me? God knows; for the secrets of the heart are all open to Him. Rome may live in darkness, as it does; and the whole hierarchy of antichrist may conceal and cover themselves from kings and nations, and from the church of God. They may have formed mines underneath the whole of Protestantism, and filled them with that which is deadly and destructive. Who knows about it? Why God does; for no secrets can be concealed from Him. Nothing is done in the enemies' camp, nor anywhere else, that God is ignorant of. Otherwise, God could not have correctly said, And the gates of hell shall not prevail against My church. The false church may plot and conceal her views and plans from the world; the church's God has an all-seeing eye, for His eye is a flaming fire; it is everywhere. He has all power, and He is His own light. Distance is nothing to Him, for He is afar off as well as near. Darkness is nothing to Him, for the darkness and the light are both alike to Him. Depth is nothing to Him, for He is deeper than the grave. Heights are nothing to Him, for He is higher than the greatest creature height, and

therefore the text speaks comfort, that your God knows the secrets of the heart. Have you been slandered and misrepresented, and are you suffering to-day in consequence thereof? Many of God's saints have suffered beneath a weight of wrong. Are you labouring under a load of unrighteous imputations, or crying out of wrong, and seem to be unheard? Your God is on His throne, and is looking on, and will appear in due time. There is a reason for His apparent silence, a divine, wise reason that He does not work when you think a blow might well be struck. Give Him time; He will do His own work in His own way. He is not ignorant, but knows all, and by-and-bye He will pluck His arm out of His bosom and smite the enemy on the right and on the left; for "He will bring forth our righteousness as the light, and our judgment as the noon-day." Then, are you troubled on account of confusion in your hearts? You know not whether there be grace there or not; but God knows the heart. One thing you know, that whereas you were blind, now you see. That is more than everyone can say, for all cannot see. The eyes of millions have not been opened. If you see yourself to be a sinner, and know the way of salvation, and feel that without an interest in grace you must be lost, God has done much for you. Yes; but there is such a conflict within, and where to draw the line between flesh and spirit, sin and holiness, grace and nature I know not. God does. He knows what is His own, and what is yours. There is much within that is yours, and is of the devil and the world; but there is also something that belongs to God, and that came from Him, and you take your denomination, not from the evil that is within, nor from your lapsed and ruined condition, but from what God is doing and has done for you, even from the fact that He dwells within. Other things may be found in your hearts; but if grace is there, you are a gracious person; if the Spirit is there, you are a spiritual person; if the fear of God is there, you are a child of the Lord God Almighty. Never fear; God knows all secrets, where grace ends and nature begins; where nature ends and where grace begins. The knowledge of our God is perfect, and, unlike ours, it is without succession. Ours comes drop by drop, and we obtain it by discourse, by examination, by observation, or by waiting for the revelations of time, a little now and then. Not so the knowledge of God, who knows all things all at once, without succession. With Him there is nothing future and nothing past. He dwells in His own eternal *now*. Do you confess sin, you give God no information by doing so. Do you pray, God receives no fresh knowledge from your prayers. Are you brought into peculiar circumstances, such as you were never in before, your feelings and experience are new to yourselves, but they are not new to Him. Fresh information can never arise from the creature for the eternal God. He knows wholly, thoroughly, exhaustively, perfectly the secrets of the heart. If there is a hope, a desire for God, and for eternal things, He knows it; for it came from Himself, and is the fruit of His grace. He will nourish it, and it shall be developed. What is the heart of man? By nature the heart is a chaos of desires and wants, and confusion prevails there. Thousands of desires, like so many birds in a nest—so to illustrate the subject—spring up with open mouths, wanting and longing for something that will never be received, and God knows them all. I say, the text indicates comfort.

It indicates a rule also; but as time is gone, I will, under this head,

only just say that the child of God deems it no hardship to live beneath His all-seeing eye. One might say, Are you not unhappy? living day by day under the impression that God's all-seeing eye is upon you. For my part, I feel as if I could say, Depart from me, for I desire not the knowledge of Thy ways. Yes, friend, you feel so, and so did we once. Some think it is very bitter and painful to always feel that the eye of God follows them everywhere, and that each should always remember that—Thou, God, seest me. Well, the smuggler is afraid to be examined, and the thief, having what is not his own, is afraid to be seen and searched. The honest man says, I would be right; O God, search me and try me, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. If God has made you honest in eternal things, He has done much for you. Give Him the praise and the glory, for He well deserves them, and will deserve them for ever.

Take the text *as supplying an explanation of certain points*. One or two only I will now mention. You came to the house of God in a peculiar frame of mind, such as you could not possibly describe to your fellow creatures, and to your astonishment the minister went through the whole of it in his sermon. He so pointed out your case, and described your difficulties and your thoughts, that you sat and wondered, and felt as if some one had told him all about you. No, the minister had not been told, and he had no means of knowing your mind and experience, and yet step by step he traced them out, and you sat with astonishment. God knows the secrets of the heart, and every minister is His servant. God directs His servants to preach on certain topics, and in certain directions, that particular cases may be met. There sits a sinner, and God induces His servant to drop an observation that arrests the attention of that man. There is a backslider, and the minister turns his attention to that state, and the person wonders. There is a hypocrite, and the minister drops down upon hypocrisy, and the false professor is detected. No; ministers are not their own masters. One is their Master, even God, who knows the secrets of the heart, and influences His servants' minds in preaching. Hence, the text may be taken as an explanation of certain important facts. I must, however, leave the subject, except that I would just say that this *accounts for the marvellous character of the Gospel*. Does not the gospel meet every case, and do you not think that He who is its Author must have known every secret before it was constructed? The covenant of grace also is ordered in all things and sure; and our covenant God foreknew the secrets of our hearts, and arranged it accordingly. It pleased God that all fulness should dwell in Christ; there is something, therefore, in Christ for every saint in every condition. How is that? Oh it was all a matter of divine intention and purpose, for God knows the secrets of the heart, and has made suitable provision for them all. The Lord add His blessing, for Christ's sake. Amen.

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

PRICE ONE PENNY.

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

May be had also of ELLIOT STOCK, 62, Paternoster Row, London.

HEAVENLY FEAR : ITS OBJECT AND PERPETUITY.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, 17th DECEMBER, 1882.

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

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

VOL. III., No. 33.—JANUARY 15, 1883.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PRICE ONE PENNY.

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

May be had also of ELLIOT STOCK, 62, Paternoster Row, London.

OUR MASTER IN HEAVEN.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,
AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,
ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, 21st JANUARY, 1883.

"Knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with Him."—Eph. vi. 9.

IN the former part of this important epistle we have very clearly and comprehensively described some of the great and glorious doctrines of the everlasting Gospel. The apostle Paul, the writer of this letter, had a naturally great and powerful mind, which having been deeply sanctified by the Holy Spirit, he brought into the kingdom of God's dear Son. As one of the apostles of Jesus Christ he was favoured with a large measure of grace, and also of the gifts and power of the Spirit of God. On one extraordinary occasion he was caught up, as he tells us, to the third-heaven, where he heard unspeakable words, which it was not lawful for a man to utter. Of course, therefore, they are not expressed in any of his letters. Nevertheless, while his soul was in Paradise, before the throne of God, and immersed in the glory of his Master, he became filled with a peculiar power which never left him, and under which he preached the glories of his Lord, and wrote important letters to the churches. Therefore, on reading the first chapter of this epistle one at once feels that its writer was a great and gifted man, and one who had much to do with God, with Christ, with heaven, and with the gospel and its glorious doctrines of salvation. Paul soared very high, and went very far back, not only to the commencement of time and the foundation of the world, but into the past eternity, and contemplated the infinite glories of Jehovah's character, and the infinite mysteries of His everlasting love; and then he set forth before the church of God the wondrous manner in which the work of salvation was being carried on, and what its glorious consummation shall be in a better world, for ever and ever, in the experience of all whom He hath quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins. Having set forth a number of the great doctrines of the gospel, and described a measure of the experience of God's people, he was divinely inspired to close the letter with words of exhortation. In doing this, he first of all directs himself to wives, then to husbands, then to children, then to fathers, then to servants, and lastly to masters. The Word of God has something to say to every class of persons, and almost every class was represented, it appears, in the church at Ephesus. We have no words of exhortation in this letter to kings, princes, or magistrates, for persons in these grades were not members of that church. Had there been royal personages and magistrates in membership, it is my belief that Paul would have given words of exhortation to them also. First, he addresses

those members who were married, and says, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord." Then he has some most important exhortations for husbands: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it." Then, "Children obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right." And I would just say, in passing, that the apostle was here addressing members of a Christian church, and therefore the children here spoken to should be considered as members of the church. "Obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right: honour thy father and thy mother." Then there is a word for fathers, for servants, and for masters. "And ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening; knowing that your Master also is in heaven, neither is there respect of persons with Him."

