

GOD'S INFINITE LIBERALITY.

A Sermon

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"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things."—Romans viii. 32.

THE gospel of God is called the testimony of God, the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the testimony of the Spirit of God: and therefore it is the testimony of a Triune God. It is God's testimony concerning himself, his being, essence, greatness, and glory; and concerning his gracious purposes, intentions, promises, and decrees. The law of God is God's testimony concerning himself also; but it is a moral testimony, concerning the moral attributes, perfections, character, greatness, and glory of God. There is nothing in it that relates to the salvation of men as sinners—to the purification of their consciences—the justification of their persons—the safety of their souls, and their everlasting glorification in heaven for Christ's sake: and therefore, "as cold waters are to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country." We have fire, thunder and lightning, tempest, and the sound of a trumpet waxing louder and louder in connection with Mount Sinai; but from the throne of God and the Lamb there flows a river into Zion, "the streams whereof make glad the city of God, the holy places of the tabernacles of the Most High." And in the blessed gospel of the grace of God we have a disclosure of that grand contrivance of God, by which he manifests his justice, and retains it in all its inflexibility, whilst he pardons the guilty, and for ever justifies the ungodly. And as God can, consistently with his moral nature and glory, forgive the sinner, and, I may say, *must* justify the ungodly, in perfect harmony with his justice, that which discloses that fact to man must be gospel, and that which reveals that reality to us must be as "good news from a far country."

The Apostle Paul, in the chapter out of which I have taken my text, dwells largely, and very comprehensively, on God's testimony concerning himself, concerning sin, concerning the sacrifice of his Son, and concerning the great results of that sacrifice. Having enlarged upon the facts that there is "no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus," and that the Spirit of Jesus Christ enters into the heart of every redeemed man in the fulness of time, the Apostle proceeded to describe the operations and influences of the Holy Spirit of God in the heart; for he maketh intercession for us, "with groanings which cannot be uttered." He helpeth our infirmities in prayer, for "we know not what we should pray for as we ought." And he proceeds then to draw, as it were, an inference—a very comforting inference—from all that he had said,—*"We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to his purpose."* Having drawn this inference from the propositions he had laid down, he proceeded to enlarge thereon:—"Whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first born among many brethren."

How comprehensive is this verse ! How much it takes in ! Indeed, it leaves out nothing in relation to salvation. "Having *predestinated* us,"—there is the act of the Father ; "to be conformed to the image of *his Son*,"—there is Jesus, the Lord ; "to be *conformed* to the image of his Son,"—this implies and supposes a performer—an operator—a person, a being, or power, that actualises predestination ; and who can this operator be but the Spirit of God ? Hence we have the Father predestinating, the Son of God as the great pattern and model, and the Spirit of God as the conformer and sanctifier of the people of God. Therefore, I say, nothing whatever is left out. He proceeds:—"Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called ; and whom he called, them he also justified ; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." What shall we, then, say to these things ? If God be for us, who can be against us ! And that he is for us is evident from the fact that he "spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all : " and, having done this, we are sure that he will "with him also freely give us all things."

I shall make a few remarks this morning on two points. In the first place, on the *great fact asserted* ; and secondly, on the *inference drawn therefrom*.

I.—A few thoughts, in the first place, on the great fact asserted :—"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all." We have the cream of the gospel here,—the marrow and fatness of all the saving truths of religion. We have here, as it were, an insight, and, I may say, a deep and clear insight, into the mind of Almighty God. He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all. My text is an infinite one, or it indicates an infinite fact. The infinite Father giving his infinitely great and precious and glorious Son for us *all*. Let us notice, in the first place, that this fact indicates the infinite liberality of Jehovah. He spared not his own Son. He did not give us a world, or a number of worlds ; he might have done so. But such a gift would have been, so to speak, small—I had almost said, insignificant—compared with the gift indicated in my text. God spared not his own Son ; that is to say, he did not spare to *give* him ; or, in other words, he did not withhold his Son, his first-beloved Son, Jesus Christ, from poor lost and ruined sinners. We read that God said to Abraham, "Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me." The word, "withheld," there, is the same as the word, "spared," used here. God did not withhold his dear Son, the Son of his bosom, the Son of his love, from lost, ruined, and miserable sinners. He had only one Son that never offended him, that never transgressed his law, and he delivered him up for us all. Here, then, we have the infinite bounty of Jehovah. What did God give to Adam in the garden of Eden ? He gave him natural and social perfection (for I suppose there never was a happier pair than Adam and Eve were before they fell ;) these were forfeitable blessings. He gave Adam, too, the beautiful garden of Eden, with a right to use everything therein, saving the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. It seems that God could not have given Adam more than he did, on the grounds of creation merely. But all the good that Adam possessed he forfeited and lost, and became "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." What has he given to his guilty sons and daughters ? What has he given to the objects of his love ? We are, naturally considered, lost and ruined. Has he taken us back to Eden ? That would not have satisfied the love of God. Has he restored social bliss to us ? Well, that will be restored in heaven ; but perfect social bliss has not been restored to us on the earth. Has he carried us back to the moral position from which we fell in Adam ? Yes, he has taken us back into that position, but—

"He's fixed our standing more secure
Than 'twas before we fell."

We stood high in Eden—we stand higher in Christ. We had much before we fell—we have not stood much, we have *all things* in the person of God's dear Son. The riches which we possessed in our forefather, Adam, were worthy of their great donor, God ; but they all sink into comparative insignificance when compared with the fact stated in my text,—

He spared not his *own Son*." He gave Adam a world, but not his own Son to die in gony, and sweat, and blood. He gave heaven to angels, yet he never gave his own Son to those sinless and perfected beings ; but deep down in moral disgrace, degradation, and in were the objects of his love. Poor miserable sinners ! he looked on them with pity his heart, forgiveness in his eye, and mercy in his breast, and he said,—"I will equal

myself and my greatness in saving these wretches; I will not give them Eden, I will not give them a world, I will not give them anything less than my dear Son, the Son of my bosom and the Son of my love; and, having delivered him up for them all, I will then follow that act by another—with him I will freely give them all things for ever and ever.

Dearly beloved brethren, this gift of our God includes more than tongue can tell—more than the most eloquent, the most learned, the most gracious, the most spiritual tongue can tell, and, therefore, infinitely more than my poor stammering tongue can tell. In this gift, the gift of God's dear Son, we have three or four eternal things—indeed, more than three or four, but three or four I may mention.

What do you think of everlasting *peace* between yourselves and the everlasting God? Oh, you say, that is a blessed reality, an infinite mercy—peace with God! Oh, it is worth a world—aye, it is worth more than the material universe! Everlasting peace between my conscience and my Maker! Well, I have this if Christ is mine. I have this in the fact that God has not spared his own Son.

And what do you think of everlasting *life*—a life that can never terminate, a life free from mortality? What do you think of living for ever, and living the best life that the God of Life could create or impart? Here is eternal life in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And what do you think of everlasting *freedom*? Not only eternal peace and eternal life, but everlasting freedom—a freedom as lasting as eternity and as holy as Jehovah himself, and a freedom as unlosable—I speak it with reverence—as is the liberty of Jesus Christ. Christ is not more free than you. You are one with him; and if he is free from curse, and wrath, and condemnation, you are free also.

And what do you think of eternal *health*—the everlasting end of sickness, disease, and sorrow? What do you think of a state of things where there shall be no tears, and no sorrow, and no pain, and no wants, and no woes? I cannot go farther.

What do you think of dwelling eternally in the presence of Jehovah himself, and feeling, whilst there, that all the majesty, and grandeur, and glory, are the property of your own dear Father? Christian brethren, we have, in this infinitely great gift, God's bounty and liberality—a representation of the fact that God has given *all he had to give*. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all."

A second fact indicated is *Divine severity*. This is one of the meanings of the phrase *spared not*. "He that spared not his own Son." First, he did not spare to *give* him; and, secondly, he did not spare to *punish* him; and then, again, the meaning will be that *no abatement* was made. God forgave him nothing—if I may use the word "forgive" in relation to Christ. He laid on him all the iniquities of all his people, and would not forgive him one. No, my dear Son, all their iniquities are upon you, and they are considered as yours; and I will not forgive you, though I will forgive them if you will expiate their guilt.

My fellow sinner, the time is coming when you will know that Divine justice is inflexibly severe; when you shall feel (if grace prevent not) that God is not to be trifled with—that he loves his justice as dearly as he loves his mercy, and that, whilst he can smile with all the tenderness of a merciful God, he can frown so as to surround the soul with a hell for ever and ever. There is hell in his frown, there is heaven in his smile.

God did not smile upon his Son—at least not when he was in the garden, or when he hung on the tree. Our dear Lord was enveloped in all the consequences of the severest frowns of Jehovah. He *spared not* his Son. If you want an exponent, a demonstration of the justice of God, you may see it in the death of Jesus Christ. The justice of God, methinks, appears nowhere so vividly, nowhere so terribly, as in connection with the sorrows and sufferings of God's dear Son. Oh, if we could look down into hell, and hear the groans of the lost, and contemplate the terrors which reign and rage there, we should have, no doubt, a very vivid representation and very terrifying views of the justice of God. But if we rightly understand Christ crucified—if our minds rightly enter into this mysterious and solemn subject—we shall see *more* in the sufferings of the *innocent Christ*, more in the hell that enveloped his innocent mind, to impress us with the terrible nature of justice than we should if we could see justice herself in the regions of the damned. Why, what have we in the sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ? A condensation of hell, eternal punishment crowded into a few short hours; and if the Sufferer had not been infinite, that awful weight, that consuming fire would have annihilated him; but he was

God's own dear Son, and therefore he could bear all the essence and quintessence of hell and wrath which was poured upon his spirit; and live in all the fire that enveloped him, and live long enough to quench it for ever; but the Father said, I shall abate nothing, I shall not moderate the heat of the fire, nor lessen the weight of the curse, nor forgive you one farthing. I stand upon the ground of inflexible justice, and, if every demand is not met and every farthing paid, I will never open the gates of heaven, not even to admit *you*. I go far here. Christ, by saving sinners, *saved himself*. Christ, by saving sinners, saved his word, his honour and his glory, and acquired a right to wear those "many crowns" that now adorn his brow. The Father met him, and spared him nothing. First, he spared him nothing in relation to *time*. The time is come, Son. "Father, the hour is come," and I am ready. Christ did not ask for a postponement of the solemn business.

He spared him nothing in relation to *place*. Son, you must leave this bosom of mine. You cannot suffer here—you must leave this glory-world. You cannot bleed here; and if you could atone for sin here, your covenant engagements, and mine also, would prevent an atonement taking place here. You must go down into that world, and I shall spare you nothing; you must go down into the world where sin was committed; and you must go to filthy Golgotha; you shall not find a Garden of Eden; you must go to Calvary, the place of a skull, and hang on the tree, and die in ignominy.

He spared him nothing in relation to the *weight of sin*—not an ounce. I wish, my friends, and especially ministers of the gospel in the day in which we live, would notice this. It is said,—“You should not take a *commercial* view of the atonement.” My friends, it is wicked, it is, indeed, and it is altogether of the devil, to talk in this manner of the atonement of Christ. What is a commercial view of the atonement if it does not appear here,—“Ye are not your own, ye are *bought with a price*!” That looks like a commercial view of the atonement. God spared him nothing in relation to the *weight* that he undertook to bear, and to carry away, and annihilate. “The Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all.” Equity was there with her scales, and Truth with her book, and Justice with her sword. Divine Truth opened the book, and Equity Divine gathered together, so to speak, “all the guilt of numerous years,” and all the guilt of accumulated millions; and God would not spare his Son at all in relation to the weight of sin. He lifted the ponderous load from the sinner and laid it upon his dear Son, the sin-bearer. And having transferred, or imputed, sin to his dear Son, he spared him nothing in relation to the *strokes of his vengeance*, or the penalty that was due to sin. The storm fell, the arrows of God flew, and every one entered him; and there was no mitigation, no alleviation. The Father did not spread his wings over his Son to screen him, nor did he put a drop of mercy into the bitter cup. I have sometimes thought of this when visiting the sick and dying. You sometimes see a dying person whose strength and powers are so far gone that he cannot sip a drop of wine if a vessel be applied to his lips, and yet his lips are parched; and frequently we have seen a feather taken and dipped into the wine, and the lips of the dear, dying one are moistened. That is *mercy*, that is *sparing* the sufferer. But there was no one to moisten the lips of the Lord. There was a sponge, which was filled with vinegar, and put on a cane, and thrust up towards him; but there was no mercy, no mother's hand, no father's hand, not even the hand of his heavenly Father. His Father's hand smote him, and cursed him, and did not moisten his lips or comfort his heart, but “delivered him up for us all.” Oh, see now he loved us! How infinitely *severe* was God to his Son that he might be infinitely *merciful* to all the younger brethren and sisters of his family! He spared not his son.

Thirdly. God must estimate his people very highly—estimate poor sinners very highly—deliver him up for us all. And will you persist in saying,—What a poor nothing creature am, only dust and ashes, and I don't know what? I cannot say whether the people of God be not a little too far here. I think so, in those hymns in which the Book of Life is mentioned. The dear, good brethren who are gone to heaven took delight in saying,—

“Unless my worthless name had been
Enrolled to life above.”

do not think your name is so worthless. See what God gave for you! See the high estimate of the everlasting God as described in the Word of Divine Truth. What did he

say? They are my children—fallen, to be sure, filthy, diseased, and unclean, but they are mine, and they are to me what they are through my own love, and I love them still. And what did he say concerning his dear Son, and concerning the great fact that Jesus Christ came to put away their sins by the sacrifice of himself? What did he say? Why, *he is not too good, he is not too great, he is not too much, he is not too rich to satisfy me in relation to their salvation.* I love them so well that the best I have is not too good for them—the greatest is not too great. I have nothing in the universe comparable to my Son, and such is my love to them that I will give him up for them all. And can you say, after this, that you are a poor, nothingly creature? Why, we form an idea of the estimate which an individual has of a thing by the price which he pays for it, or by the pains, and labour, and trouble that he takes to obtain it. “Oh, he worked at it for years; it cost him almost a fortune.” And how does God estimate you? What did he pay for you—give for you? What trouble, what pains, what labour did he expend upon you, or upon your salvation? “He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.”

And may we not say that we see here the *fixed purpose and determination of God*? What did God intend by this? To save us, to fill us with his Spirit, to admit us into fellowship with himself, to adorn us with all the garments of salvation, and to take us to everlasting happiness, joy, and glory. When he gave his Son did he make an experiment? Was it a speculation, or was it an unnecessary or superfluous display of moral excellency and worth on the part of God? Some people represent the death of the Lord Jesus Christ as not being absolutely necessary in relation to the moral government of God. Some writers say,—The death of the Lord Jesus Christ was conceived by God to be the very best way of saving sinners. That is quite sufficient. If God conceived that by the death of Jesus Christ sinners would be saved in the best manner possible, all is conceded. God’s way, his time, and his government are always best; and if God conceived that by giving his Son he would be saving sinners in the best way, I imagine and believe that the salvation of sinners was an impossibility otherwise, and therefore “He delivered him up for us all.” Can the people whose debts he paid be lost? Can the sinner that casts himself upon his finished work be sent to hell? Can the man that bends at his feet, and longs for an application of his blood, go into perdition?

“Payment God cannot twice demand,
First at my bleeding Surety’s hand,
And then again at mine.”

Lastly. The text indicates the *nature* of the Saviour’s sufferings—*substitutionary and penal*. He delivered him up *FOR* us—in our place, and room, and stead. Not only for our good ultimately, but for us vicariously. Now it is said that Judas delivered up Christ, but he did it for *money*. He did not deliver him up *for us*; he did not care about Christ, or about the people of God. Pilate delivered up Christ to be crucified; he did from *fear*,—not for us. And the Jews delivered him up to be crucified. They did it from *envy*,—not for us. And the soldiers were cruel, and pierced his side, and put out the tongues, and wagged their heads, and sneered at him; they delivered him up,—but *not* for us,—they did it from *cruelty*. God delivered up his Son—not from fear, not for the gratification of any ill-feeling, not for the purpose of accomplishing any inferior purpose—he delivered him up *for us*, and God only could do that.

And then you see, my dear friends, that the sufferings of Christ, according to the text were *penal* as well as *substitutionary*,—“He delivered him up.” I cannot give you the full meaning of it. Let me just point out one single part of the history of Christ’s sufferings. God delivered him up when he left him, when he deserted him, when he hid his face, and his dear Son said for the first time—for he never said it before, and he never said it since, and never will say it again,—“My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?” As a criminal is delivered to the executioner, who takes him to a place where the sentence of death is executed upon him, so Jesus Christ was delivered by his Father to the curse, to wrath, to condemnation, to death, to wicked men, to all the powers of darkness. Oh, I do not know what took place between Christ and the powers of darkness when his heavenly Father left him. The Father had delivered him up to suffering and to death, as if he had said,—I will spare you nothing; will deliver you up into outer darkness, where you shall not have my presence

where all the curses are, where all the hell is, and where all the terrors of death are. I will spare you nothing; I will deliver you up even to the grave itself, and by this way I will eternally save my people, and magnify the riches of my grace. Having done all this,—“How shall he not with him also freely give us all things.” Thus, you see, my dear friends, the text indicates an ocean of love, of worth, of merit, and of salvation. One word more,—and that is, the *perfect equality* of sinners saved by grace in relation to redemption,—“Delivered him up for us all.” Now, if you have *any* amount of interest in the death of Christ you are interested in it *all*. If you have any sort of vital connection with Christ, you are *wholly* connected with him; you have as deep an interest and as great a share as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, now in heaven, have. “Delivered him up for us all.” You see there are two words, and they indicate latitude and restriction. Latitude, *ALL*; restriction, *US*. “Delivered him up for us *all*,” or *all us*; that is, *all us*, or *us all* “whom he did predestinate;” for “them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” Or, if you like to read a little further back,—“We know that all things work together for good to *them that love God*, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” Or, a little further still (see the first verse of the chapter,)—“There is therefore now no condemnation to *them which are in Christ Jesus*, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” If you put all these things together in the words *ALL* and *US*, you have the fact that all these persons are saved; and their salvation is secured by God beyond the possibility of a failure.

II.—The *inference* drawn by the Apostle from this fact,—“How shall he not with him also *freely give us all things*.” The phraseology of the latter part of the text is very significant, beautiful, and expressive; indeed, the phraseology of the whole verse is so. Let me read it otherwise than we have it,—He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not freely give us all things. Leave out “with him.” That would spoil it altogether. It is a blessing to have Jesus Christ—a blessing that we have him anywhere, and a blessing to have him everywhere, and a blessing to have Jesus Christ in connection with many things—but it must be an infinite blessing to have the Lord Jesus Christ in connection with “*all things*,” and therefore notice the preposition “with.” “How shall he not, *with* him also, freely give us all things.” Without giving us his dear Son he had left us poor; but, having given us his dear Son, it seemed to follow as a matter of course that he would give us *all other things*. Just two or three thoughts.

First. How did the Apostle Paul draw such an inference from this great fact? In the first place, he argued in this manner,—There is nothing else so dear to God as his dear Son. He has given us the very best he possesses—the richest and most precious thing that he has in the universe,—Will he not, with the best, freely give us all other inferior mercies? This, I think, is how the Apostle Paul reasoned; and therefore, if you will permit me so to illustrate the subject—I know it is a very homely illustration, but it will be none the worse for that:—A man loves a woman and intends to make her his wife, if she will consent. He says, “You have my heart, and therefore there is in my hand, and there are my house and my servants, they shall be yours. That land, those flocks and herds shall be yours too; indeed, you shall be interested deeply and as long as you live, in all that I possess; for, having given you myself, and that from deep affection, how can I withhold any of my property from you?” Now I think you can apply this to the everlasting God. God has given his dear people his dear Son, and he says,—“That is the gift of my heart. You have my heart, and I give you him that is infinitely dear to my heart, and my heart with him. I give him with all my heart, and I give him as an expression of the love of my heart; and there is my hand, and that shall preserve and protect you; and there is my heaven, and that shall be your home; and there are all my angels, my servants, I have given you the best. I will give you an interest in their ministry, for they are “all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them which shall be heirs of salvation.” And I give you a church state on the earth, and will make you as comfortable as will be consistent with your spirituality whilst you are in this lower world. I will give you deacons and their gifts, and I will qualify them, and bless them with gifts for that office for you. And I will institute a Christian ministry, and qualify men to preach the unsearchable riches of Jesus Christ, dear Son; for, having given him, I will give you all other things with him. And

then, with regard to silver and gold,—“The silver and the gold are mine,” and I will take care that you shall have a sufficient supply of them. “And the cattle upon a thousand hills,” too, are mine, for “the earth is the Lord’s, and the fulness thereof;” and I will record this promise in my Word,—“They that fear the Lord shall not want any good thing.” And then you shall have a merciful measure of physical health and strength. You will have your pains, afflictions, sorrows, and trials, but I will preside over them all, weigh them all out, and measure them all; and, having given you my dear Son, I will mix with all your afflictions sanctifying grace and mercy; for, having given you the best I have, I will withhold nothing from you that is good. There is nothing in the universe that is more dear, or so dear to me, as is my dear Son; and, since I have given him to you, it follows that I must give you with him all other good things. The Apostle reasoned in this way.

Then, secondly, he took a step further, and he said, being divinely inspired,—The gift of Christ to poor sinners, and the sacrifice of Christ on behalf of poor sinners, *entitles them to all things*. This goes a little further. The gift and sacrifice of Christ entitle all that are interested in Christ to all good things; for “all things are yours.” On what ground? On this,—“Ye are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s:” so that, being interested in the blood, and groans, and agony, and sweat, and tears, and ignominy—meritorious ignominy of the Lord Jesus Christ—we are thereby entitled to all the good—I speak it with reverence—all the good that God can give. Only, friends, you and I must be brought to believe that God is the best judge of what is good for his dear people. He has not put the scales nor the reins into our hands, and he does not consult us in relation to his own conduct towards us; but he has bound himself, and Christ by his blood has bound his Father, to do all that is good, all that is really good, for redeemed sinners on the earth. All things are yours, because Christ, in whom it pleased the Father all fulness should dwell, is yours; and when God gave his dear Son, he gave all his fulness, and an interest in all his worth, dignity, and merit; and all that the sacrifice of Christ comprehends and secures is yours for ever and ever, because Christ is yours.

And then the Apostle would take a step in another direction, and reason thus, as he does elsewhere,—“If, when we were enemies,” God gave us so great a boon as his dear Son, how shall he not give us all inferior good things now we are reconciled! We are reconciled to him now, we are not enemies now. We have been brought into a state of harmony and sympathy with God, and, if God gave us the best when we hated him, will he not give us inferior blessings and favours now we are lovers of his dear name? So that you see the Apostle Paul was perfectly correct in drawing such an inference from this great fact, and he stood on very precious and high ground when he did so. Yes; if, when we cursed him, he loved us; if, when we blasphemed his name, he regarded us with the feelings of a Father; if, when we lifted our hands against him—his Deity, his authority, his power, and his throne—if then he regarded us affectionately, and gave his dear Son to die for us—surely, having brought us into a state of harmony with himself, and put away our guilt, he will not withhold from us any good thing while we are here on the earth.

And then, in the last place, he would take a step in another direction, and say to himself,—If God withheld inferior mercies from us after having given us his best and his greatest—the first gift, the gift of the greatest good, might thereby be nullified and rendered void. “How shall he not, with him also, freely give us all things?” If he has given us Christ, will he not protect us by his power, supply us with daily communications of grace, watch over us incessantly, and shield us in the hour of temptation? Otherwise the gift of his dear Son might, after all, involve disappointment, and there would be a disappointed God and disappointed redeemed sinners too. No, the Apostle says,—Having given us the greatest of all, he will give us every inferior mercy, every needed good, whilst we are here, in order that there may be an everlasting and most perfect realisation of all the greatest blessedness connected with his dear Son.

“How shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” *All things*. How are we to understand this? First, all *good* things on the earth; secondly, all good things in providence; and thirdly, all that is good in the church. Every good and godly member of the church is your brother and sister, and every ordinance is yours; every office exists for your sakes; the sympathy, love, and prayers of the brethren—all these are yours. All that is godly, and heavenly, and spiritual in the church is yours by the gift of God.

And, then, all things in the Bible are yours, in the shape of promises and loving declarations. All the good recorded, described, and disclosed in the word of Divine Truth is yours. All the good in heaven is yours—bless God! there is no evil there. And more than that, all in God is yours for ever and ever. “How shall he not with him also *freely* give us all things!” Now, the word *good*, as applied to God, is a very blessed and beautiful word; but when that word is connected with the word *freely*, and the word *freely* is applied with grace, and the operations of that grace, we do not know the meaning of it. We have some consistent, and perhaps sufficient, idea of a free gift from a man to his fellow-creature; but when God is said to give all, to give *freely*, the freeness is divine, the liberality is godlike, the freeness is infinite, past finding out, and therefore indescribable. We talk about a thing being as free as the air we breathe or the water that flows. There is nothing in the universe that comes to us so freely, and readily, and richly as do the rich blessings of a covenant God from his heart into the hearts of his dear people. You know what it is to give freely. You say to a poor individual,—“You are welcome to it; I am glad of the opportunity of giving it to you; I give it freely; I would give more if I could.” You know what it is to give freely to your child, to give with all your heart; and if your heart were a hundred times larger, you would give the blessing to your child with all your heart. If, then, there is so much sweetness and pleasure in giving freely to the needy—especially when the needy one is related to us—oh what pleasure and what delight are experienced by the eternal God in freely giving the great boon which is indicated in the text—his dear Son, and, with him, freely giving us all things!

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THE GLORY OF GOD.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, 31st MAY, 1874.

"When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby."—John xi. 4.

THE salvation of a sinner is the great and glorious work of a triune God. The Father is represented as having contrived the great salvation,—the Son of God as having executed the Father's design ; and inasmuch as the dear Redeemer has done his mediatorial work here on the earth, he has gone to heaven to perpetuate his work there as the great High Priest of our profession. He said, however, to his disciples just before he ascended, "It is expedient for you that I go away : for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you ; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." Our dear Lord consequently departed, and took his seat at the right hand of the infinite majesty of God ; and shortly afterwards, on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was poured down, and the Gospel was preached by Peter for the first time with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Ever since that moment the Holy Spirit has been upon the earth, and will remain as long as the world stands,—for the world stands for the salvation of the ransomed people of God,—for the fulfilment of the saving purposes of the Most High ; and whilst Jesus Christ is in one sense fulfilling the purposes of God in heaven, the Holy Spirit is, in another respect, fulfilling the purposes of our God here on the earth. It is the covenant work of the Spirit of God to enter into and take possession of the mind of every ransomed man and woman ; for whilst it is a fact that we are saved by Christ's blood, it is also a fact that we require something more to take us to heaven. Whilst it is equally a fact that we are saved by the love of God, yet we require something more than God's love and Christ's blood to prepare us for heaven and take us thither ; for we are saved by the love of the Father, the blood of the Son, and the power of the Spirit of God. The Holy Ghost is gradually entering into the hearts of the ransomed people of God, and implanting the life of God therein, and a meetness for "the inheritance of the saints in light ;" capacitating them for the everlasting enjoyment of those things which Christ has secured and the Father has provided for his dear children ; for the natural man cannot understand the things of the Spirit because they are spiritually discerned. Hence the Spirit on entering the mind, constitutes it a spiritual mind, and then it is in sympathy with God and with the provisions of his mercy. It is then that the mind wants what God has prepared, what Jesus Christ has secured, and when the Holy Ghost has brought a sinner to want what is laid up, and to cry for what is provided, he may be said to be experimentally and spiritually saved, or saved by the Spirit of God. A person thus transformed becomes a gracious and spiritual student, in the school of Christ, and in connection with eternal and saving things. It is very blessed to be a learner in the

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school of Christ, a student in connection with eternal salvation. We do not know, it may be, very much while we are here on the earth ; but if we have a little knowledge, a little spiritual knowledge that little knowledge is an earnest of heaven, an earnest of everlasting happiness and glory. The time is coming when all that know, however little, shall know in a better world even as they are known.

The child of God is, therefore, capacitated by the Spirit of God for watching the hand of God, or if I may so express myself, the heart of God, and for watching the very wonderful and mysterious manner in which God accomplishes his purposes and does his dear people good. Sometimes these students in divinity have their attention directed by the Spirit of God to the mediatorial work of the Saviour. Sometimes they sit down before the cross of Christ and contemplate the dying agonies and groans of incarnate God. Then they follow Christ from the cross to the grave, and contemplate the mysteries which are couched in his burial and resurrection. Then they follow him, as it were, to his throne, and sit down before his throne and study the operations of his hand as he sits and manages all the affairs of both his church and the world ; and it is said, " Whoso is wise and will observe these things, even he shall understand the lovingkindness of the Lord." Thus, Christian brethren, we shall go on learning as long as we are here ; and the more we know of the things of God, the more we want to know ; the more we receive, the more we want to receive ; and we shall go on receiving and learning until our dying hour, and then we shall drop these cases of mortality, these robes of earth, and leave these little prison-houses in which we are pent while here on the earth, and enter into a world of bliss, of undimmed light and glory, where we, as I understand heaven, shall be for ever learning, where our knowledge will be for ever increasing, where new forms of love and new features of the character of God will be for ever unfolding ; and where, therefore, the mind will be for ever blessed, for ever filled, but for ever progressing.

We have to do to-night with a certain feature of the operations of our Lord which is very instructive and interesting. Lazarus was sick, and Jesus, we are told, loved Mary, and Martha, and their brother Lazarus ; thus highly-favoured was the family of Bethany. The sovereignty of God is unaccountable in its manifestations and operations. Neither Mary, Martha, nor Lazarus was left. Jesus loved them all, and they loved one another, not only with a natural but with a *spiritual* love ; they loved each other in the truth and in Jesus Christ. " It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick. When Jesus heard that " —astonishing, even astounding, is the fact which is stated in my text—" When Jesus heard that, (viz. that Lazarus was sick) he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby."

Now, I am not going to dwell very much on the death and resurrection of Lazarus. I am going to call attention to a certain feature of the operations of our God in connection with the wonders of his grace and providence. The text is suggestive, and first, I think, it suggests *the importance of God's glory*. " This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." In the second place I shall make a few observations on *the mysterious methods by which God advances his glory*. Christ heard that Lazarus was sick ; he abode two days in the place where he was ; notwithstanding he said, " This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God." And then in the third and last place, if I have time, I should like to mention two or three of the very important *lessons* that are taught.

I. In the first place, the text suggests *the infinite importance of the glory of God* :—" This sickness is not unto death." There is a reason for it ; God intends to glorify himself by it, and that the Son of God should be glorified thereby.

Now, my dear Christian brethren and sisters, this is a feature of Divine truth—a great fact in connection with the government of God which we too frequently, I fear, lose sight of, viz., the glory of our God. If one may speak for others, we are exceedingly selfish. Almost all our thoughts and feelings terminate upon ourselves, and almost all our prayers have selfish reference to ourselves. We do not *frequently* hear our dear brethren, and you do not *frequently* hear me in prayer, say, If it will glorify thee to do this or that, then be pleased to do it, O God. If it will glorify thy name to withhold this or that, then withhold those things from us. Oh dear Christian friends, self-abnegation is a feature of Christian experience and practice which is not very prominent. O for more of that grace of God which enables its possessor to sink beneath God's glory, to sink into nothing, in order that Jesus Christ may be all in all. Can you always go to God and say, If it will glorify thee to smite me, smite me, Father.—If it will glorify thee to lay me on a bed of affliction, lay me there.—If it will glorify thy name to strip me, strip me of all I have.—If it will glorify thee to bereave me, put forth thy hand and bereave me;—Do what thou wilt, only glorify thyself? Can you always go to God with expressions of that kind? And if such expressions fall from your lips, are there always corresponding sentiments in your hearts? Was I not right in saying, at least for myself, I am exceedingly selfish? I have more regard, I fear, for myself, than for the glory of my God;—more regard for my own ease and comfort, than for the glory of God; and if I connect the glory of God with myself and my experience, I am almost sure to pray that God would glorify himself by leading me in a smooth path, by dealing with me in a very agreeable manner. Again I say, O that we had more of that grace that brings the soul down at the feet of infinite sovereignty and mercy, and enables it to say, “Do with me, O God, according to thy word and thy will.”