There are four or five points which invite attention. First—*The relation in which Christ stands to His people*: He is their Master. Secondly—*The Master's residence*: In heaven. Thirdly—*His character or perfection*: There is no respect of persons with Him; and Fourthly—*The confidence expressed*—knowing this.

In the first place—*The relation in which Christ stands to His people*: He is their Master. Our Lord said to His disciples, "Be ye not called Rabbi, neither be ye called masters; for one is your Master, even Christ. He is an everlasting Master, whose authority and power are unwasting, and He will never vacate the position He occupies, but continue to hold His seat till the end of time, and then He will be surrounded by His happy servants for ever. It is not an honour to serve some persons, and earthly service is not always pleasant; but it is always an honour to serve the God of heaven; and when our services are deeply spiritual, and we are divinely favoured and helped, it is a sacred pleasure to come near to our Master's throne, and serve Him with every power we possess. Jesus is His people's Master. In the margin it reads, and Dean Alford gives the same rendering, "For their Master and yours is in heaven;" for Christ is the Ruler of both servants and masters. Jesus is Master of His one universal and beloved church. I should like first to show on what ground the authority of Jesus over all the saints of God rests. We pass by the fact, which is universally admitted, that our great Redeemer is the mighty God and the everlasting Father, and therefore has a right to exercise unlimited authority over all the creatures He has made. We do not now regard Christ as the everlasting God only, but notice Him in His mediatorial character—as bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh; as our elder Brother, and intimately and inseparably connected with us in the kingdom of heaven, and of God. God says, "Yet have I set my King on my holy hill of Zion." Our heavenly Father having taken into His eternal thoughts and love all the millions of beings that shall appear in heaven for ever, and constituted Himself their covenant God and them His peculiar people, gave them to His beloved Son; committed them into His hands, and authorised Him to save them, to keep them, to gather them, to rule over them, to lead them through the world, and to instate them in eternal blessedness and glory. On this ground the great Redeemer is the authoritative and rightful Ruler of the Church of God. But, besides this, our Lord has acquired a right to rule, and be

the Master of the family of God. I do not know how to enter into the mystery, for it is profoundly deep; but it relates to this subject, and is truly sweet. Although our Lord "was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God; yet He made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross: wherefore, God also hath highly exalted Him." Before our Lord could ascend to heaven and take His seat at the right hand of His Father, and exercise universal and saving authority, He had to become a servant Himself. He served His Father and He served for us, and in our room and stead, in order that He might take possession of His church, and be in a position to call by grace, to rescue sinners from Satan, and from disgrace, and exercise that power which was necessary to bring them to His feet, to break their hearts, and to draw confessions of sin from their spirits. Jesus is our Master, on account of the fact that He died for us. What a pleasing thought is this, that our ruling and teaching Master and Proprietor does not preside over a multitude of slaves! He that loved us and bled for us; He that served God for us and achieved our salvation; He that closed the gates of hell against us, and opened the gates of heaven for us, has taken His position at the right hand of Infinite Majesty, and said, "Because I live, ye shall live also." Besides, in the next place, our Lord makes all His own servants, which is more than other masters have been able to do. Servants have been born in their master's houses, and trained more or less carefully, and many of them have served their masters faithfully, but our great and glorious Lord forms all that serve Him. You have servants because you require them and need their services, and cannot get on without them; therefore, in a great measure, you depend upon them. Christ has servants because He will have them, and not because He needs them. Jesus has a multitude of servants, but He does not depend upon any of them. He demands their services, but His greatness and blessedness are not increased by them. He is the unchangeable God, and became what He is for our sakes, and what He is now doing in heaven is for the glory of His own name and for the welfare of His people. When, some years ago, a mysterious and unseen power arrested your minds, and stopped your feet, and called you by grace, it took place under the eye and by the authority of your ruling Master.

"But thus th' eternal counsel ran,
Almighty love, arrest that man."

And Almighty grace arrested you. It broke your heart, and brought you to the feet of Him whom you now own as your ruling and loving Lord and Master. Thus, Christ makes His own servants. His angelic servants are the work of His own hands. He formed them for Himself, and qualified them to serve Him in a particular way. There is not an angel in heaven but what received all his gifts and abilities from his Maker, and there is not a servant of Christ on the earth but what has received his qualifications from Jesus Christ his Saviour, who is the fountain of gifts, as the Spirit is the giver of them. If the Master resolves to save a sinner, it is done; and if that saved sinner is to preach

the Word of Divine Truth, the Master, and not men, imparts the necessary gifts and qualifications for that official work. We have not a word to say against learning or intellectual power and activity, but we have to say on this point, that Jesus, who saves His people, and thereby constitutes them His servants, is the only Being in the universe that can make a spiritual and successful minister of the gospel. He is the Master of every spiritual servant, and of every official servant, inasmuch as they are His workmanship, created in Himself unto good works. A good character is very important in a servant, and there are not many masters or mistresses who would like to take a servant without one. A safe character you deem necessary, and it is an important matter; and you would be chargeable with folly, if not with something worse, to take anyone anyhow into your service. But our Lord takes His people from slavery, from a distance, from the service of an enemy, and without a character. He takes the lost, the wrecked, the disgraced, and the ruined, and forms their character Himself. He takes them without qualifications, and gives them all that He requires them to possess. Are they to be righteous? He makes them so. Are they to possess holiness? He imparts it to them. Are they to resemble Himself? He sends His Spirit and conforms them to His own image. Are they to walk in His ways? He is their Leader and their Guide. Are they to abide by His side? He puts His fear into their hearts, and they depart not from Him. Are they to be obedient servants and children? He enlarges their hearts, and they run with cheerfulness in the way of His commandments. "Knowing this, that you have a Master in heaven."

But it will be interesting and important to notice the extent of His authority. He is Master of His own work, and I think we cannot affirm as much as that of any other being in the world. He never made an experiment; He does not sit upon His throne to learn what can be done. He did not come to make sinners salvable, but to save them; He did not come to try to do them good, but to do them good; and He did not go to heaven until he had laid an everlasting foundation for their salvation and welfare. When He came under the law, He knew His own personal ability to go to the end of it, and resolved to do so; and when sin was imputed to Him, He knew His own personal ability to stand up under it, and so put it away. "He bore our sins in His own body on the tree," and by the sacrifice of Himself He made an everlasting end of them; and He did not leave the premises on which He had lived and laboured until He was able to say, "It is finished; the work is completed, the word is fulfilled; my engagements have been honoured, and my people are for ever saved." One is your Master—even Christ. What is the extent of His authority? Let me say a word to the little ones. You say sin is mixed with all you do; whether you pray, or sing, or read, or be in the house of God, or obey or meditate on God, and the word, and everlasting things; sin is mixed with all you do—you cannot control it. You hate vain thoughts, but cannot exclude them; they enter in and defile your mind, pierce your conscience, interrupt your peace, and spoil your fellowship with God. Your Lord is the Master of sin. His authority is rightful and saving, and there is not a lust but what He can control, nor

a sin but what He knows the existence and operation of. There is not a sting in your conscience but what He is acquainted with ; nor a corruption moving or latent in your nature but what He has a perfect knowledge of ; and He is powerful, and so far your Master, that He controls, restrains, and over-rules all for the fulfilment of His own wise purposes and the glory of His grace in His beloved people. Blessed be His name ! our heavenly Master can control the evils which are within, the fears which distract your minds, the doubts which trouble your hearts, and the unbelief which casts so much dishonour on His holy character and name. He is the Master of consciences, and the only Master of them. I am not a bigot, and I dislike bitterness and censoriousness ; but I think I may say for myself, and speak positively too, that I will not give place, no, not for a moment, to anything or anyone that would step in between my conscience and my Master, my conscience and my God. There are points in connection with which I may yield a little without violating my conscience or breaking the Master's rule ; but with regard to all vital and eternal matters, and the salvation of my soul, He only is my Master. To His authority I bow, to Him and Him only I yield and submit ; and the Lord alone I own as my Master in heaven, and that there is no respect of persons with Him. He is the Master of your faith. Well, let us be faithful ; we will try to be so. *There* is a word one frequently meets with now-a-days, I mean *freethinking*, and every one, we are told, has a right to think and believe what he pleases ; but we have a divine Master who exercises a solemn and rightful authority over the thoughts, the will, the faith, and the religion of His servants. "Is there, then, no such thing as freethinking, sir ? Well, in His service there is holy freedom," and when we are near His throne or under His cross, serving Him with every faculty we possess, we think freely enough ; true freedom is experienced by us then. We think, and our thoughts are pleasant, but we think within the lines of truth. We think, and feel, and believe ; but our faith and consciences and thoughts all travel within the limits which are prescribed by our Master, and we have no desire to overstep or transgress the will of the Great Person I am speaking about. Knowing that we have a Master in heaven, if I may so put it, we do not wish to think nor to believe without Him, we do not want to have a hope that He cannot and will not recognise, nor possess a religion which has no vital connection with Him. The world is getting into a fearful state, and the professing church into a loose condition ; and were it not that the Lord is on the throne, and that He is an Almighty Master in heaven, I think I should despair as to the glorious facts of the gospel ; but when I think as I do, believingly, that our Lord is the Master of minds, and consciences, and faith, and thoughts, and of thinkers also ; then I have hope, and build my expectation high that those words shall be fulfilled, "I will do all My pleasure." Whilst there is so much laxity here and there, may it be the honour of this church and congregation to live and to believe within the Master's limits, and never for any consideration depart from the truth as it is in Jesus the Lord. The commencement of our spiritual service was of Him, and its termination here on the earth is also of Him, for He will employ us here as long as He pleases. He is too wise a Master to do what some people suggest.

He occasionally does,—take His servants away in the midst of their usefulness. No, He brings His servants into certain positions, and He says, “Go, labour in my vineyard,” and they go; and sometimes the night comes upon them early and unexpectedly; but it is all a matter of purpose and design: they are immortal till their work is done. He is master of our persons, our minds, our faculties, and our graces. How sweet it is to feel, whilst we are before Him, that we are not our own, but that we are bought with a price! He has not a slave in His service, I mean in His spiritual service, for all are free; and if you are His servant, my doubting, trembling brother or sister, you are not under the dominion of sin, and Satan is not your master; you are divinely free. I am about to say a strong thing,—supposing that you are a living servant of this living Master, should you die to-night, that portion of divine truth will be fulfilled in your experience, “Where I am, there shall also my servant be.” The extent of His authority.

The condition of His servants. It is interesting to dwell on this point. We have already said they are all free, but there is something more and greater than that. All the servants of the Lord are related to Him, they are His spiritual brethren; and therefore He that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified are said to be all of one. We have one Father, and Jesus is the elder Brother, exalted above all blessing and praise; and all the younger branches of the family are destined to serve God in Christ for ever. At the last-day, when His servants shall be gathered together on His right hand, He will say, “Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of my brethren, ye did it unto Me.” Thus all the servants of Christ are related to Him. Their interest is one. It is not so with many servants and masters. All servants do not study their master’s interest, and, on the other hand, masters are not always interested in the welfare of their servants. But what interests Christ interests the Christian, and what is of moment to the Christian is of moment to Christ himself; our interests are identical and cannot be separated. In this respect Christ and His people are truly united. We must dismiss this point, otherwise I intended to say a word on His method of ruling. He cannot err nor be unkind, He cannot make a mistake, nor issue wrong orders. He cannot lead His servants in a wrong path, and is incapable of committing an error. His will is the rule of the family, and hence, “Thy will be done.” If every servant did His will, I mean by practical obedience, how wonderful would the church appear! His secret and unalterable will is being gradually executed, and since He occupies the throne, and brings events and circumstances to pass which fulfil His grand purposes, the world and the church go on from age to age. Oh, it is well that Jesus is on the throne, that He holds the reins and sways the sceptre, and uses the sword when it is necessary. Our Christ is managing all the affairs of the church for eternity. Perhaps there have been times when you would have liked to have been your own masters and taken the reins and driven yourselves in another direction; but your Master rules all. Knowing this, that your Master is in heaven, and He will have His own way and fulfil His own purposes, and His servants are eternally safe under His management and control.

Just word, in the second place, on His *residence*. He is in heaven—personally He is there. He was here, and tabernacled and sojourned with us three-and-thirty years; but He said to His Father, “I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to Thee.” His influence is here, but His person is there. His spiritual presence is with His servants on the earth, but His personal presence is in heaven, and His servants are being gradually gathered together around their Master’s throne.

“Millions of years my wond’ring eyes
Shall o’er His beauties rove,
And endless ages I’ll adore
The wonders of His love.”

He is in heaven, deservedly so. He was His own way thither, and He went in His own name, for He had a right to go. Justice and righteousness admitted Him and seated Him on the throne of majesty and power. He deserved His honours in heaven. What is He doing there? He ever liveth to make intercession for all that come unto God by Him. He is managing the affairs of the universe for the advantage of His people and the glory of His name. He never loses sight of one of His servants, angelic or human, and has never yet lost one. No servant has ever been crushed or destroyed. “I am with thee always, even unto the end of the world,” and thus He is working on His throne now. He is spiritually present with His servants, but He is there to receive them as they arrive, to admit them into their eternal rest, to crown them with everlasting happiness and glory, and to fulfil all their expectations. During the thirty-two years, or thereabouts, I have been connected with this congregation, many and important changes have taken place, and I think I am within the truth when I say that hundreds of Christ’s servants have left us here for their eternal home in heaven during that period. Heads and faces, and hearts, and hands, and names, dear to us all, are gone. We well remember their seats, their presence, their prayers, and their counsel. They were the Master’s servants, like ourselves, and have been gradually called away, and

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

Our Master is in heaven, having taken possession of that world to receive His servants as they arrive.

In the third place, what is *His character*? There is no respect of persons with Him—this will apply to all. First, nations; Jew and Gentile—no respect of persons in relation to them. It will apply to social and civil distinctions; men and women, young and old, rich and poor, servants and masters. Distinctions necessarily prevail here; but there is no respect of persons with our heavenly Master. The master employing a hundred hands does not sit higher in the kingdom of God than the servant, and the servant is not lower than the master. There is no respect of persons with our perfect Lord. This will at once appear if we just notice what He says, “And him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out.” No sinner is admitted on account of his goodness, and

no sinner is rejected on account of his badness. No, goodness does not open the door, and badness does not close it. "I will in no wise cast out him that cometh," it may be one who has been a trim and clean Pharisee, or it may be an unclean Magdalene, and bless His name ! having once admitted and received us, He will hold us for ever, and in no wise cast us out. There may be, and there are, imperfections which wound and make us moan and weep, and loathe ourselves ; the Master does not, however, discharge His servants, for He will in no wise cast them out. To do so would be to violate the Father's purpose, ignore His own claims, and reject also the work of the Eternal Spirit.