I am, however, to speak for a few minutes on the infinite importance of God's glory. He will glorify himself and his dear Son, whether you or I would or not; but it is a great blessing to be reconciled to God, to live in harmony with him, and to be in perfect sympathy with his gracious and providential operations. Without his glory, God would not be God, and could not be trusted nor loved; and therefore, beloved friends, it is your mercy that he does not consult you, but always consults his own honour, and does that which will most effectually advance his own everlasting glory.

The glory of God might be considered as *essential* and *personal*. The glory of the three Persons in the adorable Godhead is perfectly equal. The glory of the Father is not brighter than that of the Spirit or the Son, the glory of the Son is not brighter than that of the Spirit, and the glory of the Spirit is as bright, and as great, and as lasting, as the glory of the Father and the Son.

The glory of God is important to God himself. This I shall try to show. It is important also to every angel who stands before his throne, contemplates his essential perfections, and sings his everlasting praise. The glory of God is infinitely important to you, my fellow-saint, my fellow-believer. And further the glory of God is important even to the devil; for this is the only barrier beyond which he cannot go, and which comes in effectually and savingly between the soul and eternal destruction.

So important to God is God's own glory, that all his works honour him, all his works proclaim his greatness, grandeur, goodness, and glory. We look up at the visible heavens, and contemplate the old-fashioned sun and moon, and stars, and remember the beautiful language of the Psalmist in relation to the moon!—“the faithful witness in heaven:” and we contemplate them all—

“For ever singing as they shine,
The hand that made us is divine.”

And, again, this world of ours, physically and materially considered, is beautiful ; it is one of the vast and wondrous works of God. Every rose, every daisy, every blade of grass, proclaims the infinite greatness and grandeur of its Creator ; and therefore the glory of God is important in every respect. Its importance will further appear if we take into consideration—

First, that the glory of God is *essential to the bliss of heaven*. There is an infinite fulness of importance, so to speak, in this fact, that the glory of God is essential to the very existence of heaven. There could not be such a world as heaven, nor would its bliss be what it is, if God were not what he is. A dimness in connection with God's glory would obscure and deaden all the light of heaven. That wondrous portion of divine truth occurs to my mind,—“The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it ; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.” Now, if the glory of God is the light of heaven, the light of heaven must bear some true and satisfactory proportion to the glory of God himself ; and if the glory of God could be obscured, the light of heaven would be lessened, and instead of being eternal day, it would be a world of twilight, if I may so speak,—neither light nor dark. But, blessed be God ! his glory can never be dimmed, his character can never be tarnished, a defect in the operations of his hand can never be discovered ; and as Christ, the ever-glorious Sun of Righteousness in heaven, will be eternally free from spots, there will be a cloudless day, an unclouded eternity, for all the ransomed church of the living God. If there were a spot upon the character of God, and the light of heaven were thereby dimmed, I think the confidence of all the inhabitants of heaven would be shaken, the songs of saints and angels would cease ; for their affections would be cooled, if not alienated from God, if a blot were discovered upon his glorious character. The paradise, the joy, the serenity, the happiness of glorified millions are the result of the undimmed light, the untarnished character, the unspotted glory of the Lord God of heaven and earth ; and therefore the glory of God is infinitely important. There can be no heaven, no peace, no undisturbed serenity and tranquility of mind in that glory world, apart from the most perfect glory and majesty of Jehovah himself.

My dear friends, we shall not be self-supporting in heaven : there will not be a sentiment of independence in the breast of a single ransomed spirit there. We shall be as dependent there as we are here, and all the weight of all the happiness of countless millions will there depend upon the glory of the Monarch of the place. His glory will constitute heaven, and inspire for ever the rapturous spirits of millions ; but a spot on God's character would arrest the attention of all, and cause the songs of the redeemed to cease ; the harps would be silent, and the confidence of all God's angels and of all the spirits of just men made perfect would be impaired thereby. Since, then, there could be no heaven apart from God's glory, no eternal joy if a stain marred the moral beauty of God, how important is the glory of God, and the fact that he will preserve and advance his glory ! A change in him, whether voluntary or otherwise, would degrade him ; he would be immensely lowered thereby, and every angel in heaven would be contemplating the greater height which God had occupied. The very conception would alienate their affections from God, and shake all their joyous confidence in him. But all in heaven see in their God the highest Being in the highest position, in the most dignified place,—exalted above all blessing and praise. Nothing higher, nothing greater, nothing brighter, nothing that more deserves and more effectually commands all their feelings and all their services.

Secondly, the importance of God's glory appears, too, when it is further considered as *essential to the unbounded trust and confidence of his people here*. It is well to trust in him, and it is sweet and blessed to have unbounded confidence in God ; to be enabled to trust him with all, and to trust him with all for ever and

ever. Does a friend ask,—“How far will you trust me?” We reply, perhaps,—Up to such a point, my dear sir, but no further. “With how much will you trust me?” With just so much, but no more. But how far will you trust your God? You reply, “As far as he chooses to take me, and as far as he chooses to place me from him. I will trust him out of sight.” And how long will you trust him? “For ever.” And with how much can you trust him? “With my body, my soul, my family, my health, my strength, my life, and my all.”

“Myself into His arms I cast,
And know I shall be saved at last.”

Oh how sweet to have unbounded confidence in the living God! If the omnipotence of your God were unwise, unkind, or unjust in its operations, you could not trust in him. You might be terrified by his arm, but you could not lean upon it. You might be afraid of him, but you could not fear him. If his omnipotence took unjust, and unwise, and unholy courses, you could not trust in him. But, whilst his arm is almighty, that almighty arm can never do anything wrong, can never do anything unwisely, or unkindly; and hence, though it works miracles, those miracles are always wrought for the purpose of glorifying himself. “This sickness is not unto death:” death is not the ultimate end and object; there is a great and mysterious purpose to accomplish. “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God.” If the love of God were changeable, could you trust in the God of love? No. He will therefore glorify his power by making it appear that all its operations are good, wise, and righteous, the very best operations that could be devised. He will glorify his love by resting in it. He will never cast away an object of his love. He may hide his face, or withhold the light of his countenance from his dear child; but, having embraced him, he will hold him fast for ever and ever; for he hateth to put away. If mercy were limited, could you cast yourself upon it? If errors disfigured the operations of your God, could you trust in his great name? No; for this would reflect, not honour and glory, but dishonour and reproach upon his character, and you would flee from him, rather than be attracted to him. Hence the object of your trust is a glorious God, whose character is open to the inspection of heaven, and earth, and hell. He has never forfeited it, but has always deserved the confidence of all his creatures.

Thirdly: The glory of God is important also for the fulfilment of his word. When I think of this, I am sometimes pleasingly astonished, that this Book before me, this slighted, this hated, this neglected Book must be fulfilled. All its statements must be verified, all its promises fulfilled, and all the utterances of God therein made good. God cannot permit anything to occur that will falsify the Bible, can never do anything that will falsify a single utterance of his mouth. All his works, and all the operations of his hand, must fulfil the Word of his mouth, and hence the importance of the Word of God. If it were not so, I should have no confidence in preaching, and you would have no comfort in reading it. The Apostle Peter calls the promises “*precious promises*.” What constitutes their preciousness? If, when you read those promises, a doubt entered the mind with respect to the certainty of their fulfilment, you would say, they are not worth much. God must fulfil them, or lose his honor, his crown, and his glory.

II. *The very mysterious methods adopted by God, for manifesting and promoting his glory.* “When Jesus heard that, he said, this sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God.”

All the circumstances of our life are managed by the wisdom of our heavenly Father. It is a mercy to know, to believe, that afflictions do not spring from the dust, and that the circumstances of life have not their origin in chance. I do not know what chance is, and I do not want to know. It is the creature of the human imagination, that is all; and like almost all such creatures, it is a false-

hood, an illusion. Chance has no existence anywhere in the government of God.

“ Our life’s minutest circumstance
Is governed by God’s eye.”

How sweet is the feeling, that there is an invisible hand working in connection with all the circumstances of our life, in a manner that will glorify God, and secure our endless happiness and rest ! Christian brethren, God’s hand is connected with every circumstance. Nothing transpires without his will. Nothing occurs without the controlling influence of the Lord your God. Notice—

First: God glorifies himself by all that he *permits*. He permitted Lazarus to be sick, and to die. The chapter subsequently shows us how by permitting this God glorified himself. Let us look at the permissions of God’s will. God has always glorified himself by what he has permitted.

1. He permitted *the fall* to take place. Now if we reduce such matters to a question of abstract omnipotence, God might have prevented the fall of man ; but he permitted Adam to fall, and the world to sink into moral ruin ; but he did not tarnish his glory, or ruin his own name, by permitting that to take place.

2. *The injustice manifested on the part of the Jews towards the Lord of life and glory.* They spat in his face, scourged his back, put a crown of thorns on his head, clothed him with a purple robe, bound him, offered every kind of indignity to him,—all that was cruelty and injustice ; but out of it all arose the brightest honors and glories of our God. “Ye have taken, and with wicked hands have crucified and slain ;” but he was “delivered according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.” We might speak of other matters in connection with the permissive will of God ; such as

3. *The temptations of the devil.* He could put a bit into the devil’s mouth, and curb and hold him tightly, and render it impossible that he should ever tempt another saint. Why does God permit the lion to roar, when his roaring voice so alarms the saint ? Why does he permit the tempter to throw his poisoned fiery darts, when they do so much mischief ? God means to glorify himself by permitting the lion to roar, the serpent to crawl, and the tempter to tempt. His name is honoured thereby, and the very victories of the saint reflect the glories of the great Shield of her salvation. Without a battle there could be no victory, and it is more glorifying to God to give his people the victory than to prevent the battle altogether. God has resolved that there shall be a battle, that it shall be life long. He permits all hell to come against the saints, but he stands against all that are opposed to them ; so that they shall come off “more than conquerors” through his love and power. By all, then, that God permits, he glorifies his own great name.

4. *Indwelling sin.* It is fabulously said of Mahomet that when he received a commission from heaven, the angel Gabriel opened his breast, and took out his heart, wrung the sin out, and put the heart in its place again. I mention this, not because we believe such nonsense, but simply for illustration. Now, God might, when he regenerates his dear people, wring all the sin out of their hearts, empty their breasts at once of all evil, eradicate all that is vile, and constitute them, personally, thoroughly and universally holy. But no, he says, I will permit sin to remain in them as long as they live ; and my grace shall reign in them, and over sin, so that they shall overcome it. Thus I will glorify myself by permitting the evil to remain and enabling them to conquer finally and for ever.

4. By his *providence*. How strange are the permissions of our God in relation to some of his children ! He sometimes permits a dear child to have his own way, just as an earthly father sometimes does, in order that the child may learn thereby what he could not learn otherwise. His will is stubborn, he has made up his mind, he does not consult the Word, nor make it a matter of prayer ; and

God permits him to take his own course for a time : but having taken that course, he soon begins to learn what he did not know before, concerning his waywardness and the deceitfulness of his heart, and concerning his God. Our God will glorify himself by what he *permits*.

Secondly, God glorifies himself by what he *produces*. He permits a great many things that he does not produce ; and even by these he glorifies himself. But he produced angels, and they glorify him : men—and they glorify him : new creatures in Christ Jesus,—and they glorify his great and glorious name. He produces the song—that glorifies him. He produces the sigh too ; and the sigh glorifies him as much as the song. He produces the rose and the nettle. The nettle is the means of glorifying God, though it stings ; whilst the rose glorifies God by its beauty and its fragrance. Our God produces that which is agreeable and sweet, as well as that which is amazingly disagreeable and bitter. and both for his glory. Let us take a wide view of the subject : “ This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God.” God does not bring us into contact with the nettle merely for the sake of stinging us, but for the sake of glorifying his own great name.

Thirdly, He glorifies his name by what he *prevents*. I believe that God’s preventing mercy is as great as his producing mercy. We might consider God’s preventions in connection with the world, and also in connection with the devil and hell. If they were let loose against you, they would overwhelm, and crush, and destroy you. We shall never know, at least not here, the extent of God’s preventing mercy. “ Oh ! ” one says ; “ I ran as fast as I could, fell down and hurt myself, and then was three minutes too late for the train. What a mercy it was ; for, if I had caught that train and gone by it, I might have lost my life ; for fifteen or twenty were killed by an accident to that train.” It is a mercy sometimes to be too late for a train.

“ The vessel has sailed ! gone ! too late ! ” She reaches the Bay of Biscay, is overtaken by a storm, and all hands go down. “ Had I been an hour earlier,” says one, “ I should have been on board, and should most likely have perished too.” Oh ! the preventing mercy of our God is as great as his permitting mercy. “ This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.” In connection with every painful and every pleasant circumstance of your life, there is a deep laid and concealed purpose. There is a divine and golden thread that connects your every event and circumstance with the name and honour of the Almighty God ; and if you and I can only have a little patience until God’s operations are completed, we shall see the thread which the trouble concealed. The purpose is in the trouble, and the trouble will fulfil the purpose ; and, therefore, by all his purposes, God intends to glorify his name. Does he fix the bounds of your habitation ? Does he disappoint your hope, cut off your expectations, and dash the cup of pleasure from your hand, just as you were about to drink it ? Does an uncontrollable circumstance arise, by which you are plunged into poverty, in which you continue as long as you live ? Whatever God does in connection with his dear children, he does for his own glory. It is not merely for the purpose of disappointing, paining, or smiting you, not the pleasure of giving you a cup of bitters merely ; but for his own sake, for the sake of glorifying his own great name. “ Lord, increase our faith.”

III. And what are the *lessons taught* ? The first is this : that the curse is turned into a blessing. Afflictions, without salvation, would be curses. Pains, head-aches, heart-aches, and sorrows, would be curses, and death would be a curse, were it not for the salvation of the Saviour. But we have salvation. God has thereby turned the curse into a blessing, so that it is a blessing to weep. I did not say a happy thing, but it is really a blessing to weep ; to have a broken

heart and a contrite spirit ; to be burdened with sin, and unhappy on account of it. It is a blessing to be thus made miserable, for our God has " turned the curse into a blessing."

The second lesson taught is this : God does not consult his people when he glorifies himself. Now had he consulted Mary, and Martha, and Lazarus, Lazarus had not died. " Lord, if thou hadst been here," said Martha, " my brother had not died." In other words,—we did send for you, and hoped you would come ; and if you had been here, our brother had not died. Yet Christ said to his disciples, " I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe." Why should our God consult our ease in glorifying himself ? Who are we, that our ease or pleasure should be consulted ? No ; God pursues his own course, takes his own way ; and if sorrow, pain, affliction, privation, woe, or a thousand troubles will, in God's account, most glorify himself, God will permit them ; for he intends by all things to glorify his own great name. And therefore, Christian brethren, whether we can believe it or not, all things permitted or done by our God, are *for the best*. And that is not all,—all things that are done by our God are *the best* ; for he is the best Father, the best Friend, the best Ruler, the best Governor ; the best to purpose, and the best to plan. It is hard to believe, but it is a fact, that what our God produces is the very best that could happen. Am I cast on a bed of suffering, or otherwise afflicted ? Oh how painful ! How difficult ! It is all for the best, and it is the best thing that God could have sent, for he intends thereby to glorify his own great name.

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GRACE AND GLORY.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, 28th JUNE, 1874.

"The Lord will give grace and glory."—Psalm lxxxiv. 11.

It is infinitely important to possess the Spirit of God, and to have "the love of God shed abroad in one's heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." Having this, of course we are lovers of God; and if lovers of God, we are lovers of everything that is godly, or God-like; and therefore, it is a very great mercy for us that the Holy Spirit has condescended to mention a very considerable number of infallible evidences of Christianity,—of interest in the everlasting love of God. The child of God has frequently derived comfort from the declaration of Divine truth by the Apostle John,—*"By this we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."* If, therefore, we love Christians, we love Christ. If we love the brethren because they are brethren, we love the Father. If we love a godly man or woman, because he or she is godly, we love God himself. And if we love the image of Jesus Christ wherever it appears, we love Jesus Christ himself, the great Original of that image. Now let us try to inspect our own hearts, our affections and feelings, in relation to this point. We know that we are not in this respect where we were, or what we were. We can remember the time when we hated the people of God because they were God's people; and when we hated saints because they were saints, and therefore we hated professors of religion and members of Christian churches, strictly speaking, for God's sake. God was in them: the power of God appeared on them, and they were, in some respects and to some extent, representatives of God here upon the earth, and we hated them on that account. We dare not now say that we hate God's representatives on the earth. We dare not say that in this respect a change has not taken place. *"Old things have passed away, and, behold, all things are become new."* And therefore, if we are lovers of the brethren, we are lovers of their Father, and of the great Elder Brother himself; and therefore we may say, *"We love Him, because He first loved us."*

And then again, if we are lovers of God's children, and followers of God, we are lovers of God's house. It appears to me that David's heart was very warm, and his affections very strong towards the house of God. *"Yet,"* said he, when contemplating the building of the temple, *"I have set my affections unto the house of my God."* And here, in the Psalm out of which I have taken my text, David expresses his feelings, his affections towards the house of God:—*"How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!"* and again in the tenth verse,—*"For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness."* Now, if we are lovers of God, we love his people, and also his residence,—the courts of our heavenly Father; and I do believe in my heart that we can say with David, *"How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!"* One thing

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should be borne in mind in relation to what is here stated :—The temple was not in existence in David's days ; there was no magnificent and costly building for the public worship of God. The old tent which Moses had made in the wilderness, was the only residence of God in the land of Canaan in the days of David. That tent must have been repaired very considerably. There were the old badgers' skins, and the ark of the covenant, and the old altar which Moses made in the desert ; and all these were connected with the earthly residence of God ; but David went into that old tabernacle or tent, and took his station before that old altar, and, when David thought of the victims whose bodies were burning thereon, he said, "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts !" "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to enquire in his temple." Now, we may take this as a test, and apply it to our own principles and feelings when we meet together as we are met together to-night. Are we anxious to have the presence of God,—anxious that our minds might be divinely absorbed, and all our thoughts sweetly and graciously engaged ? Are we desirous that all that is within us might, for the time, be separated from the world,—elevated, as it were, to heaven, and sweetly connected with the Christ of God ? If so, God's heavenly residence is our home, and—

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

David, then, having, this experience, said, "The Lord God is a sun and shield : the Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." It was not the whole verse, however, that occurred to my mind, but that clause of it which I have read—"The Lord (or Jehovah) will give grace and glory."

Let us look at the two branches into which the subject seems to divide itself. First, the Divine and infinite donation—"The Lord God will give *grace and glory* ; and secondly, the confidence expressed in relation to this fact. David said, (and he was divinely inspired) "Jehovah *will* give grace and glory."

I. Now in the first place, let us contemplate the two blessings indicated, or the marvellous and infinite donation expressed in the text, "grace and glory." I do not expect that I shall be able to say anything new, or to add anything fresh to what you have frequently heard on this subject. Grace and glory comprehend all our religion, here and hereafter. Grace for this world, and glory for a better ;—grace to prepare us for heaven while on the earth, and glory as that "city" which God has prepared for us in the world to come.

The grace of God means the sovereign favour of the Most High. It is divided into a multitude of branches, and every branch of Divine grace is an infinitely rich and important favour. Let us notice—

1. The great Giver himself ; for I shall try to confine my attention as far as possible to the phraseology of the text. The Lord (or Jehovah ; for the noun "Lord" is in Roman capitals, and it should have been translated *Jehovah*.) will give grace and glory. The Father will give grace, the Son is giving and will continue to give grace, and the Spirit of God is giving grace, and will continue to give it down to the end of time ; and then a triune Jehovah will give eternal glory beyond death, beyond time, beyond sin, and beyond our imperfections in a better world. And I may say of that better world, what the Apostle Paul says of another subject, "I cannot now speak particularly." I hope, however, with you, and with countless millions, to see the face of God in the Lord Jesus Christ. But all our knowledge of glory must be gleaned from the Bible together with

our little shallow experience of the grace of God in our hearts here on the earth. "Jehovah will give grace and glory." No one else can give grace. The creature is as capable of giving me heaven, as he is of giving me grace ; and he that gives me grace can give me glory. The fact is, it is God's prerogative, and God's only, to give grace and glory. Grace emanates from God's high and glorious throne ; for John says, "I saw a river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and the Lamb." All the grace, therefore, that flows in this wilderness-world, takes its rise in the heart of God, and flows from his throne. My brother, there is not a drop of grace proceeding from an angel's throne, not even from the throne of Gabriel. They see grace flowing from God, but they are unable to communicate it to poor sinners. As the grace of God flows, and, as sinners receive that grace, and are meetened for heaven, again and again they sing Hallelujah ! But, if heaven depended upon the grace or the power of Gabriel, or upon the united powers of all the millions of angelic spirits that are before the throne, not a single lost sinner would ever reach the climes of everlasting bliss ; and therefore God gives grace, and God only can give grace.

No grace ever flows efficiently from the pulpit ; all grace is poured into the lips of Jesus Christ. If grace, in a certain respect, may be said to flow from the pulpit, it flows first from the heart of God, *through* the pulpit into the pew ; it flows, first from the throne of God, through the ministry of the word into the hearts of the hearers : and therefore, dear brethren, whilst sitting to hear the gospel preached, always see God's throne of grace above the pulpit ; and whilst the preacher pours forth a stream of words, and your hearts are more or less divinely blest, remember that the grace that comes with his declarations flows from God. And therefore, looking at the phraseology of the text, it expresses a naked fact, "The Lord will give grace and glory."

It is also a fact, that no spiritual creature can share his grace with a fellow-creature. I do not know whether we commit sin against God or not, by wishing that we could communicate grace to our fellow-creatures. When a father wishes he could give his children grace, no doubt there is a good deal of the parent in our religion here, a good deal that is natural, connected with our spiritual affection ; but, whatever our wishes may be for our children, or for those that are near and dear to us, it is not possible that one creature can share the grace that he has with another, and, if I understand Scripture aright, the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew aright, this truth is taught therein. The lamps of the foolish virgins went out, and they said to the wise, "Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out." And the wise said, not so ; lest there be not enough for us and you." No ; every man must retain for himself all the grace that God has given him, and however much he may love his children, and yearn over them and weep, he feels his impotence, in relation to their salvation. There is grace in his heart for personal purposes, but he cannot share it with his children. I do not know, again I say, whether the wish that he could do so, be criminal—be a guilty wish in the sight of God or not ; but we are forced to acknowledge the fact, we learn it every day, that it is God's only prerogative to give grace and glory.

Since Jehovah gives grace and glory, he does it with a Godlike freeness, he does it like a God. Those of you who are parents, when you bless your children with all your heart, you do it according to your ability ; and if you are poor, your blessings, although they come from the heart, are not large, nor perhaps intrinsically valuable ; but when God blesses a sinner, when Jehovah gives grace and glory, he gives in a manner that is worthy of himself, and corresponds to his greatness, his majesty, and his glory. Your God never gave you a *little* grace, a little mercy. He never gave you, in connection with salvation, anything that was light or little ; but when he gives to sinners for saving purposes, he gives like

a God,—like the great Monarch of the universe, the infinite majesty of heaven and earth; and therefore, if he has given you grace, he has given you an inestimable favour; and he gives it with all the love, with all the freeness of his heart; he gives it with infinite pleasure, satisfaction, and delight.

Is it a pleasure for a naturally humane and sympathising individual to help a fellow-creature,—practically to pity him, to bind up his wounds, to alleviate his pain, and to ease him in privation and poverty? Is it a pleasure to relieve necessity, and to alleviate pain? That principle, that feeling, that quality or property of our nature, came from God; and he who is the Author of feelings so *fine*, and so desirable, must possess those qualities and properties in himself, in all their infinite greatness and perfection; and therefore, when he comes to bind up a heart, he does it with ten thousand smiles on his face; when he comes to give a sinner grace, he does it with all the pleasure and delight of a God. The Lord will give, with infinite freeness and fulness, grace and glory.

And those blessings, be it observed, are from the great depths; they are not surface favours. God is constantly giving what I will call surface favours to his creatures. The world is constantly receiving the surface mercies, and the surface favours of God, such as natural health and strength. “The silver and the gold,” God says, “are mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills;” and so God distributes temporal and natural favours. But he will give *grace*, and grace comes not from the surface, but from the great depths: “He gave them to drink as from the great depths.” God stretches out his bounteous hand, and gathers ten thousand surface blessings, and scatters them down upon a nation, lavishes them upon England, for instance. But when he comes to save a sinner, he puts his hand into his heart, and brings out the deepest treasure therein, and gives the best blessing he can convey. The Lord will give grace and glory. We infer from this, therefore, that, if there is any measure of grace in the heart, there is a saving connection between us and God. If there is any grace in my mind, I may easily know where it came from. If there is anything spiritual in your breast, you may at once know what has been done to you, and what has been done for you. Well, there is some grace in the heart. Well, then, you know where it came from, for there is only one hand in the universe that can convey grace; “The Lord will give grace and glory.”

Well, dear Christian friends, the Lord, having resolved to do this, that is to say, give grace and glory to his people, he proceeded to give the gospel, which is a declaration of that fact. He proceeded to erect a throne of Divine mercy, that grace and glory might issue therefrom, and to institute a multitude of means of grace. What is the intention of the means of grace? When we see workmen laying a multitude of pipes in the streets, we conclude that certain houses are to be connected with the gas-works or the water-works, and that those pipes are to be the means of conveying the gas from the one, and the water from the other. And God has laid down many pipes, as it were, in this world; and every one is connected with his heart, and with his church. Those pipes shew that God will give grace and glory; they are the means of grace, and, as the water flows to our houses through the pipes from the water-works, so the means of grace are pipes of conveyance from the heart of the God of grace to the hearts of his dear people.

This will apply to the observation I made just now upon the minister, and upon the pulpit. Whatever we have of grace, whatever we have of saving blessing, we have from God, whatever may be the pipe through which it flows. It may flow through a minister, in connection with the ordinances of God's house, or it may flow into the heart by means of trouble. Oh! brethren, these are means of grace, and we have our grace from our God through those means; but let us never forget the height of their source, that they come from the heart

of Deity. Therefore, having resolved to give these, he issued the gospel, erected the throne, appointed the means of grace, instituted the ordinances of his house, and the Christian ministry, and is raising up and qualifying men for the work of preaching the gospel.—Oh! is he doing it now? Let us tarry here just a moment. This is a very important aspect of the question. Is he doing it now? Is not Zion in a low and languishing condition? Where are her godly, spiritual, holy, and useful ministers? Brethren, let us pray that the God of grace would raise up faithful labourers, and thrust them into his vineyard: for, depend upon it, they are as pipes between the church and God himself, and their labours fulfil spiritualizing and saving purposes. Every God-qualified and God-sent minister is an indication, a demonstration of the fact, that the Lord will give grace and glory. O that I might never be a cloud without *water*! Ministers are in some respects clouds; they are to the church what the clouds of nature are to the earth. May I, may my brethren that preach the gospel, never be as clouds without water. May that God who charges yonder clouds with all the refreshing water they contain, charge all his dear servants with his Spirit and blessing; and then, as these clouds float in the new heavens and over the new earth, and as I come and float over you, may we be enabled, by grace divine, so to preach, that your hearts may be rained upon, and watered, and refreshed; but again, again be it remembered—

“All the glory,
All the glory, Lord, is thine.”

“The Lord will give grace and glory.” I have, perhaps, tarried too long on this point, and therefore, let us hasten to a second.

2. The *order* of the blessings. “The Lord will give grace,” and then “glory.” This is the order in which they are conveyed, and the order, too, in which they are experienced by all that receive them. He will give grace and glory. To reverse this order would be unreasonable; to reverse this order would destroy everything like harmony, sympathy, and symmetry in the gracious government of the Lord our God. Indeed, I think I may say, and I speak it with reverence, that God cannot give glory without giving grace. “The Lord will give grace and glory.” What would you think of taking an unregenerate man to heaven? Why, that would be glorifying death; that would be surrounding moral death with the Divine splendour; that would be like putting, if I may so speak, a corpse into a glorious coffin, and decking and adorning it with ten thousand precious gems and jewels. Would a corpse be the better for a golden coffin, for the precious stones and jewels with which it might be covered? Well, this I think is not a far-fetched or strained illustration. If God should take an unregenerate man to heaven, and thus give glory without giving grace, he would glorify death; and the glory of God would be as a rich shroud or coffin for him. Repulsive, abominable, death would be surrounded by everything that was divine and glorious. How incongruous! How inconsistent and how impossible—is it not? No; the Lord will give grace, and with it life, glory, and eternal perfection. To take an unpardoned sinner to heaven would be to glorify a rebel, to surround a bitter foe with tokens of the Divine pleasure. A cursing wretch, surrounded by the glorifying blessings of God! How abominable is the thought! And yet that is the thought of most ungodly men, so far as they think of heaven. They do not want grace, but they want glory.

My friend, you would hate God in glory, if he did not give you grace before he took you there. It is not the glory of heaven, merely, that constitutes the happiness of the blest; it is the preparedness of the mind for that glory. “The Lord will give grace and glory,” and therefore he will not take a dead soul into a living world, and keep it there in death for ever; he will not take an unpardoned man into his glory, as the God pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin;

he will not take dwarfs and deformed beings there ; but, he will justify, and beautify, and perfect every spirit before he takes it to that glory world. And there shall be nothing inconsistent with his character, nor incompatible with eternal glory, in the experience or the character of the thousands that shall stand there.

We shall not appear in heaven as so many dark spots, as characters incapable of reflecting the honour of God. No ; just as ten thousand times ten thousand dewdrops on a beautiful May morning, sweetly, and beautifully, and gloriously reflect the sun, and shine like bright, pure, transparent pearls, so God will make every sinner transparent before he takes him to heaven, and, like transparent drops, graciously saved sinners shall surround God's throne, and reflect the glory and grandeur of their Saviour.

This is the order. The Lord will give grace and glory. He will regenerate the soul, and then take it to heaven ; he will pardon the sinner, and then put him in his bosom ; He will justify the ungodly, and then glorify him with himself, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.

My brother, grace is the ground of glory ; grace is that spiritual power or capability of heart which will imbibe the glory of God. If it rains upon a stone, the rain does not penetrate the stone. If it rains upon a rock, the rain falls off again ; but when it rains upon the thirsty and parched earth, the earth imbibes the rain, and is cooled, moistened, refreshed, and softened thereby. And so God will destroy the stony character of the heart, and give a nature to the sinner, that shall be capable of receiving, imbibing, and retaining the glory of the everlasting God. Throw a stone into the water, or hold it in water in your hand—no matter how long—the water will never penetrate the stone ; but thrust an absorbent into the water, and hold it there a moment, and it will imbibe and become saturated with the water ; and so, the soul of a gracious man will naturally imbibe and receive, and become saturated, as it were, with the glory of God. Thrust a piece of iron into the fire, and let it remain there for a time, and it will imbibe the heat and take the colour of the fire, and become fiery itself ; and so, when the gracious mind is put into God's glory, it will become transformed by that glory, and imbibe and retain for ever, all the bliss, the glorious bliss, and pleasure of heaven.