One word more, and I have done. *The confidence expressed ; " knowing this."* The apostle represented them as knowing their Master, and that He was in heaven. They knew this by the Saviour's own testimony. It is expedient for you that I go away, and that having gone away he would send them the Holy Spirit. That they knew had taken place, and therefore you know that your Master is in heaven, and that He is no respecter of persons. But it was known experimentally. Now, I have just a word to say to my doubting and fearing friends: You know that your Master is in heaven. You know that the influence, authority, and power which most effectually move your minds are in heaven, and that they *descend* upon you. You know your Master in this respect is not on the earth. You know you are not the slave of sin, nor the willing follower of the devil. You know that Satan does not preside perpetually over your minds, but that the loadstone which most powerfully attracts you is above. You know and you feel this. It is your real experience. Do not hesitate—do not deny it. The centre towards which you are drawn is in heaven. You may not have passed into liberty, nor have enjoyed much peace, yet the language of your spirit is, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee ? and there is none upon the earth that I desire beside Thee."

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

Knowing that your Master is in heaven; for the authority and power that move your spirits are divine; and there is no respect of persons with Him. Amen.

THE NEXT SERMON WILL BE READY ON MARCH 15TH, 1883.

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THE JOY OF GOD'S SERVANTS.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,
AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,
ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, 18th FEBRUARY, 1883.

"Behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart."—Isa. lxx. 14.

THE saints in heaven are vessels of mercy, and every one is filled to the brim, and in fact overflows with glory, and their overflowing in the heavenly world constitutes those songs of praises and expressions of thankfulness which they address to the Lord. And there are vessels of mercy on the earth, a large number of them; and you know by personal experience that it requires very much to fill, and satisfy a human mind. Every one of us possesses a mind, the nature, character, and capacity of which we have some knowledge of, and by personal experience we know there is nothing of a worldly character that can fill our minds. Nothing we have ever yet been able to do has afforded us perfect satisfaction, and should we ever be filled with that which shall satisfy us, and that for ever, the fulness from which we must receive that supply we know must be infinite. Such a fulness is in existence on the throne, and Jesus Christ shall fill for ever all the vessels of mercy. My beloved friends, we are destined to be eternally happy, because we shall be eternally filled,—filled not anyhow, not with anything, but with all the fulness of God. If to be filled with all the fulness of God can satisfy the human mind, and we are so filled, we shall know all the bliss of being, and the meaning of the word satisfaction, and declare before God with grateful feelings that we possess enough. Well, Jesus is exalted, that He might fill all things, and He is seated at the Father's right hand that He might also fulfil all things. We are expecting that He will fulfil every promise recorded here, and verify every declaration of divine truth, and that nothing can be nullified or falsified. Jesus, if I may so speak, keeps the Word of divine truth before Him, and rejoices in the fact that He has made Himself responsible for the actual and perfect fulfilment of the whole Word of God. Very much of the Word He has fulfilled, and He is progressing with this great work; and by and bye the great mystery of Christ shall be completed, and the Bible shall be for ever closed, and all its great realities in their divine character and form shall appear before countless millions for ever. Now among the divine truths and promises which our Lord is progressively fulfilling is that which forms our text this morning: "*Behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart.*" Allow me to read the preceding verse. "*Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, Behold, my servants shall eat; but ye shall be hungry: behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed: behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit.*"

I will endeavour to make a few plain remarks this morning on this interesting portion of the Word, and it will be profitable in the first place to direct our attention to *the interesting character mentioned*. "*Behold, my*
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servants shall sing for joy of heart." I have recently called your attention to this interesting character. The last published sermon, which was announced just now as ready, is on the character of Christ as the Great Master of His people. I shall not feel it necessary, therefore, I think, to tarry long on this part of our subject; nevertheless, it will be quite proper and necessary to offer a few observations upon it. "My servants:" Now, I need not say that the Lord is here speaking to the children of Israel as His national church, and pointing out and describing to them the terrible state they were in, and the far more terrible state into which they would subsequently sink. Into that state the Jews have plunged themselves. The Romans have taken away their place and nation, and the literal and natural descendants of Abraham are scattered everywhere on the face of the earth. Gentile sinners are being called by grace, and the Word has been fulfilled,—“I will destroy you, and call My servants by another name.” The Jewish church no longer exists. The natural descendants of Abraham are still in existence, and are to be found almost everywhere in the world; but they are haters and despisers of the blessed Christ of God, and God’s interest now lies, generally speaking, among Gentile sinners; and, therefore, it is said, “My servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart.” What a blessing it is, and may it be impressed upon our minds, that England, our native land, this highly-favoured country, is blessed with the gospel. I thank God that the Word of God is heard and open everywhere, and that it may be everywhere read and preached. How is it that this small island—this little spot upon the earth—is so honoured, favoured, and distinguished? Spain is not so distinguished, and France is not so widely blessed, though a measure of what is commonly called religious liberty prevails there. There is not, however, much gospel there, and the number of saints, I suppose, both there and in Spain is very small; and if you cross the Atlantic to America—and I desire to say as little about that as possible—religion, like many things in that country, is very strange in many respects. Altogether, I take it this island home of ours is, in relation to divine truth and the glorious gospel of the blessed God, one of the most fertile spots on the earth, notwithstanding the floods of error that are flowing, and the national sins which are prevailing, and notwithstanding that the man of sin is making rapid strides, and doing almost as he pleases in the land. God has many servants in the Gentile world, and many on this favoured spot. But let us come a little closer and look at the subject, not only in relation to England as a country, but rather in relation to ourselves individually. We have sometimes been favoured to sing, with more feeling than we could possibly express,

“Why was I made to hear Thy voice,
And enter while there’s room?”

We were no worthier than others; we had no more merit than they; nor did we look for nor want salvation, when the grace of God entered into our hearts. How was it our hearts were broken, our eyes were opened, and we were rescued from the devil’s service?

“’Twas even so, Father, we ever must sing,
For so it seemed good in Thy sight.”

It is very well to generalise a little, and talk about the Gentile world and this island home; but it is of greater importance to speak of the grace of

God in connection with ourselves personally : for it matters not much to me how extensive the kingdom of the Redeemer may be in the Gentile world, nor how many English men and women may be believers in the eternal God, if my name should be left out ; if I have no knowledge of the Saviour, and am not one of the servants of the Most High. Religion is a personal thing. It is incorrect, and something worse than that, to talk about a Christian world or a Christian country. I wonder where you will find it ! While a good deal is being said about the world and countries as being Christian, let us talk about personal godliness and Christianity. It matters not where we were born, where we live, where we shall die, when we were christened, nor what Christian names were then given to us. Are we servants of the Most High God ?

“ True religion’s more than notion,
Something must be known and felt.”

If there is a heavenly life in our hearts, and we are possessors of holiness, we stand related to God in an interesting and peculiar manner, and the promise which my text contains looks smilingly upon us. “ My servants shall sing for joy of heart.”

Now, when we speak of the servants of God, three or four ideas naturally arise in our minds. There is the divine engagement ; then their honour ; then their safety ; and finally, their reward. Look for a minute or two at the gracious engagement implied. Are we God’s servants ? Then He has engaged us to serve Himself—the great God of Heaven ! To serve Him, how long ? As long as we live—as long as we live here, and as long as we shall live hereafter : for His servants shall serve Him for ever and ever. You know I am not accustomed to talk as some people do about having given my heart to the Saviour, for I do not quite understand that phraseology ; and therefore, I will say, I remember the time when the Lord engaged me to follow Him, and I entered into His service ; when He drew and saved me by His grace, and took me into His kingdom. What a condition I was then in ! I knew not what I was, where I was, nor whither I was going. What darkness and confusion prevailed in my mind ; and what a crushing load lay upon my conscience ! Salvation is of grace, or I had not been here this morning, and grace is divinely sovereign and free ; else I had never opened my mouth as a minister of the gospel. Jesus sought me when I was a stranger among strangers, and far off.

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

That wondrous night I shall never forget—no, perhaps not in heaven, whither I trust I am going. The Lord engaged me and took me into His service, and began to prepare me for the work He intended I should do. Well, the time came when the burden was removed from my conscience, and my wounds were healed ; when a sin-forgiving God wiped away my tears and removed my chains ; when He led me into sweet gospel liberty, and I became engaged to serve Him with all my poor powers for ever. But how have I served Him ? With all my heart ? Have I not miserably failed ? Well, bless His name ; as a Master He is patient, long-suffering, and forbearing. He knows my frame, and remembers that I am dust ; and, as a father pities his children, so the

Lord has pitied me. With all my imperfect services and shortcomings—together with the fact that I am a hell-deserving sinner, I am still on the Master's premises and under the shadow of His wings; I am still recognised in some measure by Him, and having some knowledge of myself, I would not if I might be my own master, nor for the world would I return into the service of Satan again. Christ, I trust, has rescued, and for ever engaged me. "My servants shall sing for joy of heart."

The honour. It is not an honour to serve everybody. For whom do you work now? By whom are you employed? Are you ashamed to mention your employer's name? Some who are obliged to labour for the bread that perishes, are ashamed of their masters' names. This will not hold in relation to the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Ashamed of Jesus! yes, I may,
When I've no guilt to wash away."

"Ashamed of Jesus! Sooner far
Let evening blush to own a star."

It is our honour; it sheds a glory upon us, and it imparts to us a peculiar character, that the God of heaven has taken us into His service, and that we are employed by Him. It is an honour to serve Him who served His Father for purposes of eternal salvation and life. What we might and should have been had we not been called to serve the Lord, perhaps we shall never know. I have sometimes thought that such was my natural temperament that had I not been called by grace in early life, I might soon have become a physical, a moral, and a social wreck. Grace saves in a thousand ways, and God's servants are preserved from a thousand evils. It is a high and special favour to serve this great saving Lord. The clothes you wear, the homes you left this morning, the food you expect to find upon your table when you return, the carpet on your floor—I am speaking now of temporal mercies—and the beds you find night after night, are all the results and the effects of the fact that the heavenly Master has engaged you to serve Him, and that none shall serve Him in vain, for it is no vain thing to seek and serve Him. I mention these points this morning, because I did not mention them the other Sabbath, when dwelling on this matter, and I would introduce something fresh if I can. Salvation, spiritual and eternal, is the great and primary salvation—the first and the last of the great business of grace; but there are many subordinate mercies and secondary favours and blessings flowing from this great work—the redemption of men. Heaven contains many of God's servants, but there is not a being there (and angels are all the servants of Christ,) but what deems it an infinite honour to have been created for divine service, and to have been called and qualified for that important work. Gabriel, if he is the brightest and sits in the highest angelic place, feels that his Maker and Creator has highly honoured him in making him what he is, and calling him to serve the great Author of his being. "My servants shall sing for joy of heart."

The servants of our Lord are evermore safe. Sometimes masters send their servants to do what is very critical and dangerous, and may result in their death. Inaccuracies, wrong steps, and errors may not only endanger the whole business, but the servant's life also. But our Lord, though He sends His servants into strange places, never sends them into real danger or death. He sends them sometimes into the valley of

humiliation, but that is a healthy place. He sometimes sends them into the field of conflict, and permits a thousand temptations to surround them, but then He never leaves nor forsakes them. "Fear not, Abram;" the battle is not yours, but mine. "Fear not: I am thy Shield and thy exceeding great Reward." The servants engaged by our Lord are engaged graciously. Their honour is great, and they are as safe as the Master's honour: for

"His honour is engaged to save
The meanest of His sheep."

Then, as to the reward. Well, in keeping His commandments there is great reward. His servants are not mercenary. They do not serve Him altogether for what they can get, although there is something in this. You come to His house, you open the Bible, and you come into His presence to get something from Him. Ah, but you love His name, His Word, and His house, and are saying, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon the earth that I desire beside Thee." We know that in keeping His commandments there is great reward. Five minutes with Him in earnest prayer, in nearness to His throne, excluded from the world, and shut in with the God of heaven, is sweet. How sweet the service when all that is within is alive with love and heavenly power, and all the mind serves the heavenly Master! We find our reward in the service,—not *for*, but *in* it. "*In* keeping Thy commandments there is great reward." A few minutes with the God of Heaven induced David to say, "I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness;" and "A day in Thy courts is better than a thousand." Having made these remarks on the character, let us take another step, and

Notice—secondly, *their joy*. "Behold, My servants shall sing for *joy* of heart." Joy.—Religion is not a moping, melancholy thing; and persons possessing true godliness are not strangers to pleasure. The sinner and the empty professor of the day regard us as shallow-minded beings, having very small souls, and but very little in them; and as being strangers to real joy. Their notions of joy, pleasure, and satisfaction are limited to theatres, dancing-halls, public-houses, and entertainments of various kinds; or to riches, rank, and honour. But God's servants shall sing for joy of heart.

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

We can afford to be laughed and sneered at: the judgment and opinions of the world have but little weight with us. The blind know not what colours are, and the deaf know nothing of sound; so the ungodly world, or those that never serve the God of heaven know nothing about real joy. The joy of saints springs from their relation to their Master. What do you think of the pardon of sin? and of knowing this by divine teaching and influence, or by the witness of the Spirit? What do you think of having the heart washed in the blood of Jesus, and filled with the power of the atonement of God's dear Son? To know this for ourselves fills us with joy. Guilt in the conscience is a sting in the soul, and the fire of sin raging within leaves pleasure and joy impossible: but when that fire is quenched, and that sting is gone, and the conscience becomes soft and tender, and the sweet whisper of the Spirit is heard, saying, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn

thee," there is joy and pleasure, and satisfaction of heart ; and such persons pity the worldling as to his notions of pleasure : for—

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

David said, "I will walk at liberty." There are many of God's dear people who, although they are His people and servants, do not walk in liberty. They are ready to halt—their knees are weak, and their hands hang down; they are feeble and faint, and sorely burdened with care and sin; but David said, "I will walk at liberty." There are times when we are strengthened, when we are not cripples, and are not bound; when we are buoyant as consciously pardoned sinners; and guilt being removed we walk in liberty, and with God. How rapidly the time passes away when God converses with the mind, and the servant gets near to the Master, and holds sweet fellowship and communion with Him! I have sometimes been in the house of God in my youthful days, and in the heat of my first love, when a sermon an hour long appeared to have been almost no time in delivery. How soon an hour passes away when God and the mind are together! "My people shall sing for joy of heart." The joy of pardon and the joy of liberty; the joy of intercourse with God, and the joy of prospect. "Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty;" and I want to see no other object, for the sight of the King in His beauty will fill me with joy. Yes, but "they shall behold the land that is very far off." Blessed sight! to stand on Pisgah's top, and look across Jordan, and see the land of Canaan, the land of promised rest. Oh, how blessed too to receive a cluster of grapes from the Eshcol that is there; to have a foretaste of heaven; to possess the earnest of the Spirit; to be sealed unto the day of redemption; and to sing whilst we stand on the Rock of Ages—

"There is my hope and portion fair;
My treasure and my heart are there,
And my abiding home."

There is present joy. Sorrow I know is here, but my text does not speak about it; and I am sticking to my text. There are much sorrow, grief, darkness, and many wants here; but there are also seasons of joy, and let us make the most of them.

Thirdly, their heartfelt joy is *expressed*. "My people shall sing;" they do not keep it to themselves. The fire within burns, and breaks out. "My people shall sing for joy." Their relationship to the Lord is so glorious, that when it is realised they cannot help singing. Their nearness to the Lord is sometimes so real, and their fellowship with Him so blessed that they cannot but rejoice. Not only is the heart full of joy; it overflows, and there is singing before God. "We joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." I don't know much about being in debt in civil and social matters; but it always occurs to me that it must exceedingly trouble an honest person, who would owe no man anything: but to be out of debt, to owe nothing, to be free and buoyant in that respect, is how God's servants stand with their Lord. They are out of debt, and out of danger, because they are out of debt; and, therefore, they sing. Then there is no uncertainty with regard to their future.