Thirdly. We may notice *the inseparable connection that exists between these two blessings*. The Lord will give grace and glory. The "and" is placed here by God. It is God's copulative, if I may so speak. It is that link that God himself has made to connect the two great things together, grace and glory. And this conjunction is a very important one, because it is a heavenly one ; and it connects not merely the two words, it connects the two things—grace and glory ; and they are not to be separated, and there is no power in heaven that can separate them. The dawn cannot be separated from the day. The bud here must become a flower ; the babe must become a man ; and the little beginning in connection with the kingdom of grace must end in all God-like greatness, glory, and perfection ; and therefore, concerning this mystery, it is said, "The path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Is there regenerating grace in your hearts ? The Lord help you to be thankful ; for all the rest must follow. Fall from grace, sir ? I do not understand it ; I cannot. "Well," you say, "I do not believe it either." But has grace ever fallen into my heart ? I must leave that between God and your own soul. I can only say, if regenerating grace has ever fallen into your heart, you will rise into heaven, and heaven at last will surround you for ever and ever. The Lord will give grace, and glory also. They are inseparable in the purposes of God. He decreed—

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

that a state of grace should be inseparable from a state of glory. And, moreover, they are inseparable in their nature. They are not different ; the nature of both is identical. Grace here is glory begun. Glory there is grace completed ; and therefore they are inseparable in their nature. They are inseparable as the gifts of God, and in the intercession of Jesus Christ. He prays that God would keep his disciples, and preserve them, and guard them, and favour them with his presence in every way whilst here ; and then he proceeded to say—for he could not separate grace from glory,—“ I will, that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.”

My dear Christian friend, grace is simply fitting the head for the crown. The crown is ready, and because God means to crown every child, he gives grace to fit the head for that crown. The thrones are ready, and every dear child of God is to occupy a throne. But it requires peculiar qualifications and excellencies to occupy a throne with honour and credit.—Take a poor labourer for instance : I do not speak contemptuously of him, God forbid that I should !—Take an uneducated labourer, and set him on the throne of England, he would be as miserable as possible ; he would rather be in his thatched cottage, and sit at his deal table, covered with a coarse table-cloth, and furnished with coarse fare. He has not been trained for the palace—has not been educated for it. Now God has prepared thrones of glory for his people, and he will give grace to train them for their princely palaces and royal thrones ; and therefore, when we get to heaven, we shall be at home, and not be awkward nor embarrassed on our thrones of eternal glory. The two blessings are inseparable. “ He will give grace and glory.” And then, he will give a sufficient measure of grace to ensure glory ; and grace itself guarantees glory. I have said that God does not give *little* blessings. Let me repeat it. He does not give a little grace. I do not know whether we are correct in our mode of speaking of the grace of God. I acknowledge that I very frequently talk about a little grace. I very frequently say, that God gives more grace to one of his children than he does to another. But many of our observations will not, perhaps, bear strict comparison with the Word of God. Does God give a little grace to one, and a greater measure to another ? Does he not give great grace wherever he gives grace ?—grace sufficient to save the soul, meeten it for heaven, and raise to glory ? What would you think of a *little* pardon ? But little grace must mean little pardon. What would you think of a *little* justification or a little salvation ? Many of our observations will not bear critical inspection, will not bear the daylight of heaven. “ The Lord will give grace.” He gives it all ; as the Lord liveth, he gives it *all*. But are there not “ babes, young men and fathers ? That is another view of the subject. Are there not the blade, the ear, and then the full corn in the ear ? That is another view of the subject. But surely, the babe is a whole child ;—and surely it is loved with all the father’s love,—and surely, the new born babe is the rightful heir, and the rightful heir to the whole inheritance. Poor little thing ! he has no consciousness of it, no knowledge of it. He must live awhile and be educated ; but the whole is his, however young and little he may be. And therefore, however weak you may be, however earnestly you may complain of a want of growth as a child, do not forget that all God’s children are perfect ones. It is so in nature,—that is the rule, the other is the exception. It is so in grace. All God’s children are perfect children, whether one be a day old, or fifty or sixty years old ; but while here they are in a state of infancy, if I may so speak ; here they are growing, but in heaven they will be full-grown saints. The Lord will give grace, and as much grace as shall be necessary to secure eternal glory.

Does it not convey to the mind, in the next place, the idea of *time* ? Yes ; and I ought to be thinking about *time* also. It conveys also to the mind the idea of time. He will give grace. He has given regenerating grace, and pardoning grace,

—grace for thirty or forty years ;—and the Lord will give grace down to our latest hour ; and then—what then?—why, then he will give glory. And how long after death will it be before we shall have glory ? Instantaneously ; “ Absent from the body, present with the Lord.” Now, you see one of these gifts is a *time* gift, and the other is an *eternity* gift, or, in other words, God will cease to give the blessing in one of its forms, whilst he will never cease to give it in the other form. The Lord will give grace as long as the world stands, and when time is ended, and the world is destroyed, he will cease to give grace. He will never cease to be a Giver, he will give glory for ever, and ever, and ever.

Glory! What must that be ! I have been dwelling on grace—I know more about that than glory. He will give glory. I take it that glory is the completeness, the completion, and the perfection of all the salvation of our God. All God's purposes will be completed there ; all his promises fulfilled,—all your desires satisfied,—all your prayers answered, and all the requirements of the mediation of Jesus will be crowned there. The work of the Holy Spirit will be completed, and hence it is said, that all shall be “ crowned with glory.” God will do *all he can*. Oh ! I feel it is a solemn, an important thing to preach ;—I speak strongly sometimes, but I speak advisedly. God will do all he can to make you glorious and perfect. Christ did all that was necessary ; the Holy Ghost is at work, and the triune God will give you the highest seat, the richest crown, and the greatest pleasures and raptures that eternal love and power could ever contrive. There shall not be a desire unfulfilled, a want unsupplied. There shall not be a hope unsatisfied. Rivers of bliss, perpetually flowing,—nothing to occasion a sigh, a tear, or a groan ; and no room for a desire. Heaven is a roomy world, but there is not room enough for desire, because glory fills it everywhere. Nor any room for prayer.

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

May God give us grace in rich abundance here, and may the sweet prospect of heaven cheer our hearts ; whilst, as gracious travellers, we wend our way to a better world on high.

I must leave the assurance, or the confidence expressed ; because time is gone. May the Lord command his blessing, for Christ's sake. Amen.

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THE SAVED THIEF ADDRESSING HIS SAVING LORD.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, 2nd AUGUST, 1874.

"And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."—Luke xxiii. 42.

IF salvation had not been altogether of grace, the thief would never have been saved. If human works were absolutely necessary to complete the salvation of a sinner, the dying thief would never have been taken to heaven. God, however, has never had but one way of saving sinners,—Christ has always been the way of life ; and the salvation of sinners has always been and will always be of grace, from first to last. We know that the God of grace is omnipotent, and brings his omnipotence to bear upon the great business of salvation. There are no uncertainties connected with the salvation of sinners. Heaven has purposed, and omnipotence executes the high purpose ; and thus Israel is saved with an everlasting salvation, for

God's "eternal thought moves on
His undisturbed affairs."

God speaks, and it is done ; he commands, and it stands fast for ever ; and no difficulty whatever is experienced in connection with the salvation of the vilest and the worst.

If there are degrees in glory,—if one saint shines more than another, and the crown of one ransomed sinner is brighter than that of another, then I apprehend that the crown of the glorified thief is *dull*, and his throne *low*, and his position in glory at a considerable distance from the throne of God. He was a great sinner, and never lived long enough as a *Christian* to do any good, and if therefore there are degrees of glory in a better world, he must be low indeed. I have, however, an idea that the thief in heaven is immensely happy, that he is as full of bliss as possible, that he wears an unspeakably bright crown, and that there is not a ransomed spirit before the throne that casts its crown at the Saviour's feet with greater rapture than the ransomed thief. God has determined to magnify the riches of his grace in the salvation of the sinner ; and the thief is as happy, holy, and heavenly, as a Triune God can constitute him. Again, if there is an intermediate state between death and perfect glory, then how are we to understand the Saviour's words ? "Verily, I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." The Papists, however, in order to get rid of the force and meaning of this verse, have changed the punctuation, and put the comma after the word "day," in order that their foolish and wicked idea of purgatory may be sustained. "Verily I say unto thee to-day, thou shalt be with me in Paradise ;" that is, at No. 4.—AUGUST 15TH, 1874.

some future time thou shalt be there with me. Let the comma stand where it does. Jesus said, "Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." If any man, redeemed by blood and destined for heaven, was worthy of experiencing purgatorial fires, it must have been the thief. But there was no purgatory, no intermediate state for his spirit. The Saviour's answer to his prayer was perfectly fulfilled, and in due time and course, the spirit of the ransomed man entered heaven. And what an interesting entry it was! The Saviour died first, and entered into his kingdom and glory, and then, after the thief's legs had been broken, his ransomed spirit took its flight and followed his Lord, and when his spirit entered into that glory world, what an interesting meeting followed between himself and his saving Lord! Let us look at the words of our text: "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."

Now, the subject divides itself naturally into two branches; first, the *character* of the petitioner; and secondly, his *prayer*. The character of the petitioner: a wretched, black, vile, abominable malefactor.

What shall we say about his character? I certainly must say that when the dying thief has been adverted to, too much a great deal, to my mind, has been said about him, and too little about Him that saved him. I like to contemplate, not the cross of the thief, but the cross of Christ; for all the glory and greatness were there; and if there is anything worth seeing on the cross of the thief, it came from him that hung on the middle cross of the three. However, let us notice three things in relation to his spiritual character. In the first place, *his change of heart*; secondly, *his genuine repentance*; thirdly, *his wonderful faith*.

In the first place, one word or two on *his change of heart*; for it must be acknowledged that there had been fulfilled in the experience of that man, God's words by Ezekiel: "A new heart will I give you." Well, God had removed the stony heart from the thief, and a heart of flesh, a living heart, a feeling heart, a sensitive heart, had been, so to speak, given by the hand of grace to that man. This was in fulfilment of God's ancient purpose and decree. The dying thief did not seek this change; for it is said, in the early part of the sufferings of Christ, that both the thieves cast the same things in his teeth. The one that was saved was just as bad as the one that was lost; and I should not be surprised, if we could learn such a thing, to find that he that was saved, was the viler of the two. However, we must leave that. He was a guilty, vile, and black sinner, and like his fellow, when he was first nailed or tied to the cross, he reviled and reproached his saving Lord, therefore a very wonderful change had taken place. A revolution was effected within his breast in a moment. God Almighty had determined to give that man a new heart, and that a saving change should take place at that particular and solemn time. I am thinking here, in relation to this, how secretly God worked. No eye saw any blessing come from heaven. No ear heard any sound whatever. No creature was aware in any respect that anything extraordinary had taken place between Jesus Christ and that man; and yet a ray of saving light pierced his heart, a spark of heavenly life was dropped into his breast, and in a moment he was snatched as a brand from the burning, rescued from the hand of the devil, and converted from an enemy into a friend. What the experience of the man may have been, perhaps we do not know, only as we consult our own hearts in connection with our call by grace. However, hell wondered at what had taken place, and whether the rabble before the cross gave any particular attention to the words spoken by Christ and the man or not, I do not know; but Satan wondered when he saw the hand of grace pluck that rebel out of danger and death; and when the angels of God, who were hovering around the suffering Saviour, heard the dying thief say, "Lord, remember me,"

they wondered, and mingled songs of joy and hallelujahs for the salvation of a sinner, with the solemn feelings they experienced in connection with the sufferings of their Lord.

Well, there was a change of heart, and consequently a new creature hung there, and between the thief and hell there was a great gulf fixed now; and whilst he with his new heart was the subject of a peculiar experience, he looked at the expiring Saviour, and said, "Lord, remember me."

And then there was his penitence—*his genuine, spiritual, and acceptable repentance*. It is said that Christ is "exalted a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and remission of sins." But he gave repentance to the thief when he was on the cross, and before he reached the throne; and in the breast of that man, streams of godly sorrow flowed. Dear friends, it is well to have streams of godly sorrow flowing in our hearts. I am praying, if I ever pray at all, that God would keep the sluices of penitence open, and the streams of godly sorrow flowing. I want to be in godly sorrow all the days of my life. "Well, you are a strange man! and your religion is a strange religion!" It is so, my friends. In godly sorrow there is preciousness and sweetness, for "tears have their own sweetness too." 'Tis well to be pricked and pierced by God's saving arrows. God has arrows of vengeance, which he will throw at the sinner; but he has arrows which are dipped into his own heart, and when they come into the heart of a sinner, they bring love, and a Saviour's blood with them. Therefore, it is sweet to have the flood-gates of penitence open, and the streams of godly sorrow flowing. I hope then, to be penitent all the days of my life; for there is a sorrow that is experienced without wretchedness and misery. There is joy connected with this sorrow, something unspeakably sweet and desirable. Well, this man had his heart broken, and his spirit was contrite, and he bled as a broken-hearted sinner before the bleeding Saviour. This is a sight for hell, and a sight for heaven! A bleeding sinner, and a bleeding Saviour! It was the blood of the Saviour that brought streams from the sinner's heart, and the sorrow of the Saviour that brought sorrow into the sinner's heart—and the groans of the Saviour that caused the thief to groan out his feeling, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom."

And then we have his *marvellous faith*: "Lord." He addressed Jesus as "Lord," although he was covered with shame, ignominy, reproach, and spittle. They never washed his dear face before they nailed him to the tree. He was surrounded by darkness and covered with a cloud, and his grandeur, deity, dignity, and glory, were obscured and veiled; but the dying thief saw beneath the dark cloud, the Almighty God. He saw in the midst of the darkness, the Being that made the universe, and therefore, with all adorable and deep feeling, he said, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." He that does not see Deity in the suffering Son of God, does not know Christ crucified; and he that does not discover infinite majesty beneath all that meanness and woe, does not know the person of the sufferer—Jesus Christ, the "Lord." But the thief went on to say, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom:" so that he recognized the kingly character of Christ, and the fact also that he was going to his kingdom, and that everything relating to a poor sinner's salvation, depended upon his kind remembrance of him, when in his kingdom. The thief saw that Jesus was advancing towards his rightful honours and kingdom. He understood, methinks, more than the apostles, or his general disciples, of the mystery that Christ was gradually advancing towards the end of his ignominy, shame, and degradation; and the dying thief saw at the end of the sufferings of Christ, the grandeur and glory of the mediatorial kingdom of Christ, and said, "Lord, I know where thou art going. I understand somewhat of thine honours,

thy worth, and thy merit ; and when thou hast completed the mighty work, and rescued all the millions, and hast entered into thy kingdom, then, " Lord, Lord ! remember me."

Now, let us give the subject a turn ; because, as I said just now, it is possible to say too much about the thief, and too little about the Saviour. Just as we have very frequently heard Saul's conversion preached, and it has been Saul from first to last. The Alpha and Omega have been Saul of Tarsus and Saul the Pharisee. I love the Saviour, and if I preach on any good in the creature, I always like to look at that excellency which I may be referring to, in connection with the Lord of life and glory.

The first thing that strikes my mind here, is *the Saviour's infinite perfection in the depths of his sufferings*. When the thief spoke to him, he was in the very depths of suffering. The unspeakably terrible storm of Jehovah's wrath was then falling upon him in all its force and fury. Very shortly afterwards, the Saviour said, " My God ! My God ! why hast thou forsaken me ?" He was entering into the darkness of penal death, and the fires of wrath enveloped his soul ; but his sufferings did not obscure his knowledge, dim or lessen the force of his thoughts, nor paralyze his arm. He saw an object of divine love by his side, and whilst he gave all attention to God, and to the millions he was saving, he gave special and particular attention to that one individual. The arrows of God were entering into his heart, yet he thrust out his almighty arm and snatched the thief from the hand of the devil, and eternal death ; and thus we see the infinite perfection of our Lord in the very depths of his agonies. " Crucified through weakness," but in one respect not weak when he was crucified. He was perfectly God, and perfect also as to his complex person and saving ability, to the last moment of his life ; and when he was stepping out of life into death, he rent the rocks and rent the veil of the temple from the top to the bottom, shook the earth he made, and cried with a loud voice, " It is finished ! and bowed his head and gave up the ghost. There was no imperfection in his mind. You and I have sometimes suffered so severely, that we have said, " Don't trouble me just now. I can't give my attention to you." Oh ! the pain is excruciating." But our dear Lord said nothing of the kind to the thief,—Don't speak to me. I have no time to attend to you, and cannot listen to you now. His mind was surrounded with the curses, and he hung beneath the vengeance of Jehovah, and yet when the thief looked, He looked ; and when the thief felt, He felt ; and when the thief breathed, He listened ; and when the thief poured forth his prayer, He was all attention and heard—" Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom"—and answered the man, "*Verily*"—let there be no misapprehension here—" *Verily* I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." All this took place just as the terrible storm was falling ; and heaven, and earth, and hell, seemed conspired against him. Bless his name ! " He is Jesus, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." The same on the cross as he is on the throne. The changes which he seemed to undergo in relation to his humanity—a babe, a youth, a man—concealed an unchanging Redeemer, Lover, and Friend. This is our first point.

Secondly, notice, *a crucified Emmanuel always attracts the sensibly guilty sinner*. You may learn whether the man that talks about guilt and transgression is really sensible of the fact that he is guilty or not. " Oh, sir I am such a sinner ! So guilty ! I am burdened and oppressed." Well, where are you ? If you are all that, that is *what* you are. *Where* are you ? In what direction are you looking, and what particular object attracts you ? Why, that man, if his sensibilities are spiritual, and his convictions divine, and there is life in his conscience, will at once tell you that he is trying to look to the cross of Emmanuel. " My hope, sir,

is only there." You will do, my friend. Your religion is from heaven, and will take you to heaven.

"A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
On thy kind arms I fall:
Be thou my strength and righteousness,
My Jesus and my all."

The thief had no good works to think about ; but the great plan of salvation was revealed to him, and when guilt was pressed upon his conscience, and he felt himself sinking into hell, he thrust out his arm of faith for Christ to seize, and said, "Lord, remember me. I have no other hope. Put forth thy hand and save me. Remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." We have here a guilty sinner, and a guilt-bearing Saviour—a sensible sinner, and a suffering Saviour. The atmosphere of Calvary is wonderful. The guilty sinner can live in it, although he is wounded and sorrowful. The atmosphere of Sinai is fatal to a guilty sinner, he cannot live in it. But that of Calvary is vitalising, safe, calm, pleasing to God, and fragrant ; and the sensibly guilty can live therein, and breathe in hope of salvation.

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

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

We have here the fact that a sensible sinner is drawn to the crucified Emmanuel. And no wonder ; for he that is thirsty, is naturally drawn to the well, or the drinking fountain. It is not at all surprising that he that is thirsty should make his way to the drinking fountain, or that he that is weary, should make towards home, or that he that is hungry should make his way towards the house of bread. And it is not at all wonderful, that a guilty sinner should come up out of the wilderness, and try to find the crucified Son of God. There is substitution there, and that is what he wants. God's way of pardoning sinners, and taking them to heaven, is by the crucified Christ of God, and that is what the guilty sinner wants. My dear friends, I can only say, whatever the state of your minds may be—and you may be very wretched, as some of God's people are—that if you are on this ground, if you are on the hill of Calvary, you are as safe as Gabriel before the throne of God. There never was but one penal death, I mean divinely penal, on that wondrous spot, and that penal death was the death of Christ. Death can never take place there again. Death *was* on Calvary. Death came to the Lord of life ; the Lord of life received him, and swallowed up death in victory ; and there is nothing now at Calvary but everlasting life, if I understand the great mystery of salvation. We learn these two things, then : The infinite perfection of our dear Lord in the depths of his sufferings, and that a guilty sinner is always drawn towards Christ, the crucified one. I will say a word or two upon another point.

It is necessary to distinguish between the *history* and the *mystery* of the cross of Christ. Jesus died for sin. "Yes, Sir, we all believe that." He hung on the tree, and bled away his life. That is a notorious fact, an historical fact. Everybody believes that.—Well, I wish everybody did. There are a great many infidels in the present day. However, we pass over that point. This is the history of the cross. Let us go back to the days of our Lord. I do not know how many there were on Calvary when the dear Redeemer died, but they all saw his countenance, they all heard his voice, they all saw his precious face be-

grimed with spittle, and tears, and blood; they all saw the exterior of the sufferings of Christ. And the saved thief's fellow saw as much of the exterior of the whole, as he himself did; he heard as much with his outward ears, and saw as much with his mortal eyes, and was as well acquainted with all the exterior of the cross; and yet the sight of all, and the hearing of all, did not touch his heart, nor the hearts of the people generally on Calvary. What are we to say to this? Why, that there is a mystery, as well as a history. People talk about the cross, as they talk about a tragedy; and ministers, whose powers of eloquence are great, may set forth the dolorous and solemn sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ, so as to bring tears from the eyes of all their hearers; their feelings may be wonderfully excited, and a vast congregation may be carried away by the eloquence of the pulpit. All that is dramatic; all that may be felt in a theatre; and all that is frequently experienced in connection with the devil. My friends, the cross must be regarded as something more than a tragedy. It *was* a tragedy; it was an awful manifestation of solemn agony and woe; but there was beneath it all, a holy mystery—a suffering incarnate God, an angry God smiting his dear Son, and the suffering Saviour bearing the sinner's sins; and the thief entered into this holy mystery, and felt the meaning of Paul's words: "Fellowship with the sufferings of Christ." The thief entered into the holy mystery, and sympathised, not merely with the gaping wounds, and streaming blood, and visible agonies of the Lord, but with his soul, with what could not be seen, except by the spiritual eye. He sympathized with God's claims, God's righteousness, the obligations and engagements of Jesus Christ, the infinite love of his heart, and the infinite mercifulness of his intentions; and he said, sympathising thus with the sufferings of Christ, "Lord, remember me." Thus we see that the cross has a history and a mystery. What we want is its mystery. There are crosses dangling from the necks of thousands of ladies now. This may be regarded, for aught I know, as a symbol of Popery, and as serving to indicate the history of the cross, but I want the cross of Christ not in any visible form, but indelibly impressed upon the fleshy tables of my heart. The Saviour died. The Saviour died for sin. The Saviour died for *me*. Oh! how blessed when we can use the language of appropriation, "He loved me, and gave himself for me." I cannot help thinking about the days that are past and gone.

"What peaceful hours I once enjoyed,
How sweet their memory still!
But now I feel an aching void
The world can never fill."

Thank God for that! If there is a void, thank God if it is a void the world cannot fill. It is a terrible thing if the void in one's heart is such as may be filled by the world. No; when my Lord is gone, or seems to be gone, and I have no sensible comfort, or sweet enjoyment, then I feel

"——— an aching void
The world can never fill."

Oh! have we ever sat at the foot of the cross? Have we ever been washed in the sufferings and blood,—immersed in the agonies and merits of the dear Redeemer?

"There we'd sit for ever viewing
Mercy's streams in streams of blood."

And that precious mystery of the cross overwhelmed the thief's spirit, and washed the guilt of his conscience away. Whether he was a ferocious looking being or not, I do not know. Certain persons usually associate certain peculiarities of face and countenance with thieves and murderers, hence we often read:

"They had low foreheads, peculiarly formed noses, and were brutal looking individuals altogether." Whether this was so or not with the poor thief, I do not know. Grace, however, made his soul beautiful, and Christ put his comeliness and excellencies upon him. Whatever he may have been as a sinner,—as a glorified saint he is all that God requires. God calls his people at the best time. How far he permitted that man to go in sin and guilt! Why did he not call him before? Well, I must leave that. Our God is a sovereign, and I believe that he always calls his people at such times as will most glorify himself. The thief was permitted to commit that robbery, or crime, which was the cause of his crucifixion, permitted to run down to the very threshold of hell, and just as he was there—for there were only a few minutes, comparatively, between him and death—the Saviour put forth his hand, and snatched him as a brand from the burning, and constituted him a living and a loving saint. Is not Christ always glorified by the time of calling, and by the grace that calls the sinner?

I like to look at all this as a practical exposition of the Saviour's own words; for the cross is a wonderful expositor. It explains the Bible. The word of God is explained by what happened there. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden." What does it mean. The dying thief was weary and heavy laden, and wanted rest, and went to the Saviour. Here is a comment upon it. Here is an exposition of Christ's own words: "My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life abiding in him." That is the sacrament, says one. Well, the dying thief did not take the sacrament, and yet ate the flesh, and drank the blood of the Son of God, and had life eternal in his soul. He ate his flesh. It must have been his food when he said, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." Then, another word. This is a practical exposition of "All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out;" and the thief said, "Lo, I come, guilty, black, filthy, and hell-deserving; yet Lord, I come to thee." Well, says the Saviour, I will in no wise cast you out. I will take you in, and therefore, to-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise. We do not want a better commentary. I love Gill's commentary very much, but really the cross of Jesus Christ is a beautiful exposition of the Saviour's words.

Secondly, the *prayer*—"Lord, remember me." First, it was very short; secondly, it was personal,—"*Remember me*;" and thirdly, it was divinely inspired and taught, or the petitioner would never have known so much about Jesus Christ in so short a time, having never seen him before. All of it was divinely inspired. Just half-a-dozen words, if I can compress my thoughts into half-a-dozen words or sentences. The dying thief believed Christ would rise from the dead, for this prayer involves a knowledge of the fact, that Christ would rise from the dead, and ascend to heaven; and he says, "When thou comest into thy kingdom to present thy blood, and to settle the whole business of salvation with thy Father, then remember me—do not pass over me, do not leave me out. Dear Lord, when thou presentest the blood, and pointest to the names of thy people on thy breast, then Lord, remember me.

It takes in the forerunnership of Christ. Our Lord has entered as a forerunner within the veil,—run before his people, taken possession of heaven for them, and prepared the place. I had almost said, written the name of each ransomed one over the door of his mansion. "Dear Lord," said the thief in effect, "when thou shalt enter into the holiest of all, into heaven, and take possession of that glory-world for sinners, for the objects of God's love, and the purchase of thy blood, and shalt take possession of each mansion for each poor saved sinner, re-

member the poor sinner on the cross, and take a seat for me. Then, Lord, remember me.

It takes in the intercession of Jesus Christ. When thou shalt appear in heaven for sinners, and plead their cause, and stand before God as their advocate on high, and say, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory,"—then, Lord, remember me.

It takes in the kingly glory of Christ. When thou shalt sit upon thy throne, take the reins of universal empire, and manage the affairs of providence, nature, and grace, and admit saved sinners into heaven, then Lord, remember me.

It may take in the second coming of Christ. When thou comest *in* thy kingdom. Put it so, if you like. Take both forms of the preposition—"into" and "in." When thou comest *in* thy kingdom, the second time unto salvation. "Now you are going to make the thief know too much by half." I am not sure of that. However, this we mean, whether the thief meant it or not. I think the thief meant as much. When thou shalt come the second time to call forth the bodies of thy people, as thy ransomed right, and set the sheep on the right hand, and give crowns and thrones away, then, Lord, remember me. Remember me—not my sufferings. I deserve them, I do not pray that they may be remembered. Remember me. Remember my looking eye, my longing and desiring heart. Remember my poor, imperfect, but fervent prayer. Remember my worthless name. Do not leave it out. Remember my immortal soul, and

"Songs of praises
I will ever give to thee."

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"THE VOICE OF MY BELOVED"

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, 30th AUGUST, 1874.

"The voice of my Beloved ! behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills."—Song of Solomon ii. 8.

THE love of the Lord Jesus Christ to his people is infinite and marvellous,—so marvellous, that it is illustrated by the Holy Ghost in the word of Divine truth in an infinite variety of forms. In the Old Testament, the love of Christ to his dear people is compared to a river : for "There is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High ;" and in the book of the Revelation we are told that a "river of water of life proceedeth from the throne of God and the Lamb." That river of divine and eternal life sends forth a thousand refreshing streams into this world of ours, and will flow from the throne of God and the Lamb in heaven for ever and ever. It is the high privilege and rich mercy of thousands of sinners here, to go down upon the knee of prayer, and, in all holy humility, to drink of the streams of this blessed river ; and also to believe, at least in some humble measure, that when they shall have ceased to drink of the streams of this river of life, they will be found on the banks of this river in a better world on high. Again, the love of Christ is spoken of as a fire ; for "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it." The love of the creature may be quenched ; or if the love of the creature cannot be quenched while he lives, it may considerably abate ; but the intensity of Christ's love is eternal. And such is the nature of the love of Christ to his people, that all the floods of divine wrath which rolled over his soul, could not quench it, nor reduce its intensity. And then, again, Christ's love is compared to a fire ; for he says, "I the Lord will be a wall of fire round about her, and the glory in the midst of her : " so that the love of Christ to his people, is as a wall of everlasting flame round about all its objects, and this wall excludes for ever every penal danger, and everything that is deadly and destructive, whilst at the same time it eternally secures the character, the hope, the principles, the life, and the persons of all God's people.

In the New Testament, also, the love of Christ is illustrated in various ways : for instance, in that beautiful chapter in the Gospel by Luke, we have it illustrated by the lost piece of money, the lost sheep, and the lost son. In the first place, Christ is pleased to illustrate his love to his people, by the parable of the lost piece of money. A woman lost a piece of money, lighted a candle, and swept the house, and searched diligently till she found it ; and when she had found it, she called together her friends and neighbours, saying, "Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I had lost." "Likewise I say unto you," says the Saviour, "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." And then, Christ exhibits his love in another parable, as the good Shepherd of his people going after the sheep that was lost, and when he had found it, he laid it on his shoulders, and brought it with rejoicing to the fold. His love is further set forth in the parable of the prodigal. The prodigal eventually re-

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turns to his father's house, the fatted calf is killed, the best robe is brought out, a ring is put upon his finger, and shoes put upon his feet; and a feast is made, and there is joy, there is gladness, there is pleasure, there is rapture in the house of the father on account of the return of the prodigal. Very wonderful, therefore, is the love of Christ, and in a very wonderful manner it is exhibited in the words of my text: "The voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, and skipping upon the hills."

Let me call attention to the two branches into which the text divides itself:—*The voice and the advent of the Lord Jesus Christ.* In the first place, Christ is represented as *speaking*; and then in the second place, he is represented as *coming* to his church and bride.

I.—In the first place, let me direct your attention briefly to the voice, or the word of the church's Beloved: "The voice of my Beloved." Have we any scriptural idea concerning the voice of Christ? Have we any experimental view of the words and of the voice of the Lord Jesus Christ? He is the Shepherd of Israel. Have we heard his voice? for Christ says in the tenth of John, "My sheep hear my voice;" and again it is said, "They know my voice," but "they know not the voice of strangers;" and therefore, "a stranger will they not follow." Have we any scriptural idea concerning Christ's voice? And has it been our privilege at any time to hear the voice of the dear Redeemer? If so, we know that voice when we hear it; and if so, we are prepared to say that the voice of Jesus Christ is as heavenly music in our ears. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." The unregenerate and ungodly have no eye for the beauty of Jesus, and they have no ear for the music of his heavenly voice. Therefore, they do not understand us, neither do they understand the Word, when it says that "His mouth is most sweet." They do not understand us when we speak of the beauties and charms, the attractions and the excellencies, of the person of the dear Son of God. Notwithstanding, however, that we are called fanatics, and are said to be very enthusiastic, and that ignorantly so, in relation to the religion of heaven, we are prepared to declare with all possible confidence, that there is an unspeakable sweetness in the voice of Jesus, and that it is heaven upon earth to hear it.

1. Notice in the first place, that the voice of Jesus is heard *in the gospel*, and that the gospel of the grace of God is the voice of the church's Beloved. It is called the word of his grace, and he communicates the grace of his heart through the word of his grace; and you and I have heard his voice, at least we hope so, in reading the word, in meditating upon the word, and sometimes in connection with hearing the word of divine truth preached. You have heard the voices of many ministers, and the ministrations of a great many ministers have been more or less blest to you; but whenever sermons have suited you, and whenever the utterances of men have met your case, and have been as balm upon your wounded and troubled spirits, you have been forced—sweetly forced to say, "It was the voice, or the word, not of the minister—it was the word of my beloved Lord." Yes; there is a glory in the Gospel which cannot be found in any other writings, and there is music in connection with the word of divine truth, which can never be heard in connection with any other word.