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

And so they sing. The Lord has paid their debts; their safety is of Him, and they are His servants, and shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty, and be safe in the secret place of God, and thus with regard to certainty all is settled. The Lord hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; and they sing, sing on the road as they journey forward, sing in God's house, where they spend an hour and a half now and then; sing in ordinances and means of grace; sing on the Christian Sabbath, and on Saturday night too sometimes, for Sunday is not the only singing, praising, worshipping day of the servants of the Lord. Sometimes He comes on Saturday, and sometimes in the middle of the night, and "Ye shall have a song as in the night when a holy solemnity is kept." First, there is the character—God's servants. Secondly, their joy, and thirdly their method of expressing it, "My servants shall sing for joy of heart."

Fourthly, *their God*—"My servants." Here we have absolute sovereignty. He has servants. He did not require, or need them; but it pleased Him to have them, and take them into His service. How does He employ them? As He pleases. Some in one way, and some in another; but degradation and disgrace are altogether out of the question. Some are night servants and others are day servants; some serve Him in the dark, and others in the light; some are near, and others at a distance; but all are on the premises. Those at a distance wish they were nearer, but they are as safe as their fellow-servants in heaven; for distance and nearness, darkness and light are both alike to Him. The will of the Master is the rule of the servants, and they are not supposed to have any will but His. It is not what they will, but the Master, and their business is to obey their employer's orders. So the God of heaven is our Master, and He says, "have I not a right to do what I will with my own." He sends Job into poverty and destitution, or permits him to go there, and says he shall serve me there, and when he has served me under those circumstances awhile, I will bless him, and his latter end shall be better than his beginning.


Fifthly, *the promise*. "My servants shall sing for joy of heart." This is information; therefore raise your expectations, for if you are servants in sorrow, expect joy; for the promise has proceeded from His mouth, and is recorded in the Word. He has bound Himself in a solemn manner to give you joy. Whatever word fails, this will stand; and whoever may finally lose his joy, the Lord's servants shall never finally lose theirs. He who has given the promise is able to fulfil it; for He is the source and spring of all our joy. Then as to the fulfilment of this promise. Has it been verified? It has in the experience of all that are in heaven: but I am thinking of two or three characters. Passing over Abraham, think of Jacob, of Joseph, and of David. The purpose, or the blessing was in existence in the days of Jacob, that servant of the Lord. My gray hairs, he said, will go down with sorrow to the grave. That was his apprehension; and "all these things are against me," was the idea of that purblind man. His view of his Master's mind and intentions was limited, and he apprehended no favourable change. Well, look at him on the verge of the grave—an old man, with his two hands crossed, upon the heads of his two grandchildren, saying, "The Angel which redeemed me from all evil." Was that going down to the grave with sorrow? and did that look like having had the dispensations of Providence against him? "The

Angel that redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads as He has blessed me. And so confident was he in the wisdom, knowledge, and grace of his Master, that he said, "Let my name be named upon them. Let them be called Israel; for the Angel of the covenant has redeemed me from all evil, and been greater to me than all my doubts and fears. Thus God's servants sing for joy of heart, even when they come to die, if not before. Then look at Joseph: the way in which he was led was rough and bitter; nevertheless God made a good singer of him, and put a good song into his mouth, even praise and thanksgiving unto his God. His brethren lowered him into the pit; then sold him into slavery; as a slave he served in Potiphar's house, and God blessed him, and the house also. Temptations arose, and the result was he was cast into prison, and his soul came into iron, and the word of God tried him. "Year after year passed away in sorrow; but there was the loving intention of God. My servant shall sing; for he is in the way to happiness, to pleasure, and to joy. I suppose he did sing when he was introduced into Pharaoh's court, and constituted his prime minister, and bound the princes of the land at pleasure. The word "bind" there does not mean with chains or cords, but that Joseph commanded and directed them. They obeyed him, and his word was their rule; for thus he bound them at pleasure. Was not all this a fulfilment of my text? "My servants shall sing for joy of heart." He will lead us through fire and through water, into a large and wealthy place. The future is bright with promise, whatever clouds may hang over you. They shall sing for joy. Lastly, the *continuation of their joy and songs*: in this world of death, and in heaven itself. Here we occasionally sing, for sometimes we sigh as well as sing: but sighing and tears will soon for ever flee away, and in heaven there will be no willows to hang harps upon, and no disposition of heart to refuse to sing—

"Millions of years my wondering eyes
Shall o'er Thy beauties rove,
And endless ages I'll adore,
The glories of Thy love."

Oh the joy of our hearts will there be full, and our songs will gratefully express our pleasure and joy before God for ever. The Lord add His blessing, for Christ's sake. Amen.

THE NEXT SERMON WILL BE READY ON APRIL 14TH, 1883.

 Nine years since, at the earnest request of friends, these Sermons were first issued, in the hope that they might be of service to the Lord's people, more especially those laid aside by sickness and unable to attend their usual places of worship. This hope has been realised, and many proofs of blessing have been communicated from time to time; but latterly the sale has fallen off, and some loss has resulted. A little effort would no doubt bring up the circulation so as to prevent loss. Should this be made, and the sale be increased, the issue will continue, but it is considered inadvisable otherwise.

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

PRICE ONE PENNY.

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

May be had also of ELLIOT STOCK, 62, Paternoster Row, London.

THE REDEEMED BEFORE THE THRONE OF GOD.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,
AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, 18th MARCH, 1883.

"Therefore are they before the throne of God."—Rev. vii. 15.

WE may learn several important lessons from the chapter out of which our text is taken. God is the God of providence as well as of grace, and He saves His people by His providential and gracious operations. Providence never clashes with the interests of God's grace, but the two great systems of divine government are connected together, and God presides over them both; and hence, "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." In the first verse we read, "After these things, I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree." It appears from this, unless it be considered that the language is extremely figurative, that angels have to do with the operations of divine providence, and we have no doubt that they minister for the saints in this world under the throne of God. And then we are told that providence works in the most perfect harmony with grace. "Hurt not the earth, nor the sea, nor the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads." The world stands, therefore, for the sake of the church, and the operations of providence are carried on for the sake of believers; and

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

We have in the next place a representation of the two branches of the church of God,—the Jewish and the Gentile churches. Having referred to the sealing of God's servants, the twelve tribes of Israel, or the one hundred and forty and four thousand of the Jewish church, then God's beloved people as coming out of the Gentile world are brought before us, and it is said in the 9th verse, "I beheld, and lo! a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, kindreds, peoples and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and with palms in their hands." Jews and Gentiles are one in Christ, and shall be one in glory, where they shall be for ever united in divine worship. Whatever may be the employment of heaven, I believe that heaven is a place or a world of worship, and although there will be no preaching and no prayer there, yet there will be eternal songs, and the singers will appear before the throne for ever as worshippers of God and the Lamb. In the following verses we have a representation of the

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millions of happy saints, singing before God, and among other things it is said, "Therefore are they before the throne of God."

I was asked whether I should make a few remarks this evening in connection with the departure of our beloved sister, Mrs. Hodges; and as she was so well known and had been a follower of the Lord for so many years and the Lord had preserved and kept her by His grace, so that she was enabled to adorn the doctrine of God her Saviour in all things, and leave a soul-encouraging testimony behind her,—I said, "Yes, I will make a few observations in relation to her going to heaven:" and this portion of the Word occurred to me. It must be a comfort to my beloved young friends that they are enabled to hope, and even confidently believe that the soul of their mother is now before the throne of God.

Let us in the first place, make a few observations on *the throne itself*. Therefore are they before the throne of God. Two thrones are mentioned by the Holy Ghost in God's word,—the throne of grace, and the throne of glory. The throne of grace is that before which we appear as suppliants, and the throne of glory is that throne of the eternal God before which our sister now stands or sits, and before which we ourselves are hoping to rest for ever and ever. We are at present in a state of imperfection; our wants are numerous and pressing, and therefore we are thankful, if one may speak for others, for the mercy-seat or the throne of grace. By and bye, we shall pass as it were beyond the mercy-seat and take a position before God and the Lamb, as they will for ever reveal themselves on the throne of glory. Jesus Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords, and the Most High God, and all other thrones are low contrasted with His. Other thrones are temporary, but His is an everlasting one. Other thrones were erected in time, but the throne of the great God and the eternal Redeemer is from everlasting. This throne has never been empty, for God has always been upon it. There are some circumstances in connection with the life and character of Jesus Christ, from which he has been separated. He has been in places and positions which He will never occupy again. He was under the law, but He will never be there again. He was on the accursed tree, but He will never hang on the cross again. He was in the grave, and in the arms of death, but He will never again be there. He has taken his seat on the high throne of eternal majesty and glory, and He must occupy that throne, and reign until all His enemies become His footstool. Therefore our dear brethren, millions of them, are there; they see His face, rest in His presence, sympathise with Him, imbibe His spirit and for ever sing His worthy and well deserved praises. The throne of Israel was frequently vacant, by death; but the Lord liveth, as Prophet, Priest, and King; for death can never enter heaven, nor touch His glorious person again. Again, His throne is infinitely high. I do not know whether angels occupy thrones of various heights or not. If so the highest throne of the highest angel is infinitely lower than that of the dear Redeemer. He is exalted above all blessing and praise, His throne is the highest in heaven and in the universe. He sits thereon eternally conspicuous and shall be viewed by all the millions of saints and angels in heaven for ever. He looks downwards to behold the creatures that are roundabout Him, for His throne is so high; and all creatures, great though

some are, look upwards when they view the Son of God. All eyes are turned upwards towards Him, while His eye is turned downwards upon all the millions there. Exalted He is above all heavens. Angels never put their feet on the steps of His throne. He is the only worthy Being in the world of light and glory; and, therefore, all are represented as casting their crowns at His feet and crowning Him Lord of all. Our great reigning Lord in heaven is personally conscious of His own worth. He knows that He deserves the world He occupies, the throne He sits upon, the crown He wears, and the praises which are ascribed to Him; therefore He never rejects the crowns cast at His feet, nor the songs presented to Him; He is personally conscious of His own glories, excellencies and worth, and knows that He deserves more than saints and angels can give. Before that throne, and in the presence of that great Christ our beloved sister has taken her place; for all departed saints are before the throne of God. And there is nothing terrible in this throne, and nothing to intimidate in the glories of the dear Immanuel. Mercy is blended with majesty, and justice with love; and it would be impossible to say where the one ends and the other begins; or which is the greater, the soft mercy, or the marvellous, majesty of Jehovah. We need them both and both shall for ever shine upon the throne of glory. Mercy will eternally reign and smile, while majesty will fill all the happy millions with reverence and holy awe. Levity and lightness in that world would be impossible; while anything like shrinking from the throne owing to the greatness of its occupant will be equally impossible. Mercy reigning there draws all close to the throne; and as they approach with pleasurable feelings, a deep and holy awe pervades every glorified mind.

Then we read, in connection with the throne, that there is a rainbow round about it, in sight like unto an emerald. The rainbow indicates the covenant of grace, and its colours may be taken to indicate the harmonised and blended attributes and perfections of Jehovah, and as it is impossible to say where in the rainbow one colour ends and another begins, so it is impossible to say where mercy is blended with righteousness, and eternal truth with peace and grace. This rainbow is round about the throne, which is its centre, and our covenant God sits thereon, and it encircles all the millions of His covenant people. And a river flows from the throne of God and the Lamb, which is, therefore, a royal river, and unlike every other river, since it flows from the highest throne in the universe. We understand a river having its springs in some distant part of the country or the world; but here is a river whose source is the heart of God, and which breaks out and flows from the throne of God and the Lamb. Let me say, further, as to this throne, that it was the object of the triune God that all His people should appear before it. The object of the Father in setting His love upon them. I wish my friends, who may not accept these truths wholly and cordially, would try to give their attention to them. They are not terrible doctrines, neither are they that love them "hypers." God must have purposed something when He set His love upon His people before the foundation of the world; and what was His purpose or intention? Why, that the objects of His love should ultimately reach His throne, and see His face,

and live in His presence for ever. And this was the object of Christ, when He died for sin, and put it away by the sacrifice of Himself. Just before He went to heaven He said, "Where I am there shall my servants be also." Jesus had this throne in view when He died on the tree; when sin was imputed to Him; when He expiated guilt, and reconciled you to God, then the ultimate object of the dear Redeemer was our glorification in His presence in heaven. And this was the object of the Holy Spirit when, in due time, He entered your hearts, and sanctified your souls, and made you new creatures. This was done because you were destined to live before God's throne, to be immersed in His glory, and to live in everlasting sympathy with the King of all grace and glory. Was this the object of the Holy Ghost, and can there be a failure? Is it possible that disappointment can take place? The Holy Spirit is God, and does not and cannot sanctify in vain. And this is the object of the hope of all God's people. Rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. My dear friends, there is a hope in your breasts, a hope that terminates not upon objects here, but upon an Object in another world—even in eternity. You are hoping that you may see His face—

"And never, never sin;
And from the rivers of His grace,
Drink endless pleasures in."

This is the end of the believer's pilgrimage journey. We are marching upwards and homewards, and shall continue to advance until our grey heads are laid in the dust, and our disembodied spirits are taken by a mysterious power into the heavens of eternal glory. This is the consummation and completion of all true religion. I ask you whether you do not feel a restlessness and an unsettledness in connection with your religion, your godliness, and your faith. Do you not feel that there is nothing here beneath the sun that can fully and finally satisfy your minds? Do you not realise the fact that your principles and your life are destined to rest before the throne, and that a position less high and less honourable than that can never possibly satisfy you? Friends, we are travelling towards heaven. The journey of many thousands and millions is ended, and perhaps before next Lord's-day some of us may find ourselves before the throne of God. Here I should like to say a word to the little ones. There is a close connection between the mercy-seat and the throne of glory. Every poor sinner that has appeared acceptably, with a broken heart and a bruised spirit, before God on the mercy-seat, shall surely see His face in heaven, and be for ever free from sin. The mercy-seat is here, and you love the sacred place, and have to do with God thereon. The throne of glory is in heaven, and you are hoping to reach it; and as you visit spiritually and experimentally the mercy-seat, you shall not fail to reach the throne of glory in heaven. For prayer must end in praise, and grace must end in glory, and noon must follow the dawn, and full manhood must follow the new birth; for all these things are inseparable from one another. If we were able to believe these great facts every day, and with all our hearts, how happily we should live; how cheerfully we should contemplate death; and how loosely we should hold all earthly things! Try, my friends, to

think of these facts. You have been in the holiest, and had communion with God—as our sister sometimes had—that you are to take as an earnest of heaven, and as the sealing of the Spirit, and the rest must follow. God has not given you grace without intending to follow it with the gift of eternal glory. “Therefore are they before the throne.”

In the second place, a word on *the persons themselves*. *They*. “Therefore are they before the throne of God.” Who are they? Well, I shall use a word which is unpopular, but it is scriptural; and therefore I hesitate not to use it—the chosen people of God. They were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, and they shall reach heaven and rest before the throne; for they were chosen to occupy that position. They are not only God’s chosen people, they are redeemed and regenerated; they are new creatures in Christ Jesus, and justified persons; they are one with Jesus Christ, and God views them in His dear Son; and therefore they are without fault before Him. This led Paul to wish that he might be found in Christ, and induced the good man to pray that he might be found in His righteousness. To be in Christ is to be where all the salvation is, where all the promises are, where all saving truth is, and where God Himself resides; and he that is one with Jesus is justified from all things from which he could not be justified by the law of Moses. There is a portion in the writings of Paul which runs thus: “He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God; that the Holy Spirit produces in God’s people a preparedness for heaven and a meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light.” The fish is in its element in the water, the bird is in its element in the air; and we, as human creatures, are in our element in this world; and the saint, the glorified believer will be in his element before the throne of God and the Lamb. Is not this divinely marvellous and a mystery, that such poor creatures as we, such poor miserable sinners as we, whose minds are dark, whose hearts are defiled, whose nature is corrupt—is it not a mystery that we shall be perfectly at home, and altogether in our element before the high throne of the everlasting God. Well, I would explain it if I could; but I cannot do so experimentally, for I am a sinner, and sin dwells in me. No, I cannot now describe the happy and perfect experience of our departed sister. She complained of sin, and doubts and fears when she was here; but all complaints are ended, and her soul is now transparent, without a flaw, or a blot, or a blemish, and as pure as love, and blood, and power can make her: therefore is she before the throne of God. And then such persons possess not only a meetness, but a title to heaven. A person may possess a fitness for a position to which he has no title; and, again, a person may possess a title to a position which he is not fitted to occupy; but all is perfect here, for the Spirit has wrought us for the self-same thing. The Father has united us to His Son, and constituted us joint-heirs with Him. Yonder is our home, there are our seats; in the heart is a meetness for that home, and a preparedness for the presence of God, and we hold in the hand of faith, at least sometimes, the title deeds, and are satisfied that we shall see God’s face and live in His presence for ever.