Observe in the first place, whilst dwelling on this point, that the voice of Christ in the Gospel, is the *voice of peace*. I do not know a sweeter word than the word "peace;" or a sweeter feeling than that which is produced in the spirit through an application of the peace-speaking blood of Jesus Christ. We know what strife is. We know what war, contention, and turmoil are. We know what it is to experience a raging storm within. And is it not a fact, my dear friends, that heavenly peace is one of the sweetest blessings, if not *the* sweetest blessing that can come from the heart of God? In the gospel, we hear the voice of the Saviour, and the voice of the Saviour speaking peace. Now, peace may be viewed in three relations. In the first place, Christ speaks in the Gospel as our *peacemaker*. He first of all announces his intention to make peace. "The voice of my Be-

loved!"—There he comes! I hear his voice, and he tells me that he will make peace; so that he comes as a peacemaker, and he comes "leaping upon the mountains, and skipping upon the hills," determined to make peace, and to establish everlasting tranquility between my soul and God." "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second." And thus we hear the voice of Christ, first announcing his determination to establish peace between God and the soul; and then declaring the fact that *peace is made*. Let us tarry here for a minute, and look at this great sight, and hear this heavenly music. "The voice of my beloved!" He just now appeared and said that he would make peace, and now he has risen from the dead, and has met Mary and others, and said, "All hail! All hail!" The dreadful—the glorious work is done! "It is finished!" Peace is made. Peace is settled. Peace is eternally established between God and the objects of his love. And is not the voice of our Beloved sweet—unspeakably sweet in connection with this great fact? Why, I think if any one word of Jesus Christ has been more sweet to the saints than another, or more constantly dwelt upon by the saints than another, it is that dying word of his,—*"It is finished!"*

"Tis finished, said his dying breath,
And shook the gates of hell."

And when our Lord said, "It is finished!" he looked up into heaven, and saw the throne of his Father without a cloud. When he said "It is finished!" he looked at the law, and saw that it was perfectly magnified and made honourable. When he said "It is finished!" he looked at the powers of hell, and saw that they had all been defeated and vanquished. And when he said "It is finished!" he looked at the covenant of grace, and saw that all its blessings were secured, and all its promises eternally confirmed. When he said "It is finished!" he looked at the names of his church on his heart, and then contemplated the sin which had been upon his person, and realizing the fact that he had melted away every sin, and holding his church in his dear redeeming arms, with infinite pleasure and satisfaction, he said, "Peace is settled. My blood has reached the throne of God." "It is finished!" and bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. It is the voice of my Beloved in the gospel, first expressing his determination to make peace, and then secondly, proclaiming the great fact that it is made, and for ever established. But we cannot stop here, for all this is to become an *experimental reality*. Ears to ear are to be given to every ransomed one; and when the hearing ear is given, then there is a listening for the voice of Christ. And when the eye is opened by grace, then there is a looking for the coming of Christ. The soul thus redeemed and regenerated, looking towards Calvary, and the throne, is heard supplicating, "Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation." "It is the voice of my Beloved," says the pardoned sinner. His load rolls off from his shoulders, his guilt is removed from his conscience, the fever in his soul is removed—sweetly removed and cured; the blood of Christ drops upon his troubled and trembling heart, and he hears—he does, indeed—the voice of his Beloved, saying, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, and therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." And then the dear Redeemer looks upon the soul that is thus upon his knees, looking and longing for pardon, and he speaks—his voice of peace is heard: "Thy sins, which are many, are all forgiven thee." And when the voice of the Peacemaker is thus heard by the troubled spirit, what joy springs up in the mind! The tears are dried up, the sorrows of the heart are removed, and a "young heaven" on the earth is experienced. He now dances for joy; for he has heard such a voice as he never heard before. He has heard such words as were never addressed to him before. And there is eternal life in the word; "for," said the Saviour, "The words which I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." There is divinity, there is omnipotence itself, in the word of the church's Beloved: "Thy sins are forgiven thee," and the church says, "It is the voice of my beloved Lord." And thus the voice of Christ is the voice of peace.

But we proceed to observe that the voice of Christ in the gospel is the voice of *promise*; for this follows in the experience of a child of God, and in the arrangements of divine grace. There can be no flowing promise, where there is not flowing blood. There is no channel for a promise to flow in, without the precious blood and wounds of incarnate God. When, therefore, the Saviour had settled between God and man, the great affair of the church's salvation, then he proceeded to bring out the promises which "in him, are yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God by us." And what are the promises of our Beloved? Well, they are too numerous to mention, too numerous even to glance at, at least the whole of them. I am thinking of that beautiful fourteenth chapter of John, "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you." "I will come again." Now, look at that promise: "I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Look at the Speaker on the accursed tree, and hear him say, "It is finished!" Look at the Speaker standing triumphantly over the conquered grave, and hear him say, "All hail! peace be unto you." And now look at the Speaker sitting on his throne, (and he well deserves to sit there,) and hear our Beloved say, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." My dear friends, the promise is as firm and sure as was the announcement of Christ's intention to make your peace with God. The great transactions of the Redeemer on Calvary are not more firm, more settled, or more reliable, than are the unfulfilled promises of your beloved Lord. Some of these promises, yea, *many* of them, have been fulfilled again and again in your experience; but some of them, and I had almost said the best, remain to be fulfilled. Well, we see his heart in his word, and we hear the melting and the moving of his bowels in his promises, and hence we are led to declare, "His mouth, [or his word, or his voice,] is most sweet." Every promise of our dear Lord relates first to the Promiser himself; and secondly, to the person or persons to whom it is made. And which of the two is the more important, do you think? I beg attention to the question for a moment. Which of the two is the more important—the Promiser, or he to whom the promise is made? Let me just remind you, and assure you of the fact that our blessed Lord did as he pleased about giving the promise. He might not have spoken, he might have held his peace, he might have withheld his word; but since the word has fallen from his lips, since the promise has been made, since the engagement has been entered into,—he must, he is bound to fulfil the engagement, and to make good the word he has spoken. Now, then, to apply this:—Have you heard his peace-speaking voice? One says, "I think I have." Then you shall hear his voice as the promise-fulfilling God. For as you have heard his voice as your Peacemaker with the great Monarch of heaven and earth, he that has given the promise must speak the fulfilling word; for

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

But we pass on, and observe, that the voice of our Beloved in the gospel, is the voice of *prayer*. Now, this may sound somewhat strangely to some of you. The voice of Christ in the gospel is the voice of prayer. "Father, I will." Is not this sweet? The voice of prayer, the voice of intercession. "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." It is well to try to think consecutively, at least I think so; and it is well to view the fact that the works of our God are beautifully arranged, that that there is harmony, glorious harmony, pervading all the works of God. The voice of my Beloved! saying, "Lo, I come." The voice of my Beloved! saying, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." The voice of my Beloved! saying, "I did it all for thee." This relates to the voice of peace. The voice of my Beloved! I will come again, and receive you unto myself; and until I come, I will not leave you comfortless or orphans; I will give you the Holy

Spirit, and "he shall abide with you for ever." Having given us this word of peace, and this word of promise, we now hear his voice in heaven through the Gospel. Father, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do," and I am now seated on my throne. Here are the merits of my blood, and the worth of my work, and here is my character, and here is my person; and if there is a reason in me, or a reason in my blood, why thou shouldest be merciful, and why I should have the people here with me, that reason I lay down as the ground of my intercession. I make it a plea, and I say, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory."

The voice of our Beloved in the gospel is also heard as an *answer to the Saviour's prayer*. "Father, forgive them." Oh! that is the voice of our beloved Christ, with his crushed heart, with all the greatness and grandeur of God apparent at the moment. "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." And here are three or four hundred persons present, who have realized, and who are realizing an answer to that prayer of the dear Redeemer: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Oh! you say, We have not yet realized an answer to *that* prayer of the Saviour. Well, then, you have realized an answer to some other petitions, one or two of which I may be allowed to mention. "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." Here we are to-night, witnesses for God,—witnesses of the fact, that through infinite mercy and goodness, we have hitherto been preserved. My Christian brother, the perpetuity of your desires is owing to the intercession of your Lord. The perpetuity of your life and your safety is owing to the fact that Jesus lives on high. "Because I live, ye shall live also."

And do you want anything else in connection with the voice of Christ in the Gospel? then hear him speak again; for he speaks in the gospel the word of *invitation*—"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden; and I will give you rest." Our blessed Lord does not invite the rich, the mighty, and the noble,—I mean those who are spiritually, morally rich, and mighty, and noble. Our Lord does not turn his attention towards them, while he speaks those words; but to the weary, the weak, the faint, the feeble, and the defiled. "Come unto me; ...and I will give you rest." And then, hear them speak again like what he is—the beloved Lord, and Christ, and Husband of his church—"Ye shall find rest unto your souls."

Hear further, the voice of my Beloved in the *precepts* of his word:—"If ye love me, keep my commandments."

Take another thought by way of completing the whole? The *appropriating*, the claiming voice of Jesus Christ. "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name: thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee." The voice of our Beloved is the word of divine grace in the gospel.

I should like, before I leave this part of the subject, just to offer a thought upon another fact which the text suggests, viz., That the church of God here appears as able to distinguish between the voice of her Beloved and other voices. It is "the voice of my Beloved!" She had heard others speak, and, perhaps, was at the moment hearing others speak; but as soon as Christ spoke, and spoke to her heart, she distinguished his voice from that of others in a moment:—"The voice of my Beloved!" I have been asked, how I know the Bible is the word of God; and I can fancy that some of my hearers are so circumstanced, that, having to do with sceptics and infidels, very frequently the question is sneeringly put, "How do you know that the Bible is true? We have read the Bible as you have, and you talk about hearing a voice, and feeling an influence; *we* have felt none." *That is the secret.* The whole secret, the whole mystery lies there. *They* feel no influence, and they hear no voice. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." "You talk about Christ being all-charming, attractive, and excellent: we do not see anything in him." You do not know him, sir; you have never seen him. You have read

written accounts of him, historical accounts of Jesus Christ; but you have never *seen* him, sir: for if you should ever see my Beloved, as he is seen by the eye of faith, you will never forget the sight as long as you live. "*We have never heard any particular voice when reading the gospel.*" Just so; you do not know his voice, and because you have not heard the voice of Christ in the gospel, you declare that God has not spoken at all. Do not draw such an inference as that, because you have never heard the voice of God. The believer has heard the voice of Jesus, and he knows that voice from every other. And let me answer the question, "How do we know the voice and distinguish it from other voices which we have heard?" We must be a little experimental, or, a little "fanatical," if you will—for a minute. We know his voice from that of others, on account of the unspeakable *sweetness* of it. "Ah!" the sceptic says, "I knew you would go in that direction. Always talking about sweetness, and pleasure, and joy, and blessedness, and things we cannot comprehend! Why don't you reason like a man?" I do reason like a man. "I tell the truth in Christ; I lie not, my own conscience bearing me witness,"—that there is more music in a single word of Christ, than there is in an angel's song. There is more music and sweetness in the words of the Redeemer, than there is in *all* the songs of angels. *They* do not mention the blood of Christ, the righteousness of the dear Redeemer. But when this bleeding, wounded, glorious, and glorified Sufferer appears to the immortal mind, and says, "I have loved *thee*!" the whole heart is pervaded with an influence which (as I said when I appeared before the church many years ago,) is *better felt than described*. There is a sweetness in the voice of the dear Redeemer, which can *never* be described, and therefore we adopt the language of the Psalmist, and say, "O taste and see that the Lord is good!" We cannot describe it to you, and if God should correct your taste, and vitalise your minds, and give you to realise the sweetness of divine things, you will see, and know, that we, in these matters, speak the truth as it is in Christ. There is a sweetness in the voice of Christ. David might be considered a good judge. He says that God's word is "more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold, sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb." "Thy loving-kindness," said David, "is better than life!" We know the voice when we hear it, also on account of the *power* that attends it. *He speaks*; and the heart of stone is turned to flesh in a moment. *He speaks*; and the night is turned into day. *He speaks*; and every stream of sorrow is dried up. *He speaks*; and the eye ceases to weep, the devil ceases to tempt, and there is tranquility and peace within, which no other word can create. Oh! there is a power that attends the word of Christ! We know his voice from the voices of others, by the *effects* which it produces. Now, that which sends the sinner away from Christ, is not Christ's voice. I do not know how this would apply to some preachers. However, let them go. I was just thinking, though, that it could hardly be applied to some whom I have heard, who send sinners away from Christ—at least send sinners to themselves. Now, that voice is not the voice of Christ that sends the sinner away from Christ. We know his voice, and we distinguish his voice from the voices of all others, because his word, when spoken to the heart by himself, invariably brings us to his feet, to the fountain, and oftentimes into his very bosom. Ah! this is a sweet feature of Christian experience, and by this, we distinguish his voice from that of others.

And, then, the church says, "The voice of *my* Beloved." She calls him *her* Beloved. He is the Beloved of all that know him. The Beloved of the Father, and the Beloved of angels in a certain sense, the Beloved of all the ransomed in heaven, and the Beloved of his people here. And for what is he beloved? What is there about Christ, and in Christ, that constitutes him our Beloved? Well, he is beloved on account of *what he is*. What is that? "*Altogether lovely!*" The husband may so love his wife, that he may be able to see only a very few little faults in her. "To be sure, she is not perfect," he says; "but she is as nearly perfect as possible—at least in *my* esteem." But in the estimation of the bride of Christ, her Husband is without fault. She could not be induced to speak

otherwise than well of his dear name. He is "altogether lovely" in his actions. When he hid his face he meant well, and it was in the deepest and tenderest love ; and when he put bitters into my cup, he did it from a husband's love. I tell you, devils, angels, saints, and men, that my Lord is "altogether lovely."

He is beloved on account of *what he has done*. And this may be summed up in three or four words. He has taken my sins, my curse, my condemnation, my death, and every penal evil which I, as a transgressor of God's law, had incurred : He has taken all. He came and took me away from under the law, and stood there himself, bless his name ! He said, I will stand there. You made the spot, the awful, the terrible spot ; but I will occupy it. Your sin and guilt he said, I will take it all. And then the consequences of it ! The terrible curses of God ! He said, " Fear not ; they shall all fall on me ;" condemnation, curse, wrath, and ruin, therefore, are gone. I tell you, that he is my beloved Lord, on account of what he is,—of what he has done, of what it has pleased him to *become* to me. And what has he become to the sinner ? Let me say, in brief, *Everything that is good ! Everything that is desirable !* The spirit of the apostle Paul was so overburdened with this fact, that he summed it up in two or three words—" He is all in all " to us. He is a Saviour ; a Governor and Lord ; a Prophet, a Priest, and a King. But more than all these, he has become my *Husband*. " Thy Maker is thy *Husband*, the Lord of hosts is his name ;" and I have heard him say, " My delight is in her." " Though thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man passed through thee ; yet thy name shall be called Hephzi-bah, and thy land Beulah ; for I delight in thee, and thy land shall be married. Can I help, says the church, falling at his feet in adoring love, and wonder, and gratitude ? " The voice of my Beloved !"

But another thought is suggested by the text, and that is, that Christ speaks *before he is seen*. " The voice of my Beloved !" She turned : Behold ! there he is ! " The voice of my Beloved ! behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, and skipping upon the hills." Now, this will apply to Old Testament times and Old Testament promises. First, under the Old Testament dispensation, Christ promised that he *would* come ;—and he *has been*. He spoke before he was seen. Then in the present dispensation, he spoke by John the Baptist before he was seen,—" The voice of one crying in the wilderness." And whilst Christ was speaking to the people through John, he himself appeared on the scene ; and John, who was the messenger, said, " Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world !" Then he speaks to the soul before he reveals himself. You heard his voice before you saw his person,—before you saw him as your Saviour and your Lord. Ah ! he often speaks before he comes.

2. He speaks not only in the Gospel before he comes and before he reveals himself, but also in the order of *divine providence* and if we could only understand his language, we should feel persuaded he was coming,—that he might be seen. What is that palpitation of the heart which has led the doctor to say, " His death may be very sudden ?" It is the voice of our Lord. It is not pleasant, yet love prompted him to speak in that way, just to intimate to us that he was coming. The voice of our Beloved says, " Watch ; for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh." Yes, by the pains of the body, and the different events of divine providence, our beloved speaks. Happy is the man who has an ear to hear.

II.—Just a word on the second part of the subject. " Behold, he cometh, leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills." This indicates *cheerfulness*. He does not hang down his head like a bulrush, nor even come slowly and reluctantly. There are no indications of sorrow in his dear face. He was coming into sorrow, yet he was pleased because the great object of his mission was to save his dear church and bride therefrom, and therefore the church says, as it were, " He has spoken, and now I see him. Behold, he comes cheerfully !" He did not make the world more readily than he saved his people. There was not more cheerfulness in Jehovah-Jesus as a Creator, than there was in Jehovah-Jesus

whilst contemplating the great work of salvation.—“I have a baptism to be baptized with,”—a terrible one; yet do not think I am reluctant: “How am I straitened until it be accomplished!”

Secondly, he came *resolutely*. “He cometh leaping upon the mountains, and skipping upon the hills.” What are we to understand by this? What do you think of the mountains of his church’s guilt—the curses of a broken law—the claims of Divine justice—our unworthiness and deformity? Bless his name! I had almost said, “He made *nothing* of them!” Well, he *did* make nothing of them. Truly and practically speaking, he did make nothing of them. He leaped from the Father’s bosom upon these mountains, over these mountains, into this world of sin, and curse, and woe; and then by his mediatorial work he levelled them all, he leaped over them, to come to the place where he was to die; and when he had reached that place, heshed his blood,—his precious blood and merits flowed, and swept the whole away; so that every mountain and hill has been levelled, and all the valleys have been exalted, and there is now the great plain of salvation, and “all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.”

Again; when he has hidden his face from you, and you have felt the power of unbelief, and a thousand cares have almost crushed you, or stood between you and your God; for these miserable hearts of ours, if one may speak for others, sometimes make us wretched as wretchedness itself; then over all these mountains of unbelief, and wretchedness, and foreboding care, our Beloved comes again and again. Thus he comes *resolutely*.

And then it indicates *swiftness*. He comes “*leaping* upon the mountains, and *skipping* upon the hills.” He comes *swiftly*. Jesus Christ is always swifter than danger, swifter than the devil, swifter than the swiftest hostile influence that ever touched you. Hence, when Jonah was cast into the sea, the fish was ready to receive him. He prepared the fish before Jonah was cast into the sea. And when the three children were cast into the furnace, Christ was there first to receive them, and Nebuchadnezzar said, “Lo, I see *four* men there, and the form of the *fourth*, is like the Son of God.” Christ *leaps* over the mountains, comes from heaven in the twinkling of an eye, and has never been known to lose a sinner by being a moment too late.

Lastly, he comes *obviously and manifestly*. Behold him! Ah! Christ is seen by faith; and there is a limited sense in which even the world may see him, when he comes to his people. And how is this? Why, when he takes an ungodly wretch, and convinces him of sin, and regenerates him by his Spirit, the world sees, and even admires, and says, “It really must have been an almighty power that wrought a change so great.” “The Lord hath done great things for them, whereof they are glad.” When a child of God is plunged into uncontrollable difficulties, the world expects to see him sink. “There’s an end of his religion now,” say they; “I never knew a man to be in greater trouble.” By and by, however, something unexpected happens, and circumstances take a directly opposite turn. The Lord has turned his captivity, and the world says, “There *must* be something in Providence, or such a change would not have happened.” Ah! there is.—“Behold he cometh, leaping upon the mountains, and skipping upon the hills!” For what? to save me—to visit me—to fight for me—to help me, and at last to take me to himself. Amen.

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THE ROBE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

A Sermon-

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, 4th OCTOBER, 1874.

"He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness."—Isa. lxi. 10.

It does not appear that Christ took any particular text when he preached the sermon on the mount ; but he proceeded at once to say,—Blessed is this class, and that class, and the other class of persons. But shortly after this, he went into a synagogue, and they gave him the Book of the Prophet Esaias, and he opened it and read the first two verses of this chapter:—"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek ; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound ; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord :"—and when he had closed the book and returned it to the minister, he proceeded to say, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears," and proceeded to preach one of the first sermons which he ever delivered as the infallible preacher of the everlasting gospel of God's grace. Now, in the first verse of this chapter, the three great saving offices of our Lord are indicated. "The Lord," said he, "has anointed me to preach the gospel unto the meek." Here is the prophetic office of Jesus Christ ; for he is that great prophet which the Lord has raised up for the purpose of teaching the church. "He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted." Here is the priestly office and work of Jesus Christ. A wonderful work is that of binding up broken hearts. Take a wounded spirit and heal it, if you can. Take a broken heart and bind it up, if you can. If a heart is physically wounded, or broken, death will be the result ; and if the heart is wounded spiritually by the arrows of divine truth, God only can heal it. If he breaks the spirit, he only can bind it up ; and he says, the Lord God hath "sent me to bind up the broken-hearted ;" and he takes the bandages of everlasting love, and the blood of his own heart, and binds up the "broken heart ;" and thus makes the wounded whole. This is the priestly work of Jesus Christ our Lord. "And to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." Now, if preaching indicates his prophetic office, and binding up the broken heart indicates his priestly office, the proclamation of liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, are works which belong to him properly as the reigning King of grace ; and therefore, we have Christ our Prophet, preaching ; and Christ our Priest, saving by his blood and merits ; and Christ our King, delivering us from bondage, slavery, danger, and death. This was the first text our Lord took. And it is not at all wonderful, that in preaching from this text, he preached himself, and so preached that his hearers wondered at the gracious words which proceeded from his mouth." Well, the Saviour proceeded to say—"To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes." It was usual in that country for mourners to put on sackcloth, and cast ashes upon their persons, especially upon their heads ; and if the mourning was real, and tears were

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actually shed, the faces of such persons were repulsive and filthy ; hence the Saviour says, I am come "to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness ; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified." And then in the text we have the fulfilment of this in the experience of God's people ; and they express their feelings in the language of the 10th verse : "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God ; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness."

It is not my intention to dwell upon the whole verse to-night, for the whole verse did not occur to my mind—only the clause which I have read,—“He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness.”

Let us call attention to three points : in the first place, *the robe* indicated—"the robe of righteousness ;" and in the second place, *the act ascribed to God*—"He hath covered me with it ;" and in the third place, *the confidence of the sinner in relation to this fact*—"He hath covered me." There is no doubt in his mind,—"He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness."

I. Now, in the first place, a few observations on *the robe of righteousness*. An old-fashioned theme ! A theme that the church has dwelt upon with peculiar pleasure for hundreds and thousands of years. You find that the church of God rejoiced in it in Isaiah's days, and that Abraham rejoiced to see Christ's day, "and he saw it and was glad ;" and "Abraham believed, and it was counted to him (or imputed to him) for righteousness ;" and therefore the robe of righteousness has been worn for ages ; but it has lost none of its excellencies, none of its beauties, none of its glories. What it was in connection with Abraham's salvation, that it is in connection with yours and mine. Though the Pharisee and religious philosopher sneer at the idea of imputed righteousness, and going to heaven justified by the obedience of another, should the world stand six thousand years as it has already stood six thousand, sinners must be saved by Jesus Christ, and immortal spirits must go to heaven, covered with the robe of the Saviour's righteousness ; and therefore, my dear friends, and especially my dear young friends, I would say, don't be frightened by the very terrible things that are said, in the day in which we live, against old-fashioned divinity ; the way of salvation is but one, and there is only one dress in which a poor sinner can stand before God, and that is the robe indicated in our text to-night,—“He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness.” It was usual for priests to wear robes,—the people of God are “kings and priests unto God,” and they wear robes as spiritual priests. It is usual for kings or princes to wear robes ; and the people of God are princes, they are the royal children of a royal Father. They are kings, as well as priests ; and therefore, whilst they wear the robe of righteousness as priests, they wear the robe of righteousness also as princes, and as kings. It was usual, as it is still, for robes to be worn on marriage occasions, and the robe of the Saviour's righteousness is the saints' wedding dress. It indicates the fact that they are the bride of Christ, that their Maker is their husband. And the Lord Jesus Christ being the maker of this robe, took care to make it so that it should become his bride, be accepted by his Father, and excite the wonder of angels and devils for ever. I would just say here, that this robe of righteousness is the best robe in all the universe of God,—I mean, of course, the best that creatures wear. I am not speaking of the robes of our dear Emmanuel ;—I am speaking of the robes which creatures wear. There is no robe like that with which he covers his people. The robe which Adam wore before he fell was very beautiful ; but this robe surpasses Adam's in beauty and glory. The robes which angels wear are very beautiful, but the Lord does not take angelic robes to cover his bride—his church. He comes from heaven, and makes a robe with his own hands, fulfils the law himself, and presents his work to divine justice ;—justice accepts the whole, and God, as

the judge of heaven and earth, casts it over the guilty; and when this is realised to the mind by the Spirit, there is a shout of exultation and joy: "I will rejoice in the Lord, for he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness."

1. I notice in the first place, that the text indicates the infinite *munificence* to God: "He *hath* covered me with the robe of righteousness." He hath covered *me*. And who is the "me?" Here is one, there another, another yonder—he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness. Who are the speakers whom he has covered with the robe of righteousness? The poor, the destitute, the unclean, the wretched, the miserable, and those that had been cheerfully and willingly the ungodly.

"He found me ruined in the fall,
Yet loved me, notwithstanding all."

Well, "I passed by thee," says God, (Ezekiel xvi.) "I passed by thee when thou wast in thy blood, whilst lying out in the open field; I passed by thee, and thy time was the time of love; and I said unto thee, Live, and I spread my skirt over thee." God did not go about the field for clothing for the sinner that he intended to save. He had the clothing by him. "I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness, and thou becamest mine." This is saving sinners in a munificent manner. This is saving sinners with an abundance of grace, as it becomes the God of infinite grace and mercy; for it is a robe, my brother, that he casts upon the sinner, it was not quite enough for the church to say, "He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation." Why, I do not know that I can make any critical observations on the difference between the garments of salvation and the robe of righteousness. It would have been a very great thing had God delivered us from hell, and taken us back to Eden,—had he left us short of heaven. It would have been a very great thing had God simply exempted us from punishment, and given us a large measure of liberty, without taking us to heaven. But God was determined—and I am right in thus expressing myself,—God, Jesus Christ, was determined to do all he could. He was determined to do all that omnipotence, in connection with love and blood, could do; and he said, The best robe that I can weave, the best righteousness that I can work out, the best garment that I can produce, I will work out and produce, and it shall be theirs for ever and ever. My dear friends, could his righteousness have been more perfect, could the robe have been more glorious? Could Incarnate God have produced a better? Was it possible for omnipotence and love to put better material into the robe, or to make it up in a better manner? Why, you are covered with all the excellencies, all the ornaments, beauties, and facts, which Jesus Christ, the God-man, could produce; and, therefore, we have here in the first place, the infinite munificence of the Giver. We have the best Giver, Christ; we have the best gift, the robe of righteousness; and we have the astonished receiver, the unworthy sinner taken from prison and ashes. He hath covered me, and I deserved hell. I was naked and wretched, yet he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness.

The riches of divine grace as displayed in a gift like this, appear in the fact that the production of this robe was the object of the incarnation of our Lord, and of his advent into this world. This robe could not have been made in heaven,—Jesus could not have made it in his Father's bosom, nor on his own throne. Since Christ could not work out a righteousness in that glory-world; he dressed himself in that nature which he resolved to save and adorn, and came in that nature into the world which was under the curse and lost, and placed himself in the only position in which he could produce the robe of righteousness. The robe of righteousness had to be wrought out under a broken law; for had not the law been broken, we should not have required the services of the Righteousness Worker. Abstract Deity could not have taken that position; undressed Godhead could not have suffered nor worked out a robe like this; and therefore

he assumed the nature that was to be saved and dressed, and that was to shout his praises for ever; and commenced the life-long work,—for this robe cost the Saviour many months and years of labour, and tears, and prayer, and travail, and toil,—he then commenced the life-long work of producing a robe that should eternally justify and adorn his people. Well, we sing in our hymn of praise,—

“Each good deed, and each pure thought,
Conspired to weave the glorious dress.”

Not a hand touched it but his. He never went to a single individual in all the universe for a thread of it. All the materials came out of himself, out of his own heart, and hands, and mind, and body, and soul; and he worked for three-and-thirty years, and completed the whole. The robe of the Saviour's righteousness is a seamless robe. He began it at his birth, and proceeded with the working of this robe for three-and-thirty years, and completed the great business at the end of the law. Holding it up, he said “It is finished.” and Justice weighed it, and Truth examined it, and all then approved it; and the grand fact is put down in the Gospel for our eternal consolation: “I am well pleased with thee for thy righteousness' sake; for thou hast magnified the law, and made it honourable.” If I may so say, when Christ had produced it, and presented it to his Father, and his Father had expressed his entire satisfaction with it, saying, Yes, it will do, I will justify my people on the ground of thy obedience; then Christ proceeded to present it to the sinner in the Gospel, with, Will it do for you? It will do for my Father, it will do for heaven, it will do for Justice; it has received an assurance of divine approval in every respect. Sinner! poor sinner, will it do for you? And the poor sinner drops down upon his knees, and says, “Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.” Guilty, I come to thee for grace; and naked, come to thee for dress. Cover me with it, and cast it upon me.

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

“He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness.” Well, we see the production of this robe was the great object of the Saviour's advent into our world, the great object of his incarnation. It is the righteousness of a man; and that suits us, and fits us; 'tis the righteousness of a God as well as a man; 'tis the righteousness of the God-Man, and this does what I shall not have time to dwell upon to-night; this constitutes the robe what it is; I do not like using such words, but I had almost said *unique*. There is nothing like it in all the universe of God. The munificence of God—a robe. There is nothing in connexion with God's method of saving sinners that indicates a want of sufficient thought, or a want of sufficient power. All is infinite plenitude and abundance. Not a coat, not merely the garments of salvation; but the great, noble, rich, glorious, and glorifying robe of righteousness. The beggar taken, made rich, lifted from the dunghill, washed clean, and nothing less than a robe thrown over him, and that the best robe God could make, and given with all God's heart. The Lord help you to believe in the righteousness—the justifying power and righteousness of your incarnate Saviour.

2. Secondly, it indicates *protection*. He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness. Does it go all round the sinner then? Yes, it covers him. Why, there is that in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, which covers the whole person. Justice goes behind him, and there is righteousness; Justice looks him in the face, there is righteousness. Justice goes on the right hand, and on the left, and he is surrounded, he is covered with the robe of righteousness. And this righteousness, on particular occasions, he draws closely around his soul, he draws

closely around his mind ; just as a person walking abroad in keen, frosty, and cold weather, draws his clothes tightly and closely around his person, to exclude the wind, and keep his body warm. Ah ! this robe of righteousness drawn tightly around the soul, excludes the weather, and keeps the poor soul warm. This robe of righteousness drawn closely around the immortal soul, excludes the curse. There is no opening anywhere for the point of a curse to go through. It excludes every dangerous arrow. It excludes—I had almost said, and I *will* say it—it excludes all terror from the piercing eye of God.

“ Nor by the piercing eye of God,
One blemish shall be found.”

Well, now, this robe of righteousness is such a protection to the sinner, that he can walk in all places, as it were, in it—at any rate, he can walk under Sinai with safety. Nothing from Mount Sinai can strike him. He is right. He is covered with righteousness. Righteousness is between his person and the law, just as a robe is between the body and the weather, as a robe is between its wearer and the eye that looks at him. He that sits on Sinai, the great Lawgiver, sees not sin, but righteousness ; and that person may walk round about Sinai very safely, for he is all that Sinai requires him to be. Covered with the robe of righteousness, he is perfectly conformed to God's law. Then he comes into the vicissitudes, trials, and changes of life, and if he realises the fact that he is justified, that he is covered with the robe of righteousness, the trials of life do not penetrate his heart. Ah ! now you have made a mistake. Well, let me tell you what I mean,—what the robe of righteousness does exclude *in connection with the trials of life*. Why, all that is penal ! Everything in the shape of curse. When the trials of life come upon the undressed and the naked, they may come as curses, and crush the poor mind, and carry the man completely away. But when the trials of life come upon one covered with the robe of righteousness, they are *felt*, they *stun* him, they throw him down, by their number and their force, but there is no bitter curse connected with them, the robe excludes everything like that. The robe of righteousness then, qualifies its wearer to meet the trials and troubles of life. My friend, I will just simply say that this robe of righteousness, with which God's people are covered, is fire-proof. “ Make a fence,” said God to Moses, “ round about the mount, and let not the people come near ; for if the people come near they shall die.” Make a fence round about Sinai, and keep the people off. But we want no fence with this righteousness on. We can go to the mountain and touch it. It is a mountain that may not be touched by the unclean, and naked, and undressed ; but he that comes covered with the robe of the Saviour's righteousness may go close to the mountain—and I had almost said—may go to the top of the mountain to the great Lawgiver, covered with the robe of righteousness. “ Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth ;” and therefore this robe is fire-proof. And this robe is water-proof, curse-proof, proof against the sting of death, and a thousand other evils. Hostile shafts may fall upon it, but they will fall off again. The wind may rage round about ; dressed in this robe, and conscious of the fact, I shall be divinely warm. I shall not shiver with cold out in the weather ; and when it is, morally speaking, scorchingly hot ; then the robe, for it is a very wonderful one, will cool the mind during the scorching heat, as it warms the heart during the freezing winter. The child of God goes into the field of battle, the robe of righteousness is taken.—“ A robe in the field of battle ! why that is contrary to our notions of conflict, our military notions.” Perhaps so ; but this robe of righteousness is indispensable in the field of battle. 'Tis for the sinner, for the justified man to go into the water in. Ah ! 'tis his life-robe, it saves him from sinking. No man covered with this robe was ever left in the bottom of deep waters. Therefore, he goes into the water in it, and into the fire

with it, and into trouble in this robe of righteousness, and he lies down on his dying bed to breathe his last in it,—draws it tightly around his believing mind when heart and flesh are failing, and says, “I am covered with the robe of righteousness.” And then he goes with it to heaven, and appears in it before God. Aye, if you like,—I will go as far as possible—’tis his shroud, when he is dead and gone; for there are two bedfellows only in the grave, one is sin, and the other is grace. The body may be said to participate in the blessedness arising from an interest in the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ; and therefore we fight in the robe, stand up amid all weathers in the robe, die in the robe, go to heaven in the robe, are buried interested in the robe of the Saviour’s righteousness. Here is protection.

3. And then in the third place, we have *dignity*. A robe thrown all round the believer, and a robe to indicate dignity. Criminals do not wear robes. Slaves did not wear robes, and do not wear robes now. Their masters and mistresses wear robes, but the slave wears the dress of a slave. The poor do not wear robes. The degraded do not wear robes. The dignified, the noble, the rich, the titled, the mighty, and the official, they wear robes. And why are God’s people said to wear a robe of righteousness? Why, because they are related to the King of kings, descended from the King of kings: “He hath made us kings and priests unto God, and we shall reign on the earth.” My dear friends, this robe of righteousness does wonders for the sinner; at first, it lifts him out of guilt into justification; then it lifts him out of bondage into everlasting liberty; then it lifts him out of poverty into everlasting riches and plenty; then it lifts him out of insignificance into infinite and unspeakable importance; and then it brings him from a distance that was far from God, and lands and lodges him in the very bosom of everlasting love. ’Tis a brighter—as we have said—a brighter robe than angels wear, and a robe superior to that which slipped off Adam and left him exposed, when he fell and became a transgressor. That robe was beautiful. It was beautiful and glorious,—but let that pass. He lost it, and we lost it; but thanks to the God of infinite grace and mercy, the void is more than filled, the chasm is more than filled. We have a better robe than that which was lost by transgression and the fall. Here, then, we have dignity. Adam was a creature,—a justified man is a *new* creature. Adam stood in Eden, and perhaps was not qualified to go higher, at least not by his own righteousness; we stand on *heavenly* ground, and are entitled—oh let me speak it reverently!—to all the bliss God can give, and all the glory he can show. “He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness.”

4. But there is a step further we must go before we close to-night; for I fancy I hear some of my friends, as it were, thinking that I have not reached the highest point yet. The robe—it does indicate God’s munificence and abundance of grace; it does indicate divine protection, and a robe does indicate dignity; but does it not indicate more than that? Yes; it indicates *perfection*. He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness. Can you say it? Is it true of you? Then my friend, you are perfect. “Well, that is going a long way.” You are, you are perfect; that is to say, with regard to your character, as you are in Christ, and as you are dressed in the best obedience of incarnate God. So perfect, that you are accepted by God; so perfect, that God approves of you; and so perfect, that God has spread abroad his wings, and taken you underneath them for ever and ever. So perfect, that he has recorded his own feelings concerning you in the words: “Thou art all fair, and there is no spot in thee.” There is scope for your faith! There is scope for mine too! “But what about the inside, sir?” I am talking about the robe, not the inside. A good deal of strange feeling takes place underneath the robe; but then I am talking to-night about that which God sees—the robe—rather than the feelings of the wearer; and God sees the wearer as perfect and complete as that robe can constitute him. Since the robe of righteousness is upon the sinner, and the Holy Ghost is bound to work in the

sinner, and produce within a state of things in harmony with the glory of the robe itself ; therefore, the time shall come when "the King's daughter shall be all glorious within, whilst her clothing is of wrought gold." At present, for all purposes of acceptance, we wear the robe of righteousness, and soon the Spirit will complete his work and make us internally as perfect as we are already in Jesus Christ the Lord. "He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness."

5. That is not all. There is another fact, and that is *glory*. The robe of righteousness. It must be glorious. It must be bright and shining. Its lustre and glory must be marvellous. All the works of God are glorious and like himself. How glorious are his works in nature ! How glorious are his works in providence ! How glorious—in fact, to repeat what I have said already once before ! how glorious was the robe Adam wore ! How glorious are the robes of angels ! The most glorious robe, is that of which we are speaking. It would not have fitted Adam before he fell, and angels could not wear it. 'Tis a robe made by incarnate God, for hell-deserving sinners, and it fits them and them only ; and when it is cast upon the sinner, the attributes of God examine him, and truth says, It fits him ; and holiness says, It is fine linen, white and clean, without a spot, without a stain ; and justice says, the material is all perfect and divine, wrought gold ; and love is delighted with the beauty that is upon her object, and all God's attributes are pleased with the result of the Saviour's obedience. The sinner that was naked and ragged, filthy, and going to hell, is rescued therefrom, by the hand of grace, and adorned with all the excellencies that the God-man could produce.

"Strangely, my soul, art thou arrayed
By the great Sacred Three;
In sweetest harmony of praise,
Let all thy powers agree."

I will only just add that this robe entitles its wearer to all grace and all glory, and to all gracious and glorious privileges. Yes ; it entitles me, if it is mine, it entitles me to all the grace I shall require to help me through this world. "Oh ! you are so high in your experience." Oh no, I am not. I wish I were. I am high in relation to the facts which I desire to experience, which I wish I could experience. I tell you to the truth in Christ Jesus. I lie not. I do not go beside the mark, or stop short of the mark here, if I can help it. Covered with this righteousness, you are entitled to all the grace that may be required to take you safely to heaven. Covered with this righteousness, you are entitled to the fulfilment of all the promises that God has given you here. You are entitled to the protection of his arm, to the shadow of his wing, to the watchfulness of his eye, and to all those streams of goodness and mercy that follow the flock through this world. "That is high comfort ; so high, I cannot always attain to it." The Lord help you to attain to it. It is a fact that this righteousness entitles its wearer, or this robe entitles its wearer to—

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

Die, clothed or covered with this robe, and be rejected by God ! Leave the body, and go into God's presence, covered with this righteousness, and be rejected there ! No, my brother, never. Cling to it, hold it fast. If you have not the comfort of it,—I was going to say, never mind. If you have hold of it, that is something, and if you have got hold of this righteousness, God sees you as covered with it. Hold it fast—don't let it go ; and if you should not have strong comfort until you die, yet God cannot cast off a sinner that has hold of and is covered with the righteousness of his Son. The fact is the sinner interested in this robe, or covered with it, shall certainly reach heaven ; and God will receive him with all the delight of his heart,—*"Come in, thou blessed, stay with me."* Angels will welcome

him. Spirits of just men made perfect will welcome him. Christ will recognise in him his own workmanship.—“There comes another sinner saved by grace, and covered with my righteousness. And the Father will welcome him ; and all heaven will ring with joy ! Do not fear. Death, no doubt, is a cold and dark valley ; but do not fear. All heaven will ring with joy when you get home, covered with the robe of the Saviour’s righteousness.

II.—I have no time left for the two following particulars, viz., The act of God, —that of covering his people with it ; and The confidence of the sinner.

I will only just add before I sit down, that this is imputed by God to the sinner, just as the sinner’s sins were imputed by God to Jesus Christ. The transfer is mutual between Christ and his people. He took all my sins, and I take all his righteousness ; he found nothing right in me, and God found nothing wrong in him ; all his righteous life, and righteous and meritorious death are set down to my account, and this robe of righteousness is therefore as much mine, as truly mine, as if my own hands, and head, and heart, had wrought it out for myself ; for this is not a garment lent, nor a garment that God will recall, nor a garment that can be lost, nor a garment that can be worn out, nor a garment that can be forfeited. “*Forfeited, sir!*” How can the saint or the believer forfeit the robe of righteousness ? “*By sin, sir, to be sure.*” But, you see, his sin is covered, his shortcomings are covered, all his imperfections are covered—covered with righteousness. Oh ! you may abundantly rejoice here. It is imputed, it is yours, and yours by a righteous act of God, and as truly yours as if you had wrought it out for yourself.

III.—And with regard to the joy and confidence—well, I will only say that from life in the heart you may infer an interest in Christ’s mediation. Let me come down to the bottom. Is there a little life in the soul ? “*I do not know that there is.*” You do, my friends ; yes, you do know that there is a little life. You know there is some feeling. You know what your desires are, how strong, how keen, how fervent, how holy and unquenchable. You know that there is an unconquerable and invincible something that brings you to the house of God, that constrains you to open the Bible, and sometimes fills the eyes with tears, and induces you to look up to God with “*Oh that I could say Christ was mine !*” All that is life. From that you may infer that you are interested in salvation ; and if interested in one part of it, you are interested in the whole. Therefore, the robe of righteousness is yours, whether you have satisfactorily realized it or not.

“The time of love will come,
When you shall clearly see,
Not only that Christ shed his blood,
But you shall say—*For me.*”

Then cast your rags, and your supposed worth and excellency behind your back ; come naked and guilty, just as you are, to him as a Saviour for his obedience. He will cast it all around, and then you will know the meaning of the first verse of the fifth of Romans : “*Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.*” All things are mine, for I am Christ’s, and Christ is God’s. Amen.

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THE OBJECTS OF CHRIST'S DELIGHT.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, 1st NOVEMBER, 1874.

"And my delights were with the sons of men."—Prov. viii. 31.

OUR beloved Lord, in the days of his flesh, said to his disciples and others, "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." Now, it should be always borne in mind, that all the Scriptures which then existed, were the Old Testament writings. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, had not been given to the world, nor had the Epistles of Paul or of Peter, of Jude or of James ; and therefore, by "the Scriptures" there, we must understand the Old Testament—the writings of Moses, of David, and of the Lord's holy prophets. The Lord said, "Search them, for in them ye [Jews] think that ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." The Lord Jesus Christ is to be found, therefore, in the Book of Genesis. His face, yea his heart, appears everywhere in that part of the writings of Moses ; just as the blood of his heart, and the merit of his person, and the perfection of his work, seem to flow everywhere in the Book of Leviticus. Yes ; in the writings of Moses, both we ourselves have, and the Old Testament church had, a full and sufficient revelation of the person and work of God's dear Son. In the New Testament, we have the Old Testament illustrated—a divine commentary upon it. But the two books are inseparably one : for both treat continuously of one grand Person, and on one great and glorious theme—the salvation of the Triune God. Now, just as Christ may be found everywhere in the Pentateuch, so you will find him in the Book of Judges and the Book of Joshua. He is also very clearly and beautifully exhibited in the Book of Ruth ; and although the Book of Esther is a somewhat strange and mysterious book, even that is connected with the name and glories of the Lord Jesus Christ. And then you may proceed to the life of David, and run through the voluminous writings of the "man after God's own heart," and you feel obliged to say that the Saviour's face sweetly appears almost in every page of his writings. You proceed from the times and life of David, to those of his marvellous son Solomon, and what can you see ? What can you see in the Song of Solomon but the church's great Bridegroom, and the Bridegroom's bride ? And what can you see in the Book of Ecclesiastes, but the person and very much of the work, especially of the providential government of the dear and blest Redeemer ? And what is to be seen in the Book of Proverbs ? There we read—"A man that hath friends, must show himself friendly : and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." "A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity." A great deal has been said by commentators generally on this book, that it treats more especially of moral duties ; but he that sees nothing more than morality in the Book of Proverbs, does not see very much

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therein ; and he that does not see anything more than human virtues and vices in the Book of the Proverbs, does not discover the face, the name, nor the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the chapter out of which I have taken my text to-night, we have a very comprehensive, and perhaps I might say, a deep and abstruse description of the person and offices, the character, work, and triumphs of the Lord Jesus Christ. It has been said that by "wisdom" here, we should understand the divine attribute of wisdom,—not a divine person, but a divine attribute. But I do not think that it is usual for any one of the attributes of God to be represented as wisdom here appears, as speaking.—"I love them that love me, and those that seek me early shall find me." If the *attribute* of wisdom were referred to, ought we not to read the verse something like this : The wisdom of God loves those that love it, and those that seek it early shall find it ? For the wisdom of God, considered as an attribute, is not a person, but the attribute of a person, the perfection of a person. But the personal pronoun is used here—"I love them that love me, and those that seek me early shall find me." "By *me* kings reign, and princes decree justice. By *me* princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth." In this manner Christ proceeds to speak ; for I understand that the Lord Jesus Christ is the person that appears before us in this chapter. I shall not take up any of your time in attempting to prove this. For many years I have believed with all my heart, that Christ is the speaker here ; and I feel satisfied that all, or nearly all, my hearers have believed the same fact ; and, therefore, it is not necessary that I should prove that which is generally or universally believed. Christ proceeded to say, "When he prepared the heavens, I was there : when he set a compass upon the face of the depth : when he established the clouds above : when he strengthened the fountains of the deep : when he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment : when he appointed the foundations of the earth : then was I by him as one brought up with him : and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him ; rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth ; and my delights were with the sons of men."

I believe that Jesus Christ here speaks in his mediatorial character ; but I shall not go into any nice, abstruse, or difficult question to-night. Let me look at the text as a very blessed assertion of a very blessed fact. Christ says, "My delights were with the sons of men." Now, I want in the first place to *illustrate the fact itself* ; and then, secondly, to point out some of the *proofs of this fact*.

I.—In the first place, let me try to illustrate the fact itself, which is indicated in the text before us to-night : "And my delights were with the sons of men." When the heavens were prepared, and when God gave the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment, and so on, then Christ says, "I was with him, and my delights were with the sons of men." This text is, therefore, not very unlike some of those sweet texts which occur in the epistles of Paul—"Accepted in the Beloved," "Approved in Christ." Christ says, "My delights were with the sons of men." And what is there in those sons of men that he refers to, that he delights in ? He delights in their persons ; in their graces ; in their character ; in their spiritual services ; and even in their sufferings, when they suffer for the truth's sake, and for his own sake. He even delights in their tears ; in the groans that proceed from their hearts ; in their songs of praise which they say are "miserably sung ;" and in the prayers which they call "broken petitions." "The Lord seeth not as man seeth ;" and it may here be said of Christ, as it is said of him in other connections, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord." You despise your tears : he takes delight in them. You despise many of your prayers : they are music in his ears. You think your services are completely spoiled by the many shortcomings which are inseparable from them : the dear Redeemer delights in them. You speak,

and very properly too, of the fact, that there is no merit in the sufferings of a sinner, and there is none in point of fact ; but the Saviour takes delight in the sufferings of those who conscientiously and believingly suffer for his great name's sake.

But, first, I notice that Christ's delights were with the sons of men, considered *as the sons of God*. He delighted in their relationship—their high, holy, heavenly, and spiritual relationship. And do you not think that he delighted in the consideration of the fact, that whilst he called them the sons of men, he himself would be called in the days of his flesh, “the Son of man”? When here, he rejoiced in the fact that he was the Son of man. When he stood upon the threshold of Old Time, and looked forward into the future, he saw the great world before his mighty mind, and the church of the living God in the midst of the world, and said, My delights were with them as I saw them in the glass of my Father's purposes ; as I foresaw them in the distant future ; as I foresaw them rising one by one from a state of nature into a state of grace, I loved them, I smiled upon them, my delights were with them ; I regarded them as what God himself had constituted them—his own dear children in me ; and as I saw them, the sons and daughters of God, my *delights*—not merely my delight—my delights were with them ; and as they would be the sons of men, and were then in my mind the sons of men, I resolved that I too would be the Son of man, and identify myself publicly and visibly with them for ever.

Thus Christ rejoiced in their spiritual relationship, in the fact that they were God's dear children ; that they were his own dear brethren ; that they were his own near kinsmen, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh. He took infinite delight in the fact that he himself was regarded as the elder Brother, and that he should be attended through all eternity by such a multitude of younger brethren,—he saw them all from the days of Abel to the last hour of time, when the last son of God should be regenerated by his grace ; and he looked upon the whole race, the whole succession of saints, as they should come into existence, with infinite complacency, satisfaction, and delight ; and he said, “I rejoiced in the habitable part of his earth, and my delights were with the sons of men.” Thus Christ rejoiced in the relationship in which they stood to God and to himself. He foresaw them all upon the face of the earth, and rejoiced further in the fact, that as his beloved Bride, every one would wear his name ; that as his disciples, every one would become a follower of himself ; that as his own brethren, everyone would be recognized in heaven. And then, Christ looked beyond time into the eternal future, into the world of everlasting glory, which he meant us to possess and reign in for ever, and by a mysterious operation of his mind, he conveyed the countless thousands into the distant and future eternity, and viewed us all as sharing heaven with himself, and the great fact filled him with great delight, and he said, ‘I rejoiced in the habitable part of his earth, and my delights were with the sons of men.’ This was delighted love, which subsequently became love in sorrow,—bleeding love. But at the time of which we are speaking, it was love smiling upon its objects with sweet complacency and satisfaction. But did not Christ look complacently and satisfactorily upon the objects of his love when he died ? Yes. But *then* his love delighted in the forethought that he should bleed to redeem the sons of men. But on Calvary, we have the same person delighting in the same manner in the sons of men. Love to the sons of men, brought him down from heaven, and constrained him to be nailed upon the accursed tree ; and there we have love bleeding, love meriting, love removing the curse—love holding fast her objects, notwithstanding their vileness, and love resolving practically to fulfil all its own behests. Now, when Christ looked forward into the future, and beheld the sons of men, there was nothing foreseen or foreknown to qualify or moderate his delights. “Did he not foresee that some of them would be unwilling

to be saved?" He foresaw that they *all* would be unwilling to be saved ; but then that did not change his delight in them. "Did he not foresee the conditionality of salvation?" Yes ; he foresaw that salvation would be conditional, and contingent upon good works ; but then he foresaw that *he himself* should fulfil the conditions of salvation, and that the good works upon which salvation should be dependent, should be *his own* ; and therefore, friends, there was nothing in his foreknowledge of the fact that we should be unwilling, to chill his delight. He said, I will make them willing—"My people shall be willing in the day of my power," and when I pour my Spirit into their hearts, they will flock to me, and I myself am pleased with the idea of receiving them. "My delights were with the sons of men."

And what about final apostasy ? Because we are told, that they who have the grace of God may finally lose it, and that they who are once saved for ever and ever, may afterwards be eternally lost." Strange logic that. But that is the kind of logic which is introduced into religion. It would be scouted with supreme contempt from the commercial world ; but then, much that is incongruous and inconsistent is admitted into theology and divinity. He that is once for ever saved, may after all, be for ever damned ! Christ, however, foresaw nothing of the sort ; he foresaw no final apostasy ; he foreknew nothing but everlasting life. His delights were with them, because he resolved, and the Father concurred with him, and both concurred with the Spirit, that their life should be everlasting, that their safety should be eternal and divine. Hence it is recorded—"The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed ; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee."

2. But let us notice in the second place, that Christ delighted himself with *the prospect of visiting the sons of men*. He not only delighted himself with the foreknowledge and foreview of them,—he delighted himself with the prospect of visiting them. And he has paid the visit, and gone again. He came a long way, blessed be his name ! for his "delights were with the sons of men." It was a long journey to take ; but his delights were with his people, and he paid the visit. When it was decreed and appointed that he should pay this visit, he expressed his pleasure and delight ; and when he came down to fulfil his decree, he said, "Lo, I come,"—I have been waiting for the time—"Lo, I come, to do thy will, O God." So important was this visit, that the decree was put into writing, and the written decree constituted a promise, which was yea and amen in Christ Jesus, and the promise constituted the ground of hope and expectation ; and therefore Christ, under the Old Testament dispensation, was "the hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in the time of trouble." Millions were expecting this heavenly Visitor, because the decree had been declared that he should come ; and at the appointed time he came, and fulfilled the promise. And the visit was so remarkable in itself, that a host of angels appeared to announce the fact that the Son of God had become the Son of man, and had pitched his tabernacle for a time among the sons of men, in whom he so greatly delighted. And what was the purport of this visit ? He came to redeem the sons of men with his blood, and this was foreknown and foreseen ; hence he is called, "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Deceptively wounded and slain, his blood flows through all the Old Testament dispensation ; and when at the appointed time, he was literally and actually smitten, was there any regret on his heart ? Did the terrible storms that raged against him, and the floods that rolled over him, chill his delight or damp his affections ? Nay. "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it." The infinite delight of the Son of God in the sons of men, the objects of his love, remained unabated ; and the divine fire of love, burnt triumphantly in all the depths of condemnation into which he sank ; and out of them all he came, burning with supreme delight and everlasting love.

He tarried with us three-and-thirty years, and did a wonderful work during that time, and accomplished all the purposes for which he came, and then went away. But what did he leave behind him? Ah! he delighted to contemplate on the threshold of time, what he *should* leave behind him; and what *did* he leave behind him? "Peace, I leave with you." I came to make it, I came to bring salvation; and now it is expedient for you that I go away; but before I go away, I will leave these words, and these promises, and these facts, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid;" for I have loved you with an everlasting love, and my delights are all with you. And what else did he leave behind him? An open fountain, robes of righteousness, bread enough and to spare for every child in his and our Father's house. And what else did he leave behind him? So much, that we sing—and we are correct in singing,—

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

We shall see him again. We have seen him only with the eye of faith, Christ will come again, and the contemplation of his second coming gave him pleasure and delight. He will come again "the second time without sin unto salvation;" and oh! what a gathering there will then be! Oh! what a smiling Christ, and what smiling Christians!

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

Why, the other day we were black-haired, youthful, nimble, and full of vigour, and now we are getting near to the grave. Well, I hope we form a part of that vast army which the delighted Jesus will lead into glory, and present at last to his Father.

But, thirdly, he was delighted with the prospect of *receiving the sinner and introducing him to his Father*,—pleased with the prospect of the Spirit's work in the heart, and with the results of it. He foresaw himself on the throne, as the risen and ascended Saviour of the sons of men, and as waiting to receive them; because, having redeemed them, they are sure to be brought, and therefore, he contemplated himself as sitting on the throne, and waiting to receive them. And by and by, Peter preached the first sermon that he ever preached with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and he that sat on the throne sent three thousand arrows from his bow, and they entered into as many hearts, and three thousand rebels of the sons of men fell down before Immanuel's throne, crying, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Now Christ delighted himself before time with the contemplation of that sight. And then a little later, five thousand more; and then a few years subsequently to this, a wretch, a rebel, but one of the sons of men that was beloved, was on his way to Damascus, thirsting for blood, and just as he reached the gates of the city, a light from heaven shone upon him, struck his heart, and killed his natural enmity, and he became, as an enemy, a dead man on the spot. And what was it that killed Saul as a Pharisee? Christ's delight was in him. What was it that killed Saul as an enemy? Christ's delight was in him. What was it that brought Paul to pray? The delight of the dear Redeemer in his person; and therefore he said with infinite delight, "Behold! he prayeth!" Father, I will that he be with me. Behold he is on his knees. He is mine; and Ananias, go to such a house and enquire for Saul of Tarsus, for "Behold, he prayeth!" And although it was astonishing information from Christ to Ananias, the heart of the dear Redeemer was full of delight and pleasure when he pointed to Saul of Tarsus, wretched, and with scales all over his eyes, and said, "Behold, he prayeth!" What was it that caused him to fall from his horse?

A ray of the Mediator's delight. What was it that conveyed new life into his heart? It was that light that shone from heaven,—an emanation of the Mediator's delight. The Lord delighted in him, and therefore he brought him down from his pride, and arrogance, and height of conceit into a state of humility and eternal life. Christ took infinite pleasure, and delight, and satisfaction in the contemplation of all this before time begun. During the first ages of time, when God stood upon the threshold of the newly-made world, when he prepared the heavens, and set a compass upon the face of the deep, and gave the sea his decree, then Christ rejoiced “in the habitable part of his earth, and his delights were with the sons of men.”

Fourthly, He delights in *managing their affairs*. Bless his name!—he stoops very low, and concerns himself about many matters which do not give me much concern or thought. Oh! if I had not some one who thought more about me than I think about myself, I should be badly off. If I had not a Friend who managed for me better than I could manage for myself, I do not know what the consequences would be. “But,” you say, “you can manage better for yourself than anybody can manage for you.” I cannot. “You know your own affairs better than anybody else knows them.” No, I do not. I have a Manager, I hope; I believe he has managed my affairs, or I should not be where or what I am tonight. I think and believe he has managed my affairs, and taken the deepest concern in all my matters ever since I have known him, aye! and before I knew his dear name. “He fixed the bounds of their habitation.” Do you believe that? And when was that done? *Providentially* in time; but, *decretively*, before time, and hence Christ says, “I rejoiced in the habitable part of his earth,” I had the great map before me—and the habitable parts of his earth were marked, and the habitations of the saints were indicated, and when I foresaw the spot where Saul of Tarsus should fall, it gave me pleasure. When I foresaw the spot where David would live and obtain victories, it gave me delight. When I foresaw the spots where Jacob would want me, and where Jacob should have what he wanted, the sight gave me pleasure and delight. Yes; when he made a decree for the sea, then he made a decree for the sons of men, fixed the bounds of their habitation,—the bounds of their trouble, the bounds of their enemies, the bounds of their pilgrimage, and the bounds of everything that relates to their welfare here and their happiness hereafter; and Christ looking at the work that he had undertaken to do for all, and for each of them, said, Father, it pleases me well. My delights are with the sons of men, and I will never remove my eye from them, never withdraw my hand from them. I will hold them up all the days of their pilgrimage life, and present them before thy glory at last.

Fifthly, Christ rejoices in the *public assemblies* of his people. I believe our Lord included this when he said,—“Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men.” The public assemblies of his people. Did he, then, on the map that lay before him as the world and time were meted out, did he see where churches should be formed? Yes; and rejoiced in the spots. I do not believe that so important a thing as the formation of a church escapes the regard and attention of the great God of heaven, or ever takes place, irrespective of the ancient purpose and decree of the everlasting God. I believe that our beloved Lord marked out these green spots in the desert, on the map that lay before him, and looking at them foresaw their fertility, and rejoiced in them, as habitable parts of his earth. Where the sons of men would be gathered together,—where they would meet for praise and prayer: for “The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.” He chose the sites of worship, the local sites where his saints met together to sing the praises of their Redeemer, to celebrate his greatness, and to remember with adoring gratitude his word. The Saviour said to himself, and said to his Father,—I shall be there in

the midst of that assembly ; hence when here on earth he said, " Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I." And it pleased him to contemplate this fact before, or at the commencement of time. Have we ever been blest here ? Have we met here in vain, for twenty-two years or thereabouts ? Hundreds of times have I been here in the pulpit,—and has it always been in vain ? Hundreds of times have you been in your pews,—and has it always been in vain ? No ; we cannot believe this. We have had barren opportunities. Who has not ? The preacher has had barren opportunities, and the people, perhaps, at times, have been barren in their feelings ; but it has not been all barrenness. There has been a little fertility, and fruitfulness, and moisture now and then. Christ's delight is in us. I hope it is. I believe it is. And sometimes he has been in our midst, and this has been, although a Strict Baptist Chapel, a Calvinistic place of worship,—one of the habitable parts of God's earth, where, I think we may say we have realised the fulfilment of his word, " My delights were with the sons of men."

Sixthly. Then lastly, he delighted in the prospect that was before him of raising them all from the grave, taking his position at the head of countless millions, and leading them all into glory. Our dear Lord's delight will not be perfectly fulfilled until all the sons of men intended here are sharing his glory with him in another world. With what delight will he take his dear church up to his Father's throne, and say, " Here am I, and the children whom thou hast given me !" With what delight will he take his Bride and present her to his Father all-glorious within, and clothed with wrought gold. Ah ! she shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework, the virgins her companions shall also be brought. And with what pleasure, and delight, and satisfaction, will the King, the royal Bridegroom, the royal Saviour of the church survey his work, and survey the results of the same in the perfected and glorious character of all his redeemed people ! Dear brother, you and they, and all the objects of God's love, are to be the everlasting exponents of the glory of Immanuel. You are to be pillars in the temple of God, upon which God shall inscribe his name, the name of Christ, and the name of his city. And that marvellous city of eternal glory, the new Jerusalem cannot be perfect without you ; Christ's delights with the sons of men arose from the certain prospect of the completion of that city with its ornamental pillars, its monuments of everlasting praise.

II. The evidences of the fact, " My delights were with the sons of men." Has he proved this ? And if so, how ?

1. The first evidence we have, or the first I will mention,—for the Bible is full of them—is, *his own conformity* to the sons of men. Love is imitative, and we aim to imitate him we love, especially when we believe his wisdom and character are superior to our own. Will these observations apply to Christ and his church ? So far as his love was concerned, they will ? but not as regards her character. I speak of his conformity to her, not of his imitation of her. " He himself likewise took part of the same." Part of flesh and blood. Because the children were " partakers of flesh and blood," he would be like them in that respect. " My delights were with the sons of men." I will put on their nature, and I will wear it for ever. I delight in it. And so he possesses a body and an immortal soul, the soul of a man, notwithstanding that he is the infinitely great and everlasting God. He said, I will become a man, for I love them ; and I will be like them, and wear their nature for ever ; for my delights are with the sons of men. See your nature on the throne of infinite majesty ! And what does it indicate ? Why, that Christ delights in it ; or he would not wear it at God's right hand. He wears your nature there, and he means to save it perfectly, not only the soul, but the body also. And he means to have eternal fellowship and communion with the sons of men ; and therefore he will wear their nature for ever. That is one evidence of the fact that his delights were with the sons of men.

2. And then, secondly, he says, I will represent them all ; and so their names are on his breastplate. His delight is with them, and he will not have one lost, nor a single name overlooked or forgotten. And by way of raising a high idea in their minds of the greatness of the delight he takes in them, he says, "I have graven thee on the palms of my hands and thy walls are continually before me." Why, you see, this is just what the church wanted. She said, "Set me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thine arm." And he says, "O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me ;" therefore, Christ appears before the throne of God as the great representative of the sons of men, and that in order that they should never be forgotten, lost sight of, or overlooked by him. A brother said, "Pray for me." My dear friend, I said, I will if I can, and hope to be interested in the prayers of my brother. But there is a brother, the best brother of all, who never forgets to pray for us. He is always praying for his brethren, he delights in doing so, he loves them so deeply, and love, you know, will prompt one to pray for another. He that loves me will pray for me. My Saviour, my Brother, loves me I hope, and therefore he is always praying for me, and will as long as I am his brother, and his delight is in me. Well, this is another proof, he is representative of the whole.