Now the number of glorified beings is gradually increasing. You sang that solemn hymn just now—

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

Our sister's husband, your father, three years and a half ago, left you and his body here. He then left his sins, his sorrows, his infirmities and pains, and took his seat before the throne; and how many thousands followed him before your dear mother went, I know not; but there are constant arrivals there, for disembodied spirits are perpetually passing over the threshold of glory. The other day *she* went, and hundreds, perhaps, have entered since she arrived. The number is increasing; a multitude is there; a multitude is passing over Jordan; a multitude of new-born children are coming up out of the wilderness, and a multitude are at present in the world, enemies to God, and cursing His name; but, since they are objects of His love, though yet far off, they shall be brought, and have their hearts broken; while the multitudes not yet in existence shall all be saved: for the heavens have been opened, and God's throne has been prepared for all His family. The great work of glorification has been going on for six thousand years, and, should the world stand six thousand years longer, it will proceed and progress until the heavens of glory are filled with the royal family of God, and then the mystery of God shall be complete. *They*, therefore, are before the throne.

Thirdly, a word or two on *the position*. They are *before* the throne. There is elsewhere a word connected with this which is very beautiful and sweet. Therefore are they without fault before the throne. It is very important to be faultless, and most of all important to be so before the throne of God. What has become of our faults? They were very great, and our blemishes and spots were numerous. What will become of them? They shall all be lost—drowned in the depths of the sea of a Saviour's blood; and, therefore, they are without fault before the throne. But the idea appears to be nearness to the throne, and to Him that sitteth upon it—not far off, but near. All shall be near to the throne, and equally near to Him that sits upon it. Take three or four ideas—*before* the throne, *near* to the throne, *with* our Lord, and for ever *like* Him. Brethren, if we had a larger measure of the Spirit, we should not so cling to this poor, empty world, nor tightly hold the things of time and sense. To resemble Jesus here in some measure, gives a heavenly pleasure; but to be wholly and universally like Him, or like Him in every faculty and power, and, finally, in our bodies raised, and our whole persons like the glorious Redeemer! What bliss awaits the Christian! Our friend has entered into, and taken possession of, the joy; and, therefore, she is before the throne. But where do they come from? This requires a little notice, and hence higher in the chapter it is said, “What are these which are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they?” Naturally, they come from dust; legally, they come from bondage; morally, they come from the dunghill; and, circumstantially, they come out of great tribulation. They came from persecution, temptation, trial, darkness, doubt, and fear. Sometimes high and sometimes low; sometimes on the surface, and some-

times, according to their apprehension, in the very depths of the sea, or at the very ends of the earth. Their years were years of conflict and they knew not, to their own satisfaction and comfort, whether they should persevere to the end or not, or even whether God would receive them or not, but they are there, for—

“ ’Midst all my sin, and fear and woe,
Thy Spirit will not let me go.”

Dr. Watts has very beautifully and forcibly expressed it, when he says :—

“ Once they mourning here below,
And wet their couch with tears;
They wrestled hard, as we do now,
With sins, and doubts, and fears.”

And you that knew your mother best, know that this was her experience ; but she is gone from wrestling and from doubt, and from fear.

“ I ask them whence their victory came ;
They, with united breath,
Ascribe their conquest to the Lamb—
Their triumph to His death.”

“ Therefore are they before the throne.” They are there as victors, having palms in their hands as well as crowns on their heads. They are not only at rest, and holding palms, they have harps also, and they sing the everlasting song of redeeming love, blood, and power. And so are they before the throne.

Lastly, *how did they obtain that position ?* This is owing to the atonement of their Lord. Jesus died for them. You say, “ He died for us all, sir.” Then we shall all get to heaven, for He did not die in vain. My friends, generalisms are not satisfactory when grace divine takes possession of the heart. The poor sinner then wants to know that Jesus died for him, and indefinite matters do not meet the case. They are before the throne because Jesus lived, and died, and interceded for them ; they are there because He said, “ Because I live, ye shall live also.” They are there because they were and are one with Him ; and they are before the throne because the Spirit sanctifies and leads believers on step by step to their eternal home ; for the Holy Spirit never leaves His temple, nor deserts the heart He once takes possession of. Bunyan has beautifully illustrated this fact in his “ Town of Mansoul.” He represents him, I think, as *Secretary of State* ; and, refusing to be seen by the townspeople on certain occasions ; but he never left the castle, but always kept his residence, and held his abode in the hearts of the saints. So the Father loves them through all ; the Son has died for and redeemed them unto God, and the Holy Ghost takes and keeps possession of them, and guides them into all truth, and leads them in safety into heaven ; and therefore are they before the throne. There are many things between the throne and you, and we know what some of them are ; but there are others that we know not. The world is between you and the throne, but you will get through it. There are tempting devils between you and the throne, but you will overcome them. There may be deep and bitter sorrows between you and the throne, but you will get through them ; for “ When thou passest through

the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee ;" and there is death between you and the throne, for there is no other way thither, but you will get through all.

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

If there are miseries, and wants, and woes, between us and home, there are mercies also more numerous than they. All the promises are between us and heaven, and they shall all be fulfilled. Divine interpositions will take place between us and the throne to which we are going; for God will never lose a saint, and His saints shall never lose their God. Therefore shall they be there. But what are they doing there? They are not there as criminals, nor are they there as suppliants, for they have done with prayer. Our friend wanted to be prayed for, and when I called to see her, I tried to pray, and ask for some of the good and great things of salvation ; but we have not prayed for her since she went home, for we do not believe in that. She is beyond all necessity and all want. I have tried to thank God for saving her and taking her to Himself, since it was His pleasure to remove her from this world. I thank God on behalf of the family, and on her behalf, and we shall pray for those that remain. She prays for you no more ; for she is not before the throne of grace, but before the throne of glory. I do not know all she is doing. Only we are told that they sing the song of redeeming love, and that their singing is an expression of joy. She is not idle, for there is no idleness in heaven. Idleness is not bliss, and she would be wretched and unhappy were she doing nothing ; for—

" Millions of years my wondering eyes
Shall o'er His beauties rove,
And endless ages I'll adore
The glories of His love."

Her mind is eternally meditating, or rotating, in the glories of the Saviour; she is imbibing the glories in which she lives, and her thoughts are rising and will for ever travel in the illimitable greatness and glory of the Lord, who saved her. The heights and depths of love displayed in the work of God for her, and in the work of the Spirit in her, and in the way in which she was led; the hills over which he conducted her, and the valleys in which He preserved her, absorb her soul for ever. She does not forget the past, but is meditating on the love and power which preserved her in the wilderness. Everything that contributes to pleasure and creates joy, she is now in possession of. May we die the death of the righteous, and may our last end be like his. Amen.

THE NEXT SERMON WILL BE READY ON MAY 15TH, 1883.

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

PRICE ONE PENNY.

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

May be had also of ELLIOT STOCK, 62, Paternoster Row, London.