And looking at ordinances, means of grace, Christian sabbaths, the Bible, the Lord's-table, the institutions of divine mercy, the appointments of heaven ; what are they all for ? Why, they are all so many ways in which God has appointed to meet his people. Christ says to those in whom he delights, "I will come and bless you : " in the ordinances of my house, the means of grace. Thus—

"Here to these hills my soul would come,
Till my Beloved lead me home."

And, then, as my delights are with them, just as I, in one respect, became like them, they shall all be made like me ; and therefore the Spirit comes to conform the sons of men to the image of God's dear Son, and he will not have done with us, nor be satisfied with his work, until we are perfectly like him in another world.

Lastly, to sum up all in one word, and that word a monosyllable, but very full of meaning, Christ says, I will be their *all*, my delights are with the sons of men, and if you ask me what I mean to *do* for them, I say, *All* that they require to be done ; or what I mean to *be* unto them, I will be *all* unto them for ever and ever, all that God requires, and all that they require, their Saviour, their Friend, their all externally, their all internally, their all eternally ; for "my delights are with the sons of men." God bless you, and his truth to your hearts, for Christ's sake. Amen.

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REPENTANCE AND FAITH:

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, 29th NOVEMBER, 1874.

"Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."—Acts xx. 21.

THE Apostle Paul as the great Apostle of the Gentiles was greatly honoured of God. In Thessalonica he preached the gospel of God's grace, and became the spiritual father of the church in that city. He preached and became the founder of the church of Christ at Philippi. He went to the city of Ephesus and preached the gospel of our God, and became the spiritual father of that large and important church. The circumstances connected with the introduction of the gospel into the city of Ephesus, are recorded in the preceding chapter. We find that the members of the church of Christ at Ephesus were regenerated, and therefore, spiritual men and women. The Apostle, it is said, preached the gospel in the synagogue "for the space of three months." A considerable disturbance arose in consequence of the fact that so novel a doctrine as that of Christianity had been introduced into the city; nevertheless, the great Apostle proceeded with his work. He did not much heed the uproar and disturbance which he himself was the occasion of. It is said in the 17th verse that "fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. And many that believed came and confessed, and showed their deeds. Many of them also which used curious arts, brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed." In these few words we have a very full description of the character of the members of the church at Ephesus, and of the fact also that the Apostle Paul was, under God, the spiritual father of that body.

In the next place, if we turn to that marvellous letter which he wrote to the church at Ephesus, we cannot help inferring from its depth and fulness, that the Ephesian believers were great-minded men and women. Not only were they spiritual, because regenerated; we must, I think, conclude from the matter of that letter, and the sublimity of the doctrines which it contains, that many of the members of that church had naturally very capacious minds. Paul's Epistle to the Romans is very great; his Epistle to the church at Philippi contains many great and sublime *doctrines*; but it seems to me that Paul was, as it were, near the third heavens when he penned the Epistle to the church at Ephesus, and if the members of that church understood Paul, and comprehended the great truths which he brought before them, they were highly favoured men and women.

The Apostle was an old man when he uttered the words of my text, and they were addressed to the elders of the church at Ephesus. And as Paul was, at No. 8.—DECEMBER 15, 1874.

least occasionally moved by the spirit of prophecy, he, on this occasion, looked forward into the future, and was obliged to say, "For I know this, that after my departure, shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them. Therefore, watch and remember that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." And when the Apostle was in heaven, a letter recorded in the Book of the Revelation by the authority of Jesus Christ himself was addressed to the church at Ephesus ; and one of the charges brought by Christ against that church was this :—"I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." Churches here on the earth are imperfect ; and it is true of the church corporately, as well as individually considered, "Through much tribulation they must enter the kingdom."

Well, the apostle, when he spoke the words of my text, was in a very interesting position. He had left Ephesus, and was going to Jerusalem ; and he felt persuaded—and expressed the fact that sorrow, affliction, persecution, trouble, and probably death, awaited him there. And since the church at Ephesus was so near his heart, he sent for its elders, and said, "Ye know from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears and temptations which befel me by the lying in wait of the Jews : and how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewn you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God and faith, toward our Lord Jesus Christ."

Let us make a few observations, first, upon the *two blessings* indicated—"Repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." Secondly, contemplate for a few minutes, the *glorious doctrine implied*. I will tell you what that is when I reach this part of our subject ; and in the third place, if we have time, we may make one of two remarks upon the *equality* mentioned, "Testifying both to the Jews and Gentiles, repentance toward God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ."

I. In the first place let us make a few remarks upon the *two blessings* indicated in our text,—*repentance* and *faith*. First, repentance ; but look at the two as connected and inseparable graces, in their subject, and in their operation. We may say that both are the gifts of our risen Lord, for "Him hath God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give *repentance* unto Israel, and remission of their sins ;" and we read,—“Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our *faith* ;” so that both repentance and faith are the gifts of our risen Redeemer. They flow from the throne of God and the Lamb. Divine and sovereign grace is their spring and source. And if it is so, there can be no repentance without grace ; and no saving belief, no belief for death and eternity, without the intervention of the blood and power of the reigning Christ of God. And both these graces are saving, that is, both of them are inseparable from salvation, or from a saved state. I have no idea that a sinner can go to heaven, or can be said to be going to heaven, who is not a penitent, who is a stranger to repentance, a stranger to godly sorrow. I cannot as some ministers have done, and are doing,—set up a standard of Christian experience in relation to repentance, but I am bound, with the Apostle Paul, to “testify both to the Jews and also to the Greeks,” the necessity of “repentance towards God, and of faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.” And it is remarkable that both these graces are terminable graces. Both of them are to live for a time,—for a measured period only. Religion itself, as a great principle and power, is deathless, is immortal like its great Author, and will go into eternity with us, and live in all eternity before the throne of God. We shall everlastingly love our Saviour, streams of gratitude will everlastingly flow from our perfected spirits, songs of praises will everlastingly be addressed by God’s people to the

Christ of God in heaven ; but there will be no repentance there,—there will be no faith there. Repentance will cease when sin ceases to exist in us, and faith will be swallowed up in sight when we enter into the joy and presence of our Lord. And therefore, whilst both these graces are the gifts of our risen Lord, and both are saving—or inseparable from a saved state, both of them, we must say, are terminable, and will cease to work and exist when the spirit shall have returned to God that gave it.

But what *is* repentance ? Well, usually it is thus well defined : a gracious change, accompanied by sorrow,—a change of the heart towards God. Never suppose that repentance involves a change of God toward the sinner, a change of God towards the penitent, a change of God towards the man who is brought to believe. This is the theology or divinity of modern times,—that when a sinner repents, God changes towards him, because he changes towards God. My dear friends, God does not change towards the penitent. Repentance is a change of the sinner towards God, and not a change of God towards the sinner. “I have loved thee with an everlasting love, and therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.” God not being capable of changing,—for this is one of the things which our God cannot do, and it is not an imperfection but a perfection, and the glory of his nature,—God being incapable of changing, and his love having been fixed upon his people in eternity, he is pleased in due time to put his grace into the sinner's heart, and repentance towards God is the inevitable result ; and therefore repentance is a change, accompanied by sorrow, of the sinner towards God himself. But let us try to be a little plainer if we can, for repentance is a very important grace, and its existence in the mind gives rise to very important operations therein. What is the nature of repentance ? What does that sorrow flow from which is inseparable from repentance ? Well, I apprehend that the saved sinner does not repent towards God on account of the terrible fact that punishment must follow sin. There are many criminals in our land, and in other countries, who are very sorry that they ever committed crime, because they are in prison, and because they are suffering for the crimes they have committed. They do not hate the crimes they have committed. They do not loathe themselves on account of their conduct and their course. The consequences of their crimes are now upon them and round about them, and they are therefore sorry that they ever committed them. Well, that is a kind of repentance,—a natural repentance ; but it is attended by no self-loathing, by no loathing of sin, by no loathing of crime, and therefore if there were no hell,—I wish to be explicit and well understood here,—if there were no eternal torment, God's people, having realized what the nature of sin is, would be deeply penitent in the sight of God, and would fall before the throne of Divine Majesty, and mourn, and weep, and sigh, and groan, on account of their guilt and sinnership ; and therefore repentance does not flow from legal fear. Repentance is the result of a spiritual, a true, and evangelical realization of the nature of sin. One is brought to see and to feel,—to *feel*, my friend ! to feel !—for we must have more than theory here ; one is brought to see and to feel that it is both an evil and a bitter thing to sin against God,—not only to see and to feel that hell will follow sin, and hell must be the portion of the sinner,—that is not the source of that repentance which “needeth not to be repented of,—the sinner is brought to see and feel what the nature of sin is, and to hate and loathe both himself and it on account of the fact that he is a vile transgressor in the sight of a heart-searching, a good, and a holy God.

Now, let me dwell on this for a moment or two. A revelation is made by God the Holy Spirit to the heart, for we have not abandoned that doctrine yet, the doctrine of the necessity of spiritual and special revelations from God to the heart, we do not believe that *that* faith is saving faith which is like cold water round the soul. We believe that both repentance and faith are living powers and

principles in the mind, communicated to the breast by no less a person than God the Holy Spirit. Now, there is a revelation made by God to the mind; but in order to be as precise and particular as possible, let me observe that repentance follows regeneration. Regeneration does not follow repentance,—repentance follows life,—repentance is a sign of life,—repentance is the fruit and evidence of life,—repentance is the motion of life, and it is that motion of the heart towards God, which indicates the germ of godliness in the immortal mind. Well, there is first the new birth, and the eye having been opened, a revelation is made by God the Spirit to the opened eye, to the quickened heart, to the man that has been born again, although, at present, he does not feel satisfied that regeneration has taken place. It is my business, however,—and I feel I am in a solemn place, and am doing a solemn work,—it is my business to try and place these matters before you in the order in which they lie in the gracious government of God. We observe, then, that regeneration takes place in the heart under the hand of the Spirit, and then a revelation is made to the new-born mind,—to the mind that is capable of spiritually judging between right and wrong, between heaven and hell, and between sin and holiness. Man is not capable of forming a correct judgment before the understanding is quickened and sanctified. The revelation is made, and a twofold view of God is seen through a twofold medium. First, God as the great Lawgiver through the medium of his law: “By the law is the knowledge of sin.” Here is the medium,—the law of God, and through that just and holy law the sinner sees a sin-hating Lawgiver, and he contrasts himself,—he cannot help it,—as this revelation is made in order that this contrast, this operation of the mind, might follow. He contrasts his character with that law, and himself with the holiness and spotless purity of the great Lawgiver there, and the result of the contrast is that you hear him say: “I am a lost man! I am lost and ruined! I have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” Now, will he sink into despair? Will justice meet him, and sweep him into hell?—No. There is another view of God had through another medium. The sinner having seen the Lawgiver through the law, is now brought to see the same Being as the God of love and pity, and compassion, through the agonies and death of his crucified Son; and seeing a loving God through the medium of precious blood, a hope is kindled in his heart, and that very hope thus kindled in his heart, pervades every power and faculty of the mind, which melts, and sorrow begins to flow, and the question, the all-absorbing question is asked—

“Was it for crimes that I had done,
He groaned upon the tree?”

May I hope that Jesus died for me, and expiated my crimes?

“Amazing pity, grace unknown,
And love beyond degree!”

He sees first that he is a sinner in the light of law; he sees, secondly, that there is a way of salvation in the light of the cross of Calvary, and that God is a God pardoning iniquity, transgression and sin.” This is revealed to him through the medium of a crucified Saviour, and his heart is melted, his eyes fill, his soul overflows, streams of godly sorrow are poured out before the throne; he hopes and fears, and fears and hopes; he loathes himself, and loathes sin on account of its own nature, condemns himself, and uses very hard words when describing himself. And if he goes to hear the gospel preached, and the minister that he happens to be hearing uses hard words, and speaks strongly, and draws human nature in very dark colours, he is not offended. “Oh, no,” he says, “you cannot go too far there; I am black, I am guilty, I am vile; and if I had received from the hand of God what I have merited, instead of sitting in God’s sanctuary, and hearing with a little hope, I had been in hell, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.” And then he

retires to his closet again, and his eyes fill with tears, and there is a little hope and a little faith in his heart ; he drops down upon the atonement of the Saviour, and says, "Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation." But we go further. If repentance is deep before the God of justice, it is deeper before the God of love. If the sinner repents in the light of God's moral glory, his repentance is warmer, more intense, and deeper before the bleeding heart of incarnate God ; and therefore, for my part,—I do not know how it may be with my friends generally,—for my part, I am praying that streams of godly sorrow may flow in my heart all the days of my life. The Christian is a paradox in the estimation of the world ; he would always mourn and rejoice, he would always sigh and sing, he would always have godly sorrow in his heart, and yet love and adore his God. Yes, he can mourn without being miserable ; he can be contrite without being absolutely wretched. He mourns over sin and over the Saviour, and when he sees his sins upon the Saviour, repentance flows most freely. Repentance in this sense is a godly sorrow for sin, a godly hatred of sin, a godly aversion to sin. Sin seen upon the dear Redeemer is loathed and hated, and the sinner detests and denounces it, and renounces himself. Thus, Christian friends, repentance is wrought in the hearts of God's dear people.

But, testifying not only the nature of repentance, but the *uses* of it, what are the *uses* of repentance ? One of the first visible things that it does is to *dissolve all ruinous and destructive associations*. We said in the morning, "The wounded deer leaves the herd,"—a quotation it is, as most of you know :—the wounded deer leaves the herd, while the herd moves on,—an arrow, or a bullet in its side,—the wounded one leaves the herd, and seeks retirement. And when the arrow of divine truth enters the conscience of a poor sinner, that sinner stops, and the world moves on, and leaves him behind, and he seeks the closet, a secret place, in which to pour out the new feelings of his heart,—in which to pour out before God the new experience and wants of his mind. He is bleeding, for his conscience is lacerated. God is not disappointed. Heaven's purposes are not to be frustrated. God aimed at him, and the arrow of divine truth entered his heart, and he is separated from the world for ever. The world may go on ; it has left him behind ; he is in a new position, and he is a new creature ; he is inquiring the way to heaven, with his face towards that glorious world. "What is the matter with Mr. So-and-so, do you know ? He seems to have something on his mind ; he has lost all his vivacity ; he is not jocular ; he used to be a good companion, but now it seems as if there were a burden, or something on his mind." And there is a burden on his mind. There is something in his heart. God has put it there. He will never be what he has been. God has saved him. He is a penitent in the sight of God. You, my friend, may see no danger ; you may have no apprehension of the being of a God ; but there is a God, and that God has apprehended that man, and he will never be of you again. He is a penitent weeper in the sight of the God that has saved him, and into whose presence he will shortly enter. He is a spiritual penitent. Moreover, penitence *prepares the heart for God's presence*. One of the sweetest promises recorded in the Bible, is to the weeping penitent. "Thus saith the High and Lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy ; I dwell in the high and holy place ; with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit." God dwells with the heart that bleeds,—God dwells with the conscience that is lacerated,—God dwells with the man that mourns over the fact that he is a guilty, lost, and ruined sinner. My brother, if I have such a one here to-night, let me remind you of the fact, that you are not so far from God as you fear you are. God is not so far from you as you fear he is. You were far off, now you are near, and because you are near, your heart is wounded, and your spiritual grief is deep and keen. Moreover, repentance *prepares the heart for God's balm*,—for God's par-

don. God never lays the balm of Gilead upon an unwounded heart,—he never lays the plasters of eternal love upon an uncontrite and unfeeling spirit. He wounds to heal ; and whilst with one hand he makes the wound, in the other, at the same moment, he holds the balm. He makes the wound, and produces the pain, and the tear flows ; and by-and-bye the balm of Gilead is applied, pleasure is produced in the heart, and God gets the glory of his work. You see, friends, if there were no wounds, no want, no deep and piercing necessity, and God applied pardon and spiritual blessings, no pleasure would be felt. It is the suffering patient that feels the pleasure, when, after the application of the remedy, the pain is removed, or mitigated ! and so God prepares the heart for pardon, by giving it repentance ; and when his pardon drops upon the penitent, pleasure is produced, and songs of gratitude are sung to our pardoning God. And then, lastly, repentance demonstrates,—I hope my friends will give this fact all the attention they can, because there are many trembling ones in the family of God,—repentance *demonstrates one's interest in the atonement of Jesus Christ*. I use the word “demonstrate” advisedly, and I lay all possible stress upon it. It is an infallible evidence of your interest in the atonement of Christ. Sin loathed, is atoned for. Sin hated, was imputed to the Saviour. Sin, if it is a burden to the conscience, was penally a burden upon the Lord Jesus Christ ; and if sin is so seen that the sinner longs for blood, the blood that he longs for was shed for him, and shall be sooner or later applied. My friends, I go if possible, further. Sin repented of here, can never damn the sinner ; sin loathed here, can never sink the sinner into condemnation and ruin. God would never have caused you to loathe sin, and to repent of it, if he had not intended for ever and ever to pardon and forgive you. “Well, that is wonderful ! it melts my heart,” one says. To be sure it does ! and that melting of heart is another degree of repentance towards God.

As to the position of repentance, what is that ? Its position in the government of God ? Does it stand on law ground, or gospel ground ? It stands on gospel ground. There is no room, no place for it on law ground. The law does not admit of it. If there are wrongs to repent of, wrongs to be sorry for, the law examines that fact, and curses at once, and leaves the sinner. It does not require repentance,—the law does not. The law requires perfect obedience, and if there is not perfect obedience, the law leaves its curse, and leaves the sinner in a state of condemnation. What is the position, then, of repentance ? Christ comes and does “that which the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh.” The law requires, not repentance, but a perfect obedience ; and Christ, the sinner's substitute, puts a perfect obedience upon the law, and then presents the sinner before God, and the sinner then repents of sin,—indeed he does, deeply and truly. Whilst he sees that the agonies and sufferings, and death of incarnate God were the meritorious cause of his salvation and acceptance, he loathes himself, and loves the dear Redeemer ; so that repentance may be said to be a loathing of sin, and a loving, by the same heart, of the sinner's Substitute and Surety.

Now, friends, if repentance were all—just put things together very rapidly—if repentance were the only operation of the mind in relation to sin, the sinner might drop down into despair. If God revealed sin to the sinner, and did not give him “*faith* toward our Lord Jesus Christ,” then the sinner would drop down into despair ; and therefore, you see we have the two graces :—repentance toward God—I am lost, and loathe myself ; faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Here is a way of salvation provided by God, perhaps after all God will have mercy upon me. So that here are the *two* graces,—“*repentance* towards God and *faith* towards Christ.” And what is faith towards Christ ? It is a coming to him. I do not know that I can define it more accurately or scripturally. It is a coming to the Lord Jesus Christ. This involves leaving all behind, all one's former self, and

former proceedings, and former doings, and all other things behind. There is a point, the spot, I used to occupy. I have left it by faith, and am coming, dear Lord, to thee.—

“The more I strove against its power,
I sinned and stumbled but the more;
Till late I heard my Saviour say,
Come hither, soul, I am the way.

Lo! glad I come; and thou blest Lamb,
Shall take me to thee as I am.”

Faith is a coming from sin, the world, self, all creature excellency to the Lord Jesus Christ. And then it comes to *him only*. It is not coming to the sacraments first. Ritualism and Popery tell us that we must come to Jesus Christ through the sacraments. “You, sir, certainly are not going to make any depreciating observations upon the sacraments!” No; only that I do not like the word “sacrament” as applied to the ordinances of God’s house. I love the ordinances of God’s house, but I love Christ first. I love baptism, but baptism is not the way to Christ;—Christ is the way to baptism. I love the Lord’s supper, but the Lord’s supper is not the way to Christ;—Christ is the way to the Lord’s supper. Therefore, the first object is Christ, and then the “sacraments,” if you please to call them so, then the ordinances of God’s house. We come through the cross to the institutions of our God, and not through the sacraments to the cross of Jesus Christ. No; faith is a coming to Christ, and Christ only; and faith is that power which will not, and cannot stop short of Christ. There may be ministers in the way, and priests in the way, and saints in the way,—faith is that power which must come to the Lord Jesus Christ through all the crowds of priests, and saints, and angels; it goes through them, and over the Virgin Mary, and over all creatures, and does not stop until the Christ of God is reached; and when Christ is reached, faith embraces him, and—what then? She stays there for ever. She comes to him, is helped to embrace him, commits her all to him, and then cleaves to him with full purpose of heart for ever,—at least all the days of the believer’s pilgrimage. Faith lights the soul through Christ, up to the threshold of heaven, and sees the soul over the threshold of heaven, and then she sinks, she disappears to be seen no more. Her services will be required no further than that. Testifying of repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.

II. The doctrine involved is that of *mediation*. I just beg that you will think over the subject at your leisure. Repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. Now you see here is God first, and secondly, Christ—Christ standing between a sin-hating God, and a repenting sinner; so that repentance is spoken of in relation to God, and faith is spoken of in relation to the Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ. I look at God that hates my sin, and tremble, and am afraid; I look at God through the Mediator and do not tremble, am not afraid; on the contrary have a comfortable hope, notwithstanding that, in myself considered, I am a lost and ruined sinner. I cannot look at God otherwise than through Christ, and thus Christ is God’s way to the sinner—the sinner’s way to God, the great meeting-place of God that hates sin, and of the penitent sinner. And thus, here is a sin-pardoning God in Christ, and the penitent sinner coming unto Christ, and God with his pardon meets the sinner with his penitence, and drops the pardon on his heart saying, “I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee.” I make an observation for the sake of my younger brethren and sisters. You may distinguish, by looking at this verse, between natural and revealed religion. Natural religion discovers no way of escape for the sinner, no way of salvation for the sinner. Natural religion is perfectly silent upon the system of mediation. There is one God, nature

says. Ah ! and that man, that infidel is deaf indeed, stubbornly,—and forgive me if I say stupidly, (I had almost said wilfully)—deaf, who does not hear the loud voice of nature —There is a God—That is what nature says ; and if we were not sinners, that is all we should require, and we could go up through nature to nature's God. But we are sinners, fallen men and women ; we want what nature does not reveal, we want a revelation from heaven—*revealed* religion. There is one ; and this revelation says,—and one Mediator between God and man. This, says Paul, you know that “ I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you ; but have showed you and taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”

III. Then as to the *equality*. Paul made no difference, whether he preached to Jews or Gentiles, for we are all one naturally, of one blood are all the kindreds of the earth ; one morally—all owe perfect obedience to God ; one in sin —“ all have sinned,” (Jew and Gentile) “ and come short of the glory of God ; all one that are saved—all perfectly equal on the ground of salvation—one Lord is rich to all them that believe, whether they be Jews or Gentiles ; and the level will be perfect and eternal in heaven. In heavenly joy and glory, Jew and Gentile will be equal. All the saints will be equal. I have no idea that some thrones will be higher than others, that some songs will be louder than others, that some of the children of God will shine brighter than others. We are all the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ ; and Abraham, though a great man here, and tall as a cedar, and strong as a cedar too,—Abraham there appears in all the sweet and heavenly perfection of a son, and Abraham's weakest child down here, shall be like his father there—perfect and full of heaven, and satisfied and complete for ever. Therefore, there is but one law for Jew and Gentile, one Gospel for Jew and Gentile, and one salvation for Jew and Gentile, and one heaven for Jew and Gentile ; and—

“ When God makes up his last account
Of natives in his holy mount,”

may you and I be found among them, for Christ's sake. Amen.

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CHRIST, THE PROPITIATION FOR OUR SINS.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, 13th DECEMBER, 1874,

(THE TWENTY-FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THE OPENING OF THE CHAPEL.)

“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”—1 John iv. 10.

THE Apostle Paul in his Epistle to Timothy, says, “Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness;” and then he enumerates some of its many branches. The first branch which he sets forth is the manifestation of God in our nature: “God was manifest in the flesh;” and hence when the Lord Jesus Christ appeared in our world, it is said that his name shall be called Emanuel—God with us; and again, “thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.” Thus God was manifest in the flesh. How mysterious and marvellous a manifestation of God took place in the manger in Bethlehem. Was that newborn infant the mighty Saviour? Was that little child Jehovah? Was that apparently helpless one the great God that made heaven and earth? Yes; God was manifest in the flesh in the manger at Bethlehem. And we cannot doubt there were manifestations of divine glory in our flesh during the comparative retirement and seclusion of the Lord Jesus Christ for about thirty years. And God was manifest in our flesh when Christ appeared on the threshold of public life, and went down into the Jordan and was baptized of John. When he went forth into the wilderness, and was there engaged in a terrible conflict for forty days with the powers of darkness, surrounded by all the temptations that the devil could invent, and all the fiery darts it was possible for Satan to forge,—then God was manifest in the flesh. We are told that he “suffered, being tempted,” and let us not forget the fact that he suffered in the temptation, notwithstanding that he was God. During those forty days and forty nights, whilst the powers of darkness surrounded him, and most probably the most abominable suggestions and insinuations of Satan were aimed at him, and, so to speak, reached him, the sufferings of Jesus Christ were deep and unspeakable, but he yielded not. Every thought of Christ was true, every feeling was pure, every motive was perfect, every step he took and every blow he struck on that occasion, or during that period of suffering, were perfect and pleasing to God. He never erred. Satan did not gain advantage over him in a single particular. What those temptations were during those forty days we perhaps shall never know. Three or four of them are recorded. He hungered, and was tempted to convert stones into bread. He was taken to a pinnacle of the temple, and tempted to cast himself down. Two or three other temptations are recorded; but surely “all” the temptations were almost innumerable, as they were spread over the long period of forty days and forty nights. The Holy Ghost has drawn a veil over many of them. Perhaps a

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full description of them would have been unfit to meet the public eye. In all probability, many of them were so black, so diabolical, and so bad, that it was not proper that they should be fully recorded in the holy word of Divine truth. What filth our Lord fought against ! What abominations, what diabolical abominations our Lord was surrounded by ! But he came out of the conflict unstained, untarnished, and undamaged. "Great is the mystery of godliness ! God was manifest in the flesh." Having been baptized and tempted, he proceeded to preach the word, and work a variety of miracles. You see him feeding five or seven thousand with a few loaves and fishes ; God was thereby manifest in the flesh. You see him walking on the sea : God was thus manifested in the flesh. You see him rising in the boat during a storm and speaking to the wind and the waves, saying, "Peace ! be still !" and God was again manifest in the flesh. We have not, however, to dwell altogether upon that theme to-night. That is one of those branches of godliness which are inseparable from our salvation, and constitute the great mystery of godliness. Moreover, the sacrifice and sufferings of Jesus Christ are branches of godliness ; and if there are endless mysteries in the complex person of the Saviour, there are also endless mysteries in the work which he has done, and therefore it is said that the angels of God desire to look into these things. Angels desire to look into the deep mysteries of the Saviour's sufferings, into the deep mysteries of that great redemption which he accomplished, into the deep mysteries of that satisfaction which is the result of his blood-shedding and death, and into the deep mysteries of that salvation which comprehend untold millions, and shall bear them all into the presence of the everlasting God. This salvation is indicated in our text to-night, and therefore we have to look at one or two of the many branches of that godliness which is deeply mysterious, and will be deeply mysterious to saints and angels for ever.

In looking for a few minutes at our text, let me contemplate *The object of the Saviour's mission*, he came "to be a propitiation for our sins ;" and in the second place, *The great fact which the work of Christ revealed and attested*, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us." Now, these are the two branches into which we think the text divides itself, and upon each of them we will make a few observations to-night.

I. In the first place, let us contemplate *the object of the Saviour's mission*. You observe that I begin at the bottom of my text, and I do so for a certain reason. I want, in the first place, to contemplate the work of Christ, in order that I may proceed from that work which is the effect, to the everlasting love of God which is the great cause of that effect. "The propitiation for our sins." Notice, in the first place, the great Person indicated. I am not going to dwell on this branch of my subject ; I just make one or two preliminary remarks upon it. The great Person indicated—God sent "his Son." Why did he not send a million or two of his angels ? How was it that that he sent his Son ? Jesus Christ was the only person in the universe that could put away sin, the only person that could expiate the sinner's guilt, and the only person that could redeem and justify God's church and people ; and therefore it is said, "God sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." And then, in the second place, it is said that he was sent, that he came from heaven, that he entered into this world of ours. He came hither, and lived, or tabernacled here with us about three-and-thirty years. Why did he not expiate sin in heaven ? That could not be done. Why did he not make an end of transgression upon his throne, or before God's throne ? That was impossible. Jesus Christ could not come in contact with a ruined world under the curse in heaven. He could not meet hating and persecuting men in heaven. He could not meet the devil as a tempter, nor as a tormentor, nor as a liar, nor, in fact, in any other respect in heaven. He could not sink into ignominy in heaven. Our Lord could not bleed on the bosom of eternal love. The sword of divine justice could not be

thrust into the person of the Son of God in that world of glory. Sin could not be laid upon Christ in that world of light and happiness; and therefore it is said that God sent his Son. Sin was committed here, and it was necessary that it should be expiated here. The offence was committed here, and it was necessary that punishment should take place in this world. Christ came where the sin was, where the offenders and the sinners were; and when he appeared before God in this fallen and ruined world, God took the sins of his people and laid them upon the person of his dear Son, (for the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all.) Having received, by imputation, the sins of his people, it was impossible that Christ could go to heaven in that state, impossible that he could return to rule and reign, with the sins of his people upon his person; and therefore, having become their sin-bearer, it was necessary that he should carry them away into the land of eternal oblivion. Christ did *bare* our sins into a land that was not inhabited, or where they shall never be found, and returned to the throne of God, to heaven, to his honours, and to his glory, unstained and undamaged, as the triumphant Redeemer of sinners, and the worthy Ransomer of the church of God. God sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

But let me particularise a little in relation to three or four points. First I would notice this propitiation *in relation to God the Father*. It was God's intention that a propitiation, and a perfect propitiation, should be made for sin; and he was not disappointed. The purposes of heaven cannot be frustrated. This was God's intention when Christ left heaven, when God sent his Son. He said, as it were, Go and make a perfect atonement for sin. Go down into the world, and make an end of transgression. Give yourself up, your whole person, body and soul, and all your glories, as an atoning sacrifice for sin, and thereby expiate the guilt of transgression; and when you have put away sin by the sacrifice of yourself, I will receive you to everlasting honours and glory, and you shall sit for ever at my right hand as the reward of your work. You are not to forget this, my friend; for Christ and the Father also made the Mediator's success the condition of his enthronement, coronation, and reign. Jesus Christ could not have returned to heaven, he could not have been crowned, he could not have been surrounded with those honours which he now wears there, if he had not put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. And therefore, our Lord may be regarded as leaving his glory under the hand of Justice. He stripped himself of his glorious robes, put on our nature, and veiled his majesty, and appeared in this poor world, dressed like his poor brethren. But on leaving heaven he said, if I may so speak, I will not return to claim these robes nor put them on again until I have saved sinners and eternally expiated their guilt. Well, he came and did his work, and did it well, and did it like a God; he accomplished the vast purposes of heaven, and fulfilled the grand intentions of Jehovah, and returned to heaven, and Justice delightedly received him, and crowned him with his well-deserved and everlasting glories and honours.

But I am to speak of the atonement of Jesus Christ in relation to the Father; and I notice here, that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ reached the very throne of Jehovah; and I want you to bear in mind, that this was the first sacrifice that ever reached his throne, or the first sacrifice that ever had merit to reach the throne of God. Multitudes of sacrifices had been offered, probably millions of victims had been slain, and rivers of blood, so to speak, had flowed in connection with sin and sinners; but no sacrifice, until the death of Jesus Christ, had ever reached the throne of God. The influence of no sacrifice had ever been a propitiation for sin until Jesus died and put away sin. Other sacrifices were typical. Those which had been offered were ceremonial, and the Lord in speaking of them says, "It was not possible that the blood of goats and of calves should take away sin." God was pleased with them as ceremonies and types

only. He was pleased with them as indicating the great sacrifice that was coming ; but their influence never reached the throne of God. When, however, Christ, the Lamb of God, was slain, a fragrance ascended from that sacrifice into the very heavens of our God, and surrounded the throne of Jehovah, and God said, in relation to the sacrifice of Christ, I smell a sweet savour of rest. The sacrifice of Christ filled all the heavens with a sacred and satisfactory perfume, and hence it is said that he made a propitiation for our sins. Nothing so grateful to God ever ascended from Adam in the garden of Eden. Nothing so delightful to God ever proceeded from man when he was in a state of innocence, and that simply for this reason,—Adam was a mere creature, and we are now speaking of the sacrifice of incarnate God. The services of Adam were a debt, which as a creature he owed to God ; but the services of the Lord Jesus Christ were performed by him with a view to the meritorious salvation of countless millions. And this influence which thus reached the throne of God appeased Jehovah. This, my friends, is one of the sweetest facts of the Gospel. It pacified Jehovah, and changed his attributes. Let me not be misunderstood nor misrepresented. The sacrifice of Christ changed the attributes of God, *not in themselves*, but in their relation to the sinner, in relation to the transgressor. Justice became the sinner's Friend. Righteousness and equity became the friends of those for whom the dear Redeemer died ; and hence the attributes of God changed places, if I may so speak, whilst God received the fragrance of his Son's sacrifice, and smelt a sweet savour of rest. And then what followed ? Why, the propitiation having been made, and the sweetness of it having reached the throne of God, the veil of the temple was rent from the top to the bottom, and the heavens were opened. The first Adam's deeds closed heaven, and the deeds of the second Adam re-opened that world of glory and disclosed a pacified God, and Jehovah as propitious to the sinner through the precious blood now before the throne, while heaven is filled with the fragrance and merits of the Saviour's sacrifice. God, who was offended with sin and sinners, now appears on the throne of mercy, round which may be seen the rainbow of the covenant ; for the atoning sacrifice having been offered and accepted, there are no more storms in heaven to fall, but an eternal calm reigns there, and hence the rainbow round-about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. Jehovah now speaks to the sinner from the mercy-seat, and says, "Fury is not in me." I was angry, but my anger is turned away, and I can and will now comfort thee ; and therefore, addressing his servants, he says, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God." Yes ; the sacrifice of Christ has reached Jehovah's throne, and pacified and harmonized the moral attributes and perfections of our God.

But look, in the second place at this sacrifice *in relation to Christ himself* "Sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Christ knew, therefore, when he left the bosom of the Father the work that was before him, the sorrows that he was to pass through, and the death that he had to meet and destroy ; and hence it is said, "His reward is with him, and his work before him." It is your mercy and mine that we know not what a day may bring forth, that we cannot look into the future, that we know nothing about the sorrows and circumstances of next week ; your mercy and mine that the future is hid from our eyes. But the future of the Lord Jesus Christ, the terrible future of his life in the flesh, lay all before his mind. There was no veil to hide it from him. He was ignorant of nothing. He saw the whole distance that lay before him to the cross and the crown ; all the hills, all the valleys, all the sorrows, all the powers of darkness,—aye, and all the sins he was to bear ! His work was before him. However, let us look for a minute at the *quality* or the *nature* of this offering. A propitiation for our sins. What kind of propitiation is it ? What is its nature ? "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in

him." This is the sacrifice of the Lamb without blemish and without spot. Eternal perfection is in this sacrifice. Everything that God and man require. It is satisfactory. It is satisfaction itself; to the expiatory sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ nothing can be added. The Holy Spirit adds nothing to the work of Jesus Christ. Faith in the heart adds nothing to the work of Jesus Christ, and Christ's intercession before the throne adds nothing to the merit of his blood, or the worth of his sacrifice. This propitiation stands alone. It is all that God requires. The Spirit leads the sinner to Christ's work, but he adds nothing to it. The Spirit gives the sinner faith in it, but the sinner's faith does not affect the nature, worth, or perfection of Christ's propitiation. Christ pleads it on high. I will, Father, that all whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, for I have redeemed them. He pleads it in heaven; but the intercession of Christ adds nothing to its worth and sufficiency. But why do you bring this subject before us in this way? Well, my dear friends, I do so, because, as I understand matters, I am required by God to preach the Gospel; and if this is not the marrow and fatness and spirit of the gospel, I do not know what the gospel is. I do so, because I have to preach to sinners, to proclaim a finished salvation to my fellow men. And I bless God that I have such a salvation to declare as that which I am so feebly glancing at,—a salvation that is perfect and complete and entire, wanting nothing. My trembling friends,—and I think I have some here to-night,—you are not straitened in the work of Christ. You are straitened in your own faith, in your own bowels. God cannot strike you penally. He cannot strike a sinner that has cast himself for life eternal upon the all-sufficient sacrifice of his dear Son; and therefore if you can look at this propitiation in relation to Jesus Christ, you will I think, be instructed and confirmed. With regard to its nature, character, and quality, it is the offering, the sacrifice of incarnate God. I should like to make another observation on this point before I leave it. I have been speaking on what I have called its quality. Shall I say a word on its *extent or quantity*? I am not going to say how many Christ died for. I do not just now dwell on those themes and topics. That is not what I mean. I am now speaking of the measure of the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, in relation to the requirements of God and the necessities of the poor sinner. The Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all. I beg the attention of my friends, and *young* friends especially to this fact. My observation may not be received by everyone. I put it, however, before you as the glorious gospel of the blessed God, and I put it fearlessly too. The Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all. What followed? Just that measure of punishment which was due to those iniquities. There is justice here. There is equity here. There is righteousness here. There is eternal truth here. What was Christ in relation to his sufferings? A surety. Was the amount of the debt known? Was it understood? Was the amount set down or exacted anyhow? Did he die without any definite, well-understood, or limited object? Did he not know what he had to pay, how much he had to suffer, or what the weight of the load was that was transferred by God from sinners to him? Oh he comprehended all this. He knew the weight of the sin, the amount of punishment due, and all that was required of him by justice and righteousness. There was no abatement on the one hand, and no excess of wrath on the other. God will never punish for sins otherwise than in perfect justice and equity, and hence there are degrees of punishment in the world of darkness. God punishes for sin only, and he dealt thus with his dear Son. The sin that was imputed was the sin for which God punished Christ, and thus the penalty

"Was all dealt in weight and measure,
Yet how little understood!"

Thus the debt is paid, redemption is complete, the book is blotted, and the bill

is receipted and filed, being nailed to the cross. And why nailed to his cross? Why, that the sinner, who, when he is convinced of sin and visits the cross, may see it by faith. It is pleasant to see a bill, especially for a heavy amount, on the file. It is pleasant to know it is paid and receipted. Now the handwriting which was against us is nailed to Christ's cross. When the great Surety paid his people's debt, and made reconciliation for sin, was it done without regard to justice, to equity, to righteousness, and to truth? Away with all that fast and loose, or uncertain kind of dealing between God and his dear Son, in the solemn matter of punishing him for the sinner's guilt! There was sin upon him, and so much punishment was due to that sin, and though our limited minds cannot comprehend the mighty mystery, yet satisfaction for sin was demanded and given upon the principle of eternal equity. Justice stood against Christ with her drawn sword, eternal truth stood by with the debt book and turned over—if I may thus illustrate so solemn a subject—the leaves as justice smote, and the Saviour groaned, and wept, and bled. Truth turned over the leaves until the last page was reached, and the whole was paid, and then she closed the book, and justice sheathed her sword, and the Saviour bowed his head, and said, "It is finished," and gave up the ghost. And thus God's Son became a propitiation for our sins. The shout of our dear Lord on the cross—and it was a shout, for "He cried with a loud voice—was the shout of a released sufferer. "It is finished!" All penal sufferings are ended. Not all sufferings, but all penal sufferings are ended in relation to all that are interested in this propitiation. It was the shout of a conqueror. It was predicted of him that the "seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head." There the old serpent lies, and that prediction is fulfilled. I have overcome the devil and death. It was the shout of a Surety—the dreadful debt is paid, it is finished; and that which was against us, he nailed to his cross. And right views of the cross of Christ discover to the soul the perfection and completion of the Saviour's atoning sacrifice. It was the shout of a Ransomer, and the shout of a Saviour—I came to seek them, and have found them; I came to save them, and they are saved with an everlasting salvation.

Then thirdly, if we had time we might dwell a minute or two upon this atonement, or this propitiation *in relation to sin itself*. Where is sin? Well, sin is in the sinner. Ah, I am speaking of sin now, my dear friends, in connection with the perfect work of Christ; in connection with the satisfaction which God, as the moral governor of the world, has received, and in relation to all its penal consequences through this propitiation. Where is sin? In God's book? I have blotted out as a cloud thy transgressions. In the mind of God? I will remember thy sins no more. Before the face of God? Thou hast cast all mine iniquities behind thy back. Between God and the sinner?

"But since my Saviour stands between,
In garments dyed in blood;
'Tis he instead of me is seen,
When I approach to God."

If thou doest well, thou shalt be accepted; and if not, sin lieth at the door like a dog. You may think this somewhat curious, but this seems to be the idea. It lies like a dog, or a savage beast at the door; so that if one would leave the house he cannot, and if one would enter the house he cannot. There lay that cruel monster sin, and Christ approached him, removed him, and destroyed him, and now he opens the door, and enters the house, and saves the sinner with an everlasting salvation. Thus sin is not in the book, it is blotted out—not in God's mind. God says, "I will remember it no more." Where is sin? I can only give you Scriptural phrases illustrative of this? Sin is covered. Sin is drowned. Sin is put away. Sin is lost in the atoning death of our Lord. "It shall come

to pass in those days, that the iniquities of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none, and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found ; for I will pardon them whom I reserve." I love those words. You know it is very possible that a thing may be in existence although it cannot be found. You may look for it, a hundred people may look for it ; but it does not follow because it is lost, because you cannot find it, that therefore it has ceased to exist. The Lord has been pleased to say, "The sins of Judah shall be sought for, and they shall not be found ; and those of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none." *There shall be none !* And therefore, I suppose when we come to die—I cannot tell what the solemnities of death are, having never been in them ; I must, however, enter the deep solemnities of death, and then I shall know what they are—but I suppose when we come to die, if we have a sweet and living faith and hope in this atonement of Jesus Christ, we shall realize the sweet meaning of the words of Paul : "O Death, where is thy sting ?" Where is thy sting ? I have seen it. I used to fear it, when I contemplated thee, Death, years ago. I was afraid of thee. I saw thy sting, or thought I saw it, and was afraid I should be stung in this last, in this solemn hour. Is this dying ? Is this departing ? Is this going into eternity ? Death ! Where is thy sting ? There shall be none. Sin is put away. "He sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

I might proceed to speak of the sinner, or of this work *in relation to the sinner*. What shall we say of him ? He lives. The sentence of death has been executed upon another. The sinner is free ; and how does he appear before God ? Well, he is alive through the death of Christ, and he is washed in blood, he is covered with the obedience of the Saviour, he is justified from all things, his heart possesses the living graces of the Spirit, and he stands in humble boldness and confidence before the throne of God. O that it may be our privilege under the influences of the Spirit, by the exercise of a living faith, to realise somewhat of the infinite preciousness of this blessed atonement for sin.

II. Well, our time is just gone, and therefore I can only put two or three matters together very rapidly in relation to *the great fact which this propitiation reveals and attests*. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us." Love was before blood, and the love of God is antecedent to the love of his dear people. The cross of Jesus Christ is the grand effect of a glorious cause. "Not that we loved him, but that he loved us, and sent his Son ;" and so on. Well, in this propitiation for sin, we have a *manifestation of love*. Here is a manifestation of love, a breaking forth of the eternal love of God. It had been concealed in eternity, it had been concealed in the bosom and heart of God ; but in the suffering Jesus it broke forth gloriously as the waters gushed out of the smitten rock. As the rising sun puts an end to darkness and night, so Jesus Christ was the great manifestor and manifestation of God's everlasting love to his dear people.

Secondly, herein is the *measure of love*, the magnitude of it. No one but Christ could contain the whole of God's love. No being in the world could contain the whole of the fulness of God. It required an infinite person to contain all the love of God ; and when God gave his Son, he gave all he had ; and you see how great the love was. The best, Love said, the best is not too good ; and therefore he gave his only begotten Son. The best was not too good, and the greatest was not too much. Our gifts do not always represent the whole of our love. Perhaps few of our gifts represent or express the whole of our love ; but I do not hesitate to say that God by giving us his dear Son has expressed the whole of his heart, the whole of his love. He has not equalled himself in Providence. He has not equalled himself in nature. He has not equalled himself in creation. He might have gone on creating worlds till now if he had pleased, for who can set limits to omnipotence ? But he *has* equalled himself in the

salvation of his people, in the gift of his dear Son. He has given himself in Christ to the objects of his love. Here, then, we have the measure of it, and the manifestation of it. A substitute for sinners receiving the strokes of divine Justice which they had merited, and rendering that to God, which was due from them to their Lawgiver, stooping over the guilty sinner, shielding and defending him, whilst justice frowned, and the law cursed, and God poured his wrath down. He met it all, received it all, and set the sinner free. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us." And how manifold in its forms does the love of God appear in the sacrifice of Christ! God's love, which is divided into many forms and streams in the different relations in which he is said to stand to his people, unites its manifold glories in this propitiatory sacrifice; for the Father, Brother, Husband, Head, Surety, and Shepherd, all appear in this one grand fact, he is the propitiation for our sins. In the cross of Christ, and in the sufferings of God's dear Son, we have all these scattered forms of love united in one centre, all combined in Christ crucified. My Father's love, my Brother's love, my Husband's love, my Saviour's love, my Shepherd's love, the love of the Head of the church, though expressing different facts, or different forms of the same fact, are all collected, all united together in the work of him that was sent to be a propitiation for our sins. May the Lord command his blessing for Christ's sake. Amen.

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THE GLORY OF GOD RECEIVED AND REFLECTED.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, 31st JANUARY, 1875,

"And his glory shall be seen upon thee."—Isa. lx. 2.

THE manifestations of the Lord Jesus Christ to his church have been various, progressive in clearness, and continual. In the first place, he manifested himself for the most part in connection with types and shadows: the sacrifices which Abel offered, the ark which Noah built, and the sacrifices which Abraham offered, were typical of the Lord Jesus; and in some respects also Isaac was a type of his father's seed, Saviour, and Lord. David also was a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, as were also Aaron and the Jewish high priests; and thus under the Old Testament dispensation, Jesus Christ visited his people in connection with types. It is true he visited them sometimes in a visible form; but every day, and several times a day, his people saw him in connection with the types and shadows of the ceremonial law. In the fulness of time, he came in person and manifested himself to the children of Israel as the great and glorious Mediator of his church. "Lo, I come," he said, "to do thy will, O God;" and he that was born of the Virgin Mary was to be called Emanuel, viz., God with us. Well, he came for a solemnly and an eternally important purpose; and that purpose he perfectly and triumphantly fulfilled and returned to heaven; "and the heavens have received him, and will retain him until the times of the restitution of all things." What then! are we strangers to his presence now? Are there now no manifestations of Jesus Christ? Is it a fact that he does not now visit his people and manifest himself to them as he does not unto the world? Blessed be his holy and saving name! although, personally considered, he is in heaven, his Spirit, his word, and his hallowing, heavenly and helping influences are here, and he is pleased to manifest himself to his people very frequently in a spiritual manner. And when all his spiritual manifestation of himself shall have taken place, and all the objects of God's love shall have been gathered together and saved, then we and the world shall see him again, for he will come the second time, without sin unto salvation; and then in a very glorious and perfect sense shall my text be fulfilled:—"The glory of the Lord shall be seen upon thee."

The exhortations of the Word of God are inseparably connected with divine doctrines; and that form of grace which appears in exhortations always arises out of that which is doctrinal; and therefore the exhortations of the word of God are not thrown out indiscriminately. The Holy Spirit is perfectly discriminating, and particularly so in relation to spiritual things and persons; and it is the business of the ministers of the gospel to define character and position. As the promises of God belong exclusively to God's people, so the exhortations of his word belong exclusively to particular characters; and hence in the first verse of this chapter we have "Arise, shine!" You call this an exhortation,—an order from heaven, an injunction from the throne of God; but then mark the con-

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nection,—“Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee ;” and therefore a sinner dead in trespasses and sins is not exhorted to arise and shine. An individual upon whom the glory of God has not fallen is not here exhorted to shine as a light in the world ; for the Son of God is here considered as having risen as the Sun of Righteousness, and as pouring the beams of his glory down upon the soul ; and this is followed by the word proceeding from the throne of God, *Arise, shine* ; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people. “Darkness covers the earth, but light shall cover thee ; and gross darkness shall cover the people, but the glory of the Lord shall be seen upon thee. The words express a contrast,—darkness upon the earth as in Egypt when Israel was there ; but light upon the church as in the land of Goshen where Israel dwelt ; gross darkness upon the earth, but a light which is visible, and a glory which is reflected upon a certain people. “But the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.”

If you look at our text, you will, I think, see two things :—*the Lord’s glory received by his church* ; secondly, *the reflection of that glory which is thus received.*—“His glory shall be seen upon thee.”

First, let us offer a few thoughts upon the glory of the Lord which his people are said to receive. “The Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.” There is no doubt allusion in my text to the visible symbol of the Divine presence and glory which was connected with the Jewish dispensation. When the children of Israel came out of Egypt a peculiar cloud went before them, and when the Egyptians pursued and threatened to overtake them that cloud went and placed itself between the Israelites and the Egyptians. That cloud was the visible symbol of the Divine presence, and a type of the Mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ. That cloud conducted the children of Israel from place to place, during forty years in the wilderness ; and when the tabernacle was made and set up, the glory of the Lord “filled it and covered the tent of the congregation,” and subsequently dwelt between the cherubims. This was the divine Shekinah, the symbol of God’s presence, the glory of God among and upon his people Israel ; and hence it is said in the word of God—“The Lord shall be seen upon you,” and “Thy God is thy glory,” and “There the glorious Lord will be unto them a place of broad rivers and streams ;” and thus the glory of the Lord was seen upon his people. That, however, which appeared only in type to the children of Israel, has appeared in reality and as an actuality in connection with the gospel dispensation ; for “Unto you that fear my name, shall the Sun of Righteousness arise,”—not a luminous cloud, not a bright symbol of the Sun of Righteousness ; but the Sun of Righteousness himself shall arise with healing in his wings ; and ye shall go forth and grow up as calves of the stall.” Jesus Christ is the glory of the Lord, for all the glory of God in which we are interested, and which we shall ever receive, and be capable of beholding, is in the person of the Son of God’s love. Christ is the great embodiment of God’s glory. All the glory of God is in him, and hence we behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ ; and we all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord—that is the Lord Jesus Christ—are changed into the same image, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. And thus Christ is the great embodiment of God’s glory. He is the great medium or Mediator of glory ; for God’s communicable glory comes from God, through the Mediator to his church : and hence, “The glory which thou hast given me, I have given them ;” therefore that grace, that salvation, those riches, and that glory by which we, as the saints of God, are distinguished, and which come from the heart of Deity, flow from our Father to us through the person and mediation of God’s dear Son ; and Jesus Christ is the great, glorious and everlasting dispenser of the communicable glory of God. Now, the church of God is here considered as having received glory from Christ, and I hope we may apply this to ourselves ; for we have received a measure of glorious

grace from Jesus Christ, and through infinite favour not only received it, but imbibed it; and we trust that in some humble degree we as spiritual mirrors reflect the glory of the Lord. A rock receives the showers of heaven, but it does not drink them in; but the thirsty earth drinketh in the rain of heaven: so God's people receive imbibe, and reflect the saving light of Christ; and therefore we trust we know something of the meaning of the text—The glory of the Lord has been received by thee, and is seen upon thee.

Now let me particularise for a few minutes. Our subject is perhaps a somewhat difficult one, and somewhat unusual for the pulpit in this place. I notice in the first place—that if we are what we profess to be, we have received from Christ the glorious grace of relationship. I will quote a scripture or two presently in support of this position, but here I will just say that different forms or expressions of the divine glory fall upon God's creatures according to the relationship in which they stand to God. In the first place, the natural sun is the most glorious creature of God in our system; we say nothing about the whole universe; and when he rises in the morning, if the day is bright and cloudless, he pours floods, and continues during all the hours of the day, to pour floods of glorious light down everywhere upon the face of the earth, and thus the glory of God falls upon the earth when God's glorious creature the sun rises. But that expresses, if I may use the word "inferior," an inferior relationship of God,—that expresses the fact that the world and the sun are God's creatures, and that God is good to all, and causes his sun to shine upon the evil and the good. The sun shines upon nature, but he produces no moral change. He shines upon men, but no spiritual advantage or benefit is derived therefrom. Then turn for a moment to look at the Shekinah again. As the natural sun shines upon nature, and this indicates the relation in which nature stands to its God, so the divine Shekinah was in and upon the tabernacle to denote the kind of relation in which the children of Israel stood to that God whose presence was symbolically with them. They were not all spiritual people, but they were nationally the people of God, and he avowed and expressed that fact by granting them visible tokens of his presence, and the glory of Israel's God, as such, rose upon the children of Israel.

But now we pass from the natural sun, and the Shekinah, to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Sun of Righteousness; and I quote again Malachi's beautiful words—"Unto you that fear my name, shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings." And if Christ shines upon a spirit, what does that indicate? If a soul receives anything from Christ, any light from the Sun of Righteousness, what may be inferred from the fact? Why, that that soul is his; that that mind belongs to God; that that poor sinner, though ever so poor as a creature, as a sinner, is a son or a daughter of the Lord God Almighty. I said a few minutes ago that I would quote a text or two of scripture in support of this position. The Apostle Paul tells us that the Spirit of glory and of God, rests upon God's church. But how does the Spirit come down upon the heart? From whom does the Spirit descend upon the Israel of God? From Jesus Christ the risen Sun of Righteousness. And in what character does he come down upon the hearts of sinners? Why, as the Spirit of adoption; and here we have the glory of relationship. He comes down upon the hearts of sinners as the Spirit of adoption. He hath given us the Spirit of adoption, to bear witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. "Stop!" one says; "you have advanced too far. You are rising too high. If I have received the Holy Spirit in any measure from Jesus Christ, I have not yet received the Spirit of adoption." I fear, my friend, if you will permit me thus to address you, you are not a good reasoner by any means in the things that pertain to eternal life. Have you received the Spirit of Christ and yet not received the Spirit of adoption? Why, the Spirit that comes in regeneration from the Lord Jesus Christ upon the soul of a poor sinner, always comes as the Spirit of adoption; and because that soul was adopted by God into the family, and he comes for the purpose of revealing that fact to the mind,

and bringing the grace of relationship into the heart. "But, I do not know," one says; "even now, that I am an adopted child of God." You should distinguish, my dear friends, between the *person* of the Spirit, and the *voice* of the Spirit—between the presence of the Holy Ghost, and his operations in the mind. If you have received the Spirit of God from Christ, you have the Spirit of adoption. This indwelling attests your holy sonship, though he may not yet have made you confident that you are the children of God. That blessing is to come; you are not a good reasoner in the things of God. If you separate the grace of adoption from the Holy Spirit. If you have received the Spirit of adoption, you have the Spirit of glory, and sooner or later—may it be sooner, rather than later, if it be the will of God, you shall hear the voice of the heavenly turtle dove, the voice of this blessed witness of the covenant bearing witness with your spirits that you are the children of God. Still, you say, "I am not satisfied." Perhaps you are not; and it is not my business to satisfy you. It is my business to preach Him that can satisfy, and to proclaim that power which does inspire the soul with confidence in God. I will tarry here a minute just to observe—"The glory of the Lord shall be *seen* upon thee." It does not say that they that receive it shall see it. My dear friends, when Moses came down from the mount, after having held fellowship and communion with God for forty days and forty nights, his face shone with a supernatural brightness, which was so great that the children of Israel could not look at him. Do you think he knew it? Did he see it himself? Was he conscious of it? Doubtless Moses was ignorant of the fact that his face shone—he did not think there was an extraordinary brightness on his countenance; but when he came into the presence of others, they at once discovered it, and the glory of God was seen upon him. He did not see it himself. He did not, it may be, realise the fact; but such was the glory of God upon him that the people withdrew from him, shaded their eyes and could not stedfastly look at him until he had covered his face with a veil. And if you have received the Spirit of glory, others can see God's glory upon you. Angels can see it, and so can devils, whether you see it yourself or not; but the glory of God is upon you, for it is infinitely glorious to be manifestly a son or a daughter of the Lord God Almighty. See a little lower in this chapter it is said—"And thy God shall be thy glory, (the 19th verse.) "And the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory." And how is God your glory? He is your *internal* glory. That cannot be seen by others, only as its fruits and effects appear. He is your *external* glory. We shall have a word to say upon that point presently. And he is your *eternal* glory. But thy God is thy glory, in relation to the fact that you have such a God that you are privileged to be interested in the love of such a God. To be destitute of God is ruin, wretchedness, and woe. It is grandeur, glory, greatness, and dignity to have an interest in the mighty and everlasting Jehovah! I tarry a minute longer here, for the purpose of enquiring what glory consists in. Does glory consist in rank, in respectable, high, or royal connections? is that glory? Well, if glory consists in rank, what shall we say about the people of God? Who are they? They are the Royal family of heaven, the Royal children of God. They are descended from Jehovah himself; and if glory consists in rank, the people of God are of all people the most glorious people. Does glory consist in riches and wealth? Well, what shall we say about the people of God? They are poor and despised in this world; but what is said about them in connection with the covenant of grace? "All things are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." Does glory consist in a perfect character? What is the character of saints? "This people have I formed for myself, and they shall show forth my praise." Does glory consist in usefulness? The world could not stand without the church. The utility of the church in connection with the preservation of the world is obvious, almost to one who is spiritually blind; for the people of God are in a subordinate sense, the pillars of the earth, and God has set the world upon them, and when all these pillars shall have been removed,

and placed as pillars in God's temple above, then the earth shall fall and become a total wreck. And therefore look at the people of God as you please—look at them in their associations, in their connections in their wealth and riches, in their character ;—look at the manner in which they are attended here, for angels are their ministers and convoy, and you will see the glory of God upon them. When Royal personages travel portions of military power attend them ; but God is with his people, and his angels are “all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them that shall be heirs of salvation ?” Therefore, the glory of the Lord has risen upon you, if you have received the Spirit in saving forms from the Lord Jesus Christ.

What is the result of this ? Separation from the world, and that is glorious. It is to be lifted from the dunghill, and raised from the dust, and brought from wretchedness, misery, and woe, into a position of honour and dignity. “The people shall live alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations ;” that is glorious ! To receive the Spirit of God from Christ results in a glorious transformation ; such a transformation as God and God's glorious grace only can accomplish—a vital transformation, a revolution within. “Old things are passed away ; behold, all things are become new.” A vital and a practical transformation ; and in the practical transformation of an individual thus blest by God, the glory of God is seen. Is it a glory to possess a meetness for heaven ? You possess that. Is it a glory to be heirs of mansions on high ? Your title is good. Therefore, contemplating the child of God, you will see, looking at him in connection with the Bible, that the glory of the Lord has risen upon him.

Let us now pass on to another point—The righteousness of Jesus Christ ! You have not only the Spirit of adoption, and of glory, but the righteousness of Jesus Christ. You do not realise—neither do I realize, the sweet fact which I am about to introduce, as I wish we could realize it. I think I should be the happiest man on earth, if I could realize this fact in all its sweetness and fulness every day—that the glorious obedience of my Lord has been imputed to me, and that I am glorious in that glory,—that I am perfect in that perfecting robe,—that I am complete in the Lord Jesus Christ. I will tell you a fact. It is not a secret. I have no secrets in connection with this glory to tell you. All in the Lord Jesus that is transferable,—that can be imputed to another, that can be given to another, has been, or shall be, transferred and given to you. All the communicable and imputable excellencies of the dear Redeemer are cast over his dear people.

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

What is in that robe ? All the excellencies of him that wrought it out and brought it in. It is eternal, pure, true, holy, and divine, and therefore glorious. All the excellencies of humanity and divinity are in the obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ. And what is said of the person upon whom this glory is cast, or to whom this glory is imputed ? “He is comely in the comeliness which the Lord has put upon thee. The Lord beautifies the meek with salvation ; and when the Lord resolves to make one beautiful, most certainly the beauty is divine. The result of the imputation of this righteousness is perfection and completeness. or as the text expresses it, the glory of the Lord, poor sinner, has risen upon thee, or is imputed to thee. Now, this glory is variously illustrated—it is as “fine linen.” She was clothed with fine linen, white and clean. Fine linen, not such as slaves wear, but the very best—white, denoting divine purity and holiness ; clean, so that the piercing eye of God discovers no stain, no fault whatever in it. It is called the robe of righteousness. The priestly robe, the excellency, beauty, and glory of which were great ; a marriage robe, to indicate the dignity of the spouse, the bride of the Lord Jesus Christ ; a robe that covers the whole person, and conceals every defect and deformity, and by nature there are

many in us, this thrown over the whole person, covers all imperfection, and reflects the honour and glory of the dear Redeemer, for it is God's best robe. That is not all. "She shall be brought to the King in raiment of needlework;" and again, "Upon the right hand did stand the queen, in gold of Ophir." Dressed in gold! and in God's gold, for God made the costly golden dress. The glory of the Lord is upon thee. More than that, it is added by the Spirit, as illustrative of the greatness and brightness of this glory, that a woman was seen in heaven clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. There is the glory of the Lord upon her! The ever-changing moon under the feet of Christ's bride—the ceremonial dispensation in all probability. Clothed with the sun—Christ, her husband, enveloping her in his glories, hence clothed with the sun, and a crown of twelve stars upon her head, the glorious truths and doctrines of the gospel as propounded and explained by the twelve apostles of her Lord. Here is the church, living in light, in righteousness, and in the glory of God, crowned with new covenant truth, and reflecting its harmony and purity. Oh that we could realise the fulness, the sweetness, and the glory of our privileges! for the glory of the Lord is risen upon us, and shall be seen upon us. I will just mention, and only mention, one or two other points. The presence of the Lord with his people is their glory. It is our glory that the Lord of Hosts is with us, and the God of Jacob is our refuge. The children of Israel, you know, lived under a conditional covenant. When they forsook their God, their God forsook them; for his presence with them was conditional: and when God had departed from them, Ichabod might have been written over the doors of all the people. The glory of Israel is departed—the glory of the country. God's presence was the glory of the country, of Israel, and the glory of the people. The presence of God with his saints is their glory. If our God is absent, we hang our heads, and are dull, and dark, and dreary. If God leaves a chapel—very solemn thought!—if he leaves a chapel or a church, or a congregation,—there may be a grand organ behind the pulpit, a most accomplished and skilful organist, and a matchless choir of singers; and there may be also a surpliced and an eloquent man in the pulpit, a considerable congregation, and large contributions of money: indeed there may be all that earth calls good or great; but if the Lord is not there, there is no glory; for the presence of God is the glory of a church. Churches decay through the suspension of the blessing of God, and the absence of the operations of God's Spirit. Friends, let all that belong to this place pray that the glory of God may ever fall and be seen upon us here. We may be said to be a small congregation in comparison with others, and the place a comparatively small one, nevertheless, we shall be glorious and useful, and do good to one another—to our fellow-men, if the Lord of Hosts is with us. I can do all things, or can bear all sufferings, if my Lord is there. How glorious to be able to do all things, and to bear all sufferings! it is glorious; but it can be done if the Lord is with us. "Thou shalt thrash the mountains and beat them small, and make the hills as chaff."

In the fourth place, a word or two may be said *on heavenly fruitfulness*. The glory of the Lord is seen upon his people when they are fruitful. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." "They shall be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified." "From me is thy fruit found." Hence, spiritual fruit constitutes a part of that glory of which we are trying to speak. A tree of righteousness bears *righteous* fruit, just as an apple tree bears apples, and a pear tree bears pears, so a tree of righteousness bears righteous fruit, or "the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ." The tree, or the saint, bearing fruits of righteousness, is himself right, and righteousness is glorious; he is rooted in good soil, even in everlasting love. The influences which operate upon him, and under which he is fruitful, are righteous influences, and it glorifies a believer to be visited with fertilizing influences from the throne of the Lord Jesus Christ; and further, all that such a tree

bears is, as the result of divine influence, pleasing to heaven and God. There are three degrees of fruitfulness. Some of these trees are covered with blossoms, others are covered with fruit, unripe, but full, or filling up, while others are laden with fruit, ripe, and ready to be gathered. Some are covered with blossoms. Speak kindly and affectionately about the young believer. There is no sweeter, no lovelier, no richer, no more attractive sight, than an orchard in the spring, when its trees are covered with thousands and thousands of beautiful and fragrant blossoms. They may not all fulfil the promises they give, half of them may fail; but the rule is, there will be some fruit. And if there is beauty in the apple when it is red, rosy and ripe, there is also a beauty peculiarly its own when it appears only in the form of a blossom. Here is the young believer, covered with blossoms of spiritual hope and promise. It is the glory of God in him. Is the believer more matured, full, unripe, but ripening? Well, that is the glory of God seen upon him. Does one "bear fruit in old age" in the courts of the Lord's house? It shows that the Lord is a rock, that he is upright, and that there is no unfaithfulness in him. Which do you think is the best of the three? The blossom, the fruit filling up, or the fruit that is mature and ripe? I do not know,—I cannot tell which is the best of the three. God produces them all. It is pleasing to see the blossom, encouraging to see the fruit when growing, and it rejoices us to see it when it is ripe. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit: so shall ye be my disciples." Passing over an idea or two, we notice, finally, the church triumphing over all her enemies. I read sometimes, with wonder,—I think I may say with wonder, the Book of the Revelation, and it has occurred to me that one cannot see much of the holy glory of this book, unless he sits down and reads the whole of it at once; it is only like a small tract or pamphlet compared with many works that we read through at once. Read from the first chapter so the end of the 22nd chapter, and you will see, I cannot say, how many, objects in it, but you will see one. I mention only one now, prominent figure, and that is the church. She goes down into the greatest depths, and becomes invisible, so to speak, as if she were drowned. She seems to be gone. In the next chapter she comes up again, wounded, bleeding, torn; but there she is. She is not dead. The next chapter shows her going down again, and she scarcely appears for a chapter or two. Further on she reappears; and thus we have her described, until we reach the 19th chapter, where we read: "I heard the voice of many people in heaven saying, Alleluia! for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. He has judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication." Babylon is fallen! Behold the Bride, the Lamb's wife. She has made herself ready. "And I looked," says John, "and saw the city of God, the new Jerusalem, descending from God out of heaven as a bride adorned for her husband." There she is after all! She has survived every danger, every death, every devil, and every pope! The glory of the Lord is seen upon her. By-and-by, the bodies of his dear people shall be raised. They are sown in dishonour, but raised in glory!—sown in corruption, but raised in incorruption! These vile bodies when they come forth out of the grave, shall catch, imbibe, and reflect the beams of Immanuel's glory, and become like his glorious body. We shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we be for ever with the Lord: and then the glory of the Lord shall be seen upon us.

Thus much for the reception.

II. I can only say a word or two on the reflection of this glory. It shall be seen upon thee. This is natural and inevitable. It shall be seen upon thee, without any effort on the part of the people themselves. Put a lighted candle into a lantern, and let the lantern stand abroad. Everyone that has an eye will see that there is a light in that lantern, and need not be told that the lantern contains a light. And it is rather remarkable that the results of the grace of God in the heart of a sinner are frequently called fruits. They are *sometimes* called works; but for the most part, they are called fruit. There is a very great dif-

ference as to the manner in which fruit and works are produced. How natural is it for a good tree to bear fruit, and that without noise ! It is done naturally, inevitably ; and so by the fruits of the Spirit, Paul says, "The *works* of the flesh," but the "*fruits* of Spirit," and they are "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith," and so on ; so that the glory of God is seen on the church without any extraordinary effort on their part. Only stand as Christians and as believers behind the counter, at the desk, in your house, in the market, only carry your religion with you. You need not tell the world that you are a religious person,—that you are a saint of God, or that the glory of the Lord is risen upon you. You need not tell them that. Let a Christian go with his Christianity with him, and the glory of the Lord shall be seen upon him. When the sun shines, it must be light ; and if there is a beautiful gem lying on the ground while the sun is shining, it will reflect the light, unless it be covered. And so the child of God, having received the glory of God, naturally and necessarily reflects the same, and then it is seen. The glory of the Lord shall be seen. Who shall see it ? Well, the world will see it, and shall acknowledge that that is "the seed which the Lord hath blessed." Then shall the enemy say, "God hath done great things for them." They gaze and admire, yet hate the change. Who will see it ? The devil ; and hence he will try in a thousand ways to damage the character and obscure the brightness of the child of God. He knows the man that the glory of God has fallen upon, and he is one of the first that can see the glory that has been received by a poor sinner. The church will see it, and say, "Come in, ye blessed of the Lord ;" and every angel of God in heaven will see it, and delight to guard and protect these reflectors of the glory of God. Where will it appear ? Well, in different circumstances. In trial, it will keep your head above the water. In temptation, it will sustain you and carry you through. On the bed of affliction, if the glory of God is poured upon the heart, there will be a singing :—Sweet affliction ! sweet affliction ! that makes Christ precious to my soul. In death—ah ! go to the dying bed of a saint ; hear him say he has no fear ! He is on the rock ! All is well ! Heaven, with its glory, is in view, and the earth, with all its affairs, are now behind him. The glory of God is seen upon him. Here is variety also ; and many other things might be noticed, but time is gone. But here are *variety* and *unity*,—variety in the fact that the people of God are numerous, and unity in the fact that God only is reflected in every one that the glory of the Lord is seen upon. If there are a thousand mirrors, and the sun is shining, the whole thousand will reflect the same sun ; and if a thousand gems and jewels were on the ground, they all would reflect the same sun ; and in a pool of clear water here, and in a similar pool in India, thousands of miles off, the same sun is reflected. And so it is with Jesus Christ and his receivers. The Indian, the negro, the Greenlander, those that live beneath the burning rays of a vertical sun, and those that live in almost everlasting ice and snow, if the glory of God falls upon them, they all alike reflect that glory, and our dear Christ is glorified in his people.

The church borrows nothing from the world ; her light and glory are from her Lord ; her life and character, and experience are emanations from Christ, and in her godly practice, the world and others see the saving glory of her only Head. The world can neither destroy nor conceal God's people ; for this glory shall be seen. Who can prevent the shining of the sun, or the world from being irradiated thereby ? and who can prevent the grace of God from falling on a sinner's heart ? or the natural and visible results thereof ? I leave the subject. Time is gone. May the Lord command his blessing. Amen.

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JOB'S FAITH IN THE RESURRECTION.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, 14th FEBRUARY, 1875.

"Yet in my flesh shall I see God."—Job xix. 26.

JOB had spiritual breathing times before the throne of God. There were moments in his sufferings, when his spirit was buoyant, and his feelings lively; when his thoughts were carried on high, and he was more than a match for Satan, and equal to all his pains and afflictions. Sometimes we see him plunged as it were, into the greatest depths, and then we hear the language of deep and bitter complaint. Again, we see him rise to the surface, and breathing sentiments of joy. The hand of his covenant God was underneath him, and the Spirit of Jehovah raised him above the flood, when he again and again used the language of confidence,—“Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.” “My witness is in heaven, and my record is on high.” “I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.” And thus you see, Job had his changes. The night was terribly dark, but a star or two now and then appeared. The cup which was put into his hand was filled with terrible bitters, but now and then the Lord put something sweet into his spirit. The wounds which had been inflicted upon him were terribly deep, and the sufferings which they produced were unspeakable; but every now and then he was favoured with a sweet and soul-ravishing view of his God, and thus he was sustained, and helped to bear his sorrows. We find Job saying here, “Oh that my words were now written, that they were printed in a book!” Well, that wish has been at least partially fulfilled, whether Job knew it would be so or not; for they have been printed in a book, and we have the book before us here to-night. But Job proceeded to say, “Oh that they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever.” Whether that wish of Job was fulfilled or not, I do not know. The idea appears to be this—and it may strike you as somewhat novel—Job knew he was a dying man, and that his poor dying body would drop into the grave; and he said, Oh that there might be engraven upon my tomb or tombstone as with an iron pen these important words:—“I know that my Redeemer liveth.”

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Whether these words were written upon his tombstone, or whether Job had a tombstone or not, I cannot say. It appears to me, however, that this may have been the thought of Job, and that he expressed it in the language before us. First—"Oh! that my words were written in a book,"—they are here; and secondly, "That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock (where perhaps I may have a sepulchre) for ever." Job wished these words might appear on his grave or be graven with an iron pen upon the rock: I am dead, and my flesh is here, but I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God. The remainder of the wish expressed you will read at your leisure. The whole of it is indicative of the deepest spirituality, and the clearest and most comprehensive knowledge of the things of God. I may just observe one thing more. What did Job refer to when he said, "My Redeemer will stand at the latter day upon the earth?" The learned tell us that the word translated "stand" here, has a great variety of meanings in the original. Sometimes we are to take it as it occurs before us—"He shall *stand* at the latter day *upon* the earth;" and then looking thus at the words, we have Job's faith in the incarnation of Christ, for the Gospel dispensation is called the last day, or the last days, or the latter days; and taking this meaning of the word Job expressed, if such were his thought, his faith in the advent and incarnation of the Saviour,—"I shall see God who will appear in my flesh." Another meaning of the word is—"He shall be *lifted up* above the earth at the latter day." If this were the meaning of the word as used by Job, then it expresses Job's faith in the crucifixion of Jesus, "For I, if I be *lifted up* from the earth will draw all men unto me." Another meaning of the word is *raised up*. If this be the meaning of the word used by Job, then Job expressed his faith in the resurrection of the dear Redeemer. Another meaning of the word is *stand upon* or *stand over*; "and that he shall *stand over* the earth, or above the earth, at the latter day." That appears to have been the word that was used by Job, and that is the view which we shall take of the subject to-night. This being the meaning of the word, as is most probable, it sets forth Job's unbounded faith in the second coming of the Lord of life and glory. "He shall stand over the earth, or above the earth at the latter day; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God."

Let us take a three-fold view of our subject. First, *contemplate it as a very important and glorious doctrine*. In the second place, *consider it as an expression of spiritual confidence*; and thirdly, *look at it as indicating spiritual comfort and consolation*; for it is a most comforting and consoling thought in view of death and eternity that we shall see God in these bodies of ours.

I. In the first place, let us contemplate our subject to-night as *an important and glorious doctrine of grace*. Looking at this aspect of the subject, you perceive that it naturally divides itself into two branches;—first, the resurrection of the body; and secondly, the soul's full and eternal vision of God. Let us offer a few thoughts on these two branches of this important subject.

1. First, *The resurrection of the body*—not the resurrection of the bodies of all men, though it is a fact, and a fact which we firmly believe, that the bodies of all men will be raised from the dead. Our attention, however, is to be limited for a few minutes to the resurrection of the redeemed bodies of the people of God. We believe most earnestly and intensely in the general resurrection of the wicked and the just. But Job was a good man, and spoke of himself, and we therefore confine our attention to our text and the resurrection of the bodies of God's people. Now, let us notice in the first place that the resurrection of the bodies of the church of God is necessary to satisfy the rights of Emanuel. I know that my remarks will be doctrinal for a few minutes, but I know also that the doctrines of divine grace are the spiritual food of faith; and if you can follow me here,

perhaps you may be able to gather a few crumbs of heavenly bread which will be nourishing and strengthening to your spirits. The Saviour has a right to the bodies of his people, a right which is inalienable, a right he can never forfeit, a right which he will never ignore, and a right which is realisable and shall most certainly be realised. And is it not an unspeakable blessing to be interested in these rights of Emanuel, and to be enabled to say by divine teaching—In my flesh I shall see God, I shall see him in this body and for myself, and not another? Christian brethren, in London we have so much preaching, so much—I had almost said—religion, and so many public services, in connection with the worship of God, that I am afraid these great facts frequently fall upon our ears as common things. Nevertheless, the last day will be a wonderful day, when churchyards and cemeteries shall yield up their teeming millions of the bodies of ransomed men and women and they shall stand smiling beneath their descending and smiling Lord. However flatly these things may fall upon our ears now, it will be blessed to be found among the redeemed then, to look up and see the great white throne of our descending and smiling Lord, and to feel that influence which I cannot now describe, catching us up to meet the Lord in the air, that we may be for ever with him. It will not be a flat subject then. It will not then be insipid or uninteresting. The rights of Jesus Christ are such that the resurrection of the bodies of the saints of Christ must take place. Will you follow me for a few minutes while I point out a few Scripture facts. With regard to the *donation* of the church to Christ—"Thine they were, and thou gavest them me;" and then turning to the sixth chapter of John, you hear the dear Saviour say, "It is the will of him that sent me that of all he gave me—*of all that he gave me*—I should lose none; and then secondly, "I should lose *nothing*, but should raise it up again at the last day." It seems then, from this, that the bodies of the saints were given to Christ. You limit your attention in relation to eternal things to your minds, to your souls; but your whole persons were given to the Lord Jesus Christ, and Christ says, "They are mine, even their bodies, by my Father's donation; and it is his will that I should lose nothing, but raise it up again at the last day; and therefore, not a limb nor an organ, not a power nor a faculty essential to our minds or our bodies shall be lost." They are all the property of Jehovah-Jesus. They all belong to the dear Lamb of God; and Job says, "These eyes out of which I can hardly see by reason of their ulcerated condition, these eyes are his, and though they shall be eaten by worms, yet by and by, they shall reappear in these very sockets and see God; for I shall see him for myself. And then again the body is *redeemed*; and if the Saviour has a right to the body on the ground of his Father's donation, he has—I had almost said a further or a stronger right to it by reason of the fact that he has redeemed it with his precious blood. I do not know why I am directed to speak in this way to-night, for I am not preaching a funeral sermon; but I was reading the Book of Job, and the words seemed to fasten upon my mind, and I have brought them as my text. We are speaking of the redemption of the body by the Lord Jesus Christ—"Ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your bodies, and in your spirits, which *are his*." The Father's gift renders it necessary that you should see Christ in your flesh. The Son's redemption renders it necessary that you, if you are a redeemed man, should see God in Christ, in this flesh of yours. But that is not all. The body, my brethren,—and permit me to say, perhaps you do not frequently soar so high;—the body, my brethren, is *represented in heaven*. We speak of the representative character and work of Jesus, and limit, I fear, our thoughts to our spirits; but he represents our whole persons there. Jesus Christ's body is in heaven. Our Advocate before the throne appears there in our flesh and therefore our bodies are represented in a better world, even before the throne of God. That is not all. The body which you and the Bible

call a vile, poor, frail, mortal, and dying body is a *member of Christ*, and as really united to him as the soul is, for Paul speaking of purity of conduct and giving exhortations in relation to chastity, asks the question, "Shall I take the members of Christ and unite them to a harlot?" So that the body of the saint of God is a member of the mystical body of Christ, and that mystical body cannot be perfect in heaven without that body of yours, which at present is poor and vile. "Wherefore," says Paul, "comfort one another with these words." Do not tell me there is no comfort in the doctrine of the resurrection, that this is a subject too distant and too mysterious for our comfort and consolation. Is it not a deeply and an indescribably pleasant and delightful fact that death shall yield up every atom of its prey, and that Christ will have all he received from the Father, all he bled for, all that is united to him, all that he represents now in heaven, and all the temples of the Holy Ghost? In my flesh shall I see God. Christ's rights are universal, and I have said a minute or two ago that they are realisable. Worldly wisdom sneeringly asks, "How can the body be raised from the dead when it has ceased to exist?" Consider cremation, or the destruction of the body by fire. And how, it is asked, when the body is consumed, burnt to nothing or next to nothing, how can it be re-produced? How can it be raised from the dead? How can it reappear? How did Almightyness produce it at first! How did Omnipotence bring this material world of ours out of nothing at first! Can we limit an Almighty hand? Christ, therefore, having bought the body, and made it his own, has a right to it and will realise his right; therefore, the body, though it be burnt by fire and its ashes be driven by every wind, and scorched by every sun, shall be reproduced by Omnipotence; for Christ has bought it with his blood. Even Job with all his ulcers, and others with all their sicknesses shall, notwithstanding all their sicknesses, reappear. There shall be a reproduction of bodies and all shall in their flesh see God. But that is not all. The resurrection of the body is necessary, not only to satisfy Christ's rights, it is necessary to complete his victories. Our Lord is the Captain of our salvation, as well as our meritorious Saviour; and he came to conquer our enemies, and he will come the second time, without sin, unto salvation, to complete his conquests; for we read that he has a sword girded on his thigh. When he shall come to complete his conquests and finish salvation, he will use that sword. He has another blow, or other blows, to strike; other battles to fight, other victories to win, and other conquests, to gain; and therefore, the period is coming when he will be seen again on the earth and fight the last battle, gain the last victory, and achieve the last conquest; for he must reign till all enemies are put beneath his feet, and the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. Our Lord when he came the first time conquered death, but he did not utterly destroy him, he conquered him, and took him into his service, but did not make an end of death, and hence you and I are to die; but when he comes again he will destroy him whom he then subdued and conquered. When our Lord came the first time, he changed the nature of the grave, but he left the grave for us, he left it where it was, though he did not leave it what it was. There is the grave! We must go to it or be carried to it. Ministers of the gospel have frequently visited the grave, and seen many of the bodies of the saints lowered into that last home on earth. The grave still exists. But it must be destroyed, and cease to be. And Job believed in that fact—In my flesh shall I see God. Originally, or apart from Christ's death, the grave was only death's gloomy depository,—the jaws, the open jaws of death, and connected with sin only; it was opened to swallow up all the seed of Adam, and it swallowed for a time, the dear and blest Redeemer. The grave was originally, or by reason of sin, the prison of justice, and, my fellow-sinner, (here is a word to you): There are two bed-fellows in the grave. Looking at the grave as a bed-chamber, or as a bed, there are two bed-fellows,—one is grace, and

the other is sin. Grace and sin!—and if sin goes to bed with you when you are buried, it will rise with you in the morning of the last day; and if grace goes to bed with you when you are buried, it will rise with you in the morning of that day. There are two states only for both body and soul. Well, then, the grave is, apart from Jesus Christ, the prison-house of justice, and it receives the bodies of the impenitent, and the sinner for the purpose of retaining them till the general assize, till the last trial. There the body of a sinner is in a state of confinement till the day of trial comes, when the Judge will call, power will open the prison and call the criminal out, the trial shall take place, conviction shall follow, and eternal banishment and ruin take place. But Christ has changed all that to the saint. It is not now a prison to his dear people. Job said, “It will not be a prison to me.” Oh that my words were written with an iron pen on lead and on the rock for ever! I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that when he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth and call me out of the grave, I shall in my flesh see him and for ever know him. The grave, therefore, is a bed-chamber, a resting-place, a temporary abode, where the sacred dust of the church of God is deposited for a time. And the eye of the great Purchaser and Owner of the property is kept upon that property, and when he shall come and blow the great trumpet, “Awake! ye dead, and come to judgment!” then Job, and you, and I, and the millions of the redeemed shall respond to the call. “Thou shalt call and I will answer thee, and thou wilt have respect unto the work of thine hands.” Thirdly, lest we should dwell too long in one place,—the resurrection of the body you will see is necessary to *preserve our identity*. It will be a resurrection of the body, not a new or another body. ‘In my flesh shall I see God,’ and “These eyes shall behold him and not another.” The body that was born—do not trouble me with any philosophical observations or quibbles just now! I am preaching the gospel, and I have not time to go into the matter that in certain respects the body changes every seven years. The body that stands in the pulpit here before you to-night, is the body that was born fifty years ago or thereabouts. The body that was born, shall be raised. The body that grew, shall be raised. The body that suffered, shall be raised. The body that died, shall be raised. In my flesh shall I see God. You see the identity of the believer will be preserved for ever. Our souls, these immortal substances or beings which we have in our breasts here, will go to heaven and be for ever with the Lord; but should we at the last day enter a strange tenement, a strange house, a strange body, our identity would not be perfect and complete, but we shall be united to our identical bodies. The spirit will be reunited to its own body, and there will be no confusion. I like sometimes to sit and think on that. There will be no confusion, no mistake, no disorder. There will be Abraham’s body—glorious old saint!—and there will be his spirit and the reunion will take place. There will be Isaac, and Jacob, and Joseph, and Job, and there will be other bodies and their spirits which are now in heaven will come with the Lord. The re-union shall take place and there will be no mistake, no confusion, no disorder. What a meeting it will be between the body and the soul after a separation of hundreds or thousands of years! Ah! Watts sings:—

“Corruption, earth, and worms,
Shall but refine this flesh,
Till my triumphant spirit comes
To put it on afresh.”

And methinks how disappointed and tormented Satan will be when he sees the destruction of his first-born sin, his second-born death, and his third-born the grave, when he sees all his offspring dead, and the raised bodies of God’s people none the worse, but the better after having crumbled and mouldered into dust in

the grave ; for as death came by the first Adam, life comes by the Second. "By man came death, and by man came also the resurrection from the dead." Fourthly and lastly : The resurrection of the body is necessary *to complete our conformity to Christ*. Without the resurrection of our body we should not be perfectly like him. His body is there. The body that Mary nursed, the body that walked about Jerusalem, the body that sat on Samaria's well, that body that Judas kissed, the body that Pilate scourged, the dear head that was torn by the crown of thorns, the body that was nailed to the tree, the body that was put into the grave of Joseph of Arimathea, that body was raised from the dead, that body of our Lord is now in heaven. And if these bodies of ours should not be raised, there will be a want of conformity, there will be imperfection in our conformity, to the dear and blest Redeemer. But all is settled. Do not despise your bodies, for you will be buried in union to Christ. Your body will lie in the dust in sacred union to Christ ; and at the last day, the Holy Ghost will enter your grave. Will he ? So Paul says, Romans viii. I do not speak without the Book. Paul says, "If the Spirit of him that raised up Christ from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit which dwelleth in you." The Holy Ghost will enter the grave and revivify the body, sanctify the whole, spiritualise the whole, present the whole in its spirituality to Jesus Christ, and in a moment all shall be perfectly like the Lord of life and glory. This will be the climax of our religion, the consummation of Divine grace, and the fulfilment of the purposes of our God.

2. *The vision of God.* In my flesh I shall see him. Only a word or two. I shall see him in my nature, and hence some have supposed, and even gone as far as to say that was Job's meaning : In my flesh I shall see God, and I shall see God dressed in my flesh. I do not mind how you take it. The literal meaning of the text is this, that in that body which was then sitting in ashes and covered with sores, Job shall see Christ at the last day ; but it is also a fact that Job will see God in his flesh, in his nature. We shall see God in Christ at the last day, and not see Abstract Deity, not a Being that will inspire us with terror and dread, not a distant object, an object far off. See God in our nature infinitely amiable, and attractive, and lovely. We shall know him, know him as our own God, and know him as our own in a moment. Not only see God in Christ, we shall realise the fact as we cannot realise it here, that he is our kinsman, our near kinsman, our brother ! Oh friends, this will inspire us with confidence when the world is on fire, that Christ on the throne is our Brother ! our Husband ! that we are related to him, that the relationship is marvellously close and true. In my flesh shall I see God. Oh that it were graven on the rock for ever. We shall see him face to face without a vail between, and through no medium ; and every organ, bodily as well as mental, will be qualified for the sight, qualified and strengthened to bear the weight of glory and splendour and majesty that will eternally emanate from the divine presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. Live in the Sun, brother ? We could not do that. Before that were possible, a change would have to take place. Live in the glories of his face, in the splendours of the light of his countenance ? We could not live in those splendours in our present state. It is a weight of glory. It would oppress us, bend us, break us here. It is a weight of glory, but we shall be strengthened then. I cannot enter into this subject ; I have never been there ; I am guided by the Bible, for glory must follow grace, and glory is said to be a weight. Heavy, however, as it will be, we shall be strong to bear it, and never groan beneath it ; for whilst it will be a *weight*, it will be a weight of *glory*. We shall see him face to face, and pleasure will be in both the redeemed and the Redeemer. Pleasure and love indicated in the countenances of both. The Saviour pleased to see his once suffering Job, and Job delighted to meet his Redeemer and his Lord, whom he shall see face to

face. And the sight will be an influential one. This is a mystery which I cannot explain. We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. A photographer takes your likeness in the light of the sun, and the solar light operates in such a manner under certain conditions that the result is your likeness. So when you come out of your grave, and your soul is united to your body, and the great Sun of righteousness shines, or the dear Redeemer descends, and your eyes are fixed upon him, his likeness shall be seen upon you at once. You will be a representation, a likeness, a copy of the great Christ of God. In my flesh shall I see God. It will be an everlasting sight, my brother. We see him by faith here, but see him only now and then. We come to his house, and do not always see him ; we sometimes read the Bible, and do not see him at all, or not satisfactorily ; and in Christian conversation we do not always see our Lord. But when we shall see him as he is without a veil between, we shall see him for ever, and the eye will never be removed from its object, never be taken off the dear Christ of God. Christian brother, we shall see all at once in him,—all that he is to us shall be seen immediately, and all that it is necessary we should know to constitute us perfect, we shall see at once in Christ. Now, my friend, we look from object to object, and from one thing to another, and we are obliged to do so, for our powers and parts are exceedingly limited. If we contemplate Christ as a Husband, we limit our attention to that one fact for a time. Then Christ as a Brother, we limit our attention to that for five or ten minutes ; or as a bleeding Saviour,—we cannot take in all at once—but when we see God in our flesh we shall see the Husband, the Brother, the Redeemer, the Saviour, yea, *that* Christ who is all in all to his dear people.

II. In my flesh shall I see God. It is an expression of confidence. How did Job know this ? Job had not the written Word, there was no Bible in existence then. Neither had Abraham, Isaac, Jacob nor Joseph, the written Word. Neither had Moses the written Word until he was inspired to write a portion of it ; therefore God communicated his mind and will to his ancient people in an extraordinary manner. Had Job seen the Son of God in visible form ? Probably he had ; for Abraham and the patriarchs frequently saw the Son of God in visible forms. Probably Job had seen and met the Son of God in some visible form, but I do not like speculation. Job had the Spirit of God, and God's Spirit is always the Regenerator of God's people, the Sanctifier of the soul in which he dwells, and the Witness of the covenant of grace ; and Job having the Spirit of God, having been taught by that Spirit, and having received his testimony, said, " I know that Christ is my Redeemer, and that he liveth, and that in my flesh I shall see God. Now I will dismiss this part of my subject, although much more might be said upon it, and just offer one word on the last particular, viz :—

III. That the text exhibits a *source of comfort and consolation*. In my flesh shall I see God. Job said, as it were, this diseased body of mine—and it was covered with sores from the crown of his head to the sole of his feet, his breath was strange to his wife, he took a potsherd and scraped himself withal, and sat in ashes,—yet Job says, the condition of my body does not affect its union to Jesus. The hundreds of boils upon it, and pains within it, do not affect God's love to my flesh. My body is still a member of the dear Redeemer, and an object of God's love ; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, which is now offensive, yet in my flesh shall I see God. I will only add one thing more by way of inference from the subject : If all this is true, (and it is, and much more than this is true) then my beloved friends, your bodies are cared for now by your God. I have sometimes been terribly concerned and distressed about my poor body, more so at times than I have about my soul. I have felt at times as if I could trust God a great deal better with my soul than I could with my body, and as though I could trust him for spiritual bread more readily than I could for temporal bread. Take a wide and comprehensive view of salvation.

He loves your bodies as strongly as he loves your souls. God will care for them as tenderly and deeply and as wisely as he will care for your souls ; for they are Christ's members, the purchase of his blood, the temples of the Holy Ghost, and Christ is bound to raise them up at the last day. Therefore he will supply them, and fix the bounds of their habitation on earth, and cause them to be instruments of accomplishing his own mind, will, and purpose. God loves that flesh of yours, not your corrupt nature, but he loves that flesh of yours as he loves your immortal soul. Therefore in your flesh you shall see God. The doctrine of the text is glorious ; the confidence it expresses is holy ; and the consolation it indicates is such as God only could prepare and reveal. Amen.

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THE PRIVILEGE AND POWER OF PRAYER.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON THURSDAY EVENING, 1st APRIL, 1875.

“Incline thine ear, O Lord, and hear : open thine eyes, O Lord, and see : and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent to reproach the living God.”
Isaiah xxxvii. 17.

SATAN goeth about as a roaring lion, “seeking whom he may devour;” and the Holy Ghost has said, “resist him, stedfast in the faith.” Though Satan devours thousands or millions of our fellow men, he has never yet been permitted to devour the saints of the everlasting God. But he has in all ages of the world tempted and tormented them. Sometimes the temptations of the devil relate to the genuineness of one’s religion and profession, and to the filial character of one’s connection with the great God of heaven and earth. At other times they relate to the divine inspiration of the Scriptures. Sometimes Satan suggests a doubt to the mind concerning the divinity of the gospel ; and when a question arises in the mind in relation to this fact, the devil’s purpose is, to a very considerable extent, fulfilled ; for well does he know there can be neither comfort, nor holy or spiritual strength in the believer at the time his heart is tossed and distressed by doubtings and anxieties respecting the perfect genuineness of God’s holy Word. It is, however, a fact, that the Spirit which dwells in the heart of a saint is breathed, so to speak, through the whole of the gospel of our God ; and hence the heart of a child of God is, notwithstanding Satan’s temptations, in sympathy with the gospel. There is that in the gospel which can and does coalesce or unite with the mind of a sanctified man or woman ; and since both the heart and the Word of God are inspired by the same Spirit, when the Word is brought to bear upon the heart of a saint, a holy and sympathetic connection or heavenly union is formed, and divine comfort, consolation, and vigour are sure to result. Now, if we always believed, firmly and deeply, in the inspiration of the Word of God, and could always firmly and deeply believe in our own personal salvation and interest in the facts and promises recorded therein, I hardly know how we could hang down our heads, or what circumstances could arise to induce us to despond and almost despair ; for no fact is more clearly revealed than this, that God is a prayer-hearing and a prayer-answering God. And this fact is not only abundantly stated, it is abundantly attested and verified in God’s holy Word, that God has always heard and answered prayer ; and that his throne has been frequented by his dear children in all ages, and that successfully, are facts which are everywhere declared in this Book which is divine. God is the same in all generations, and, therefore, having always heard and answered prayer, he will hear the petitions of faith and necessity as long as faith and necessity are in existence, or as long as his Holy Spirit shall indite prayer in the hearts of his people.

We have in the text before us, and in the connection in which it stands, a very interesting and instructive narrative in relation to the reign of Hezekiah, king of Judah, and Sennacherib, the proud monarch of Assyria. You are aware (for we

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read this chapter at the commencement of the service to-night) that Sennacherib could not fulfil his design to take Jerusalem at the time when he had resolved to do so, for he heard that Tirhakah, king of the Ethiopians, was come out against him, and therefore he was for a time diverted from his purpose. It was his intention to come down all at once upon Jerusalem and destroy the city and people of God. God, however, knows how to frustrate the purposes of men, and he sent Tirhakah into the way (if I may so speak) of Sennacherib, and he and Rabshakeh and his whole army were obliged to leave Jerusalem for a time; but before they left the place, the general wrote a blasphemous letter, assuring Hezekiah that in a very short time he would return to the city, destroy, or subject the people, and swallow up Jerusalem and Judah altogether. The letter was blasphemous, and Hezekiah did the only good thing that could have been done with it. We are told that, having received it, "he went up into the house of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord." I suppose he literally took the letter into the house of God, that is, into the temple, and that he opened it, and laid it before the holy place, or before the vail which separated the holy from the most holy place. Having laid the open letter beneath God's eye, he prayed to the Lord, saying, "O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, that dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth. Incline thine ear, O Lord, and hear; open thine eyes, O Lord, and see; and hear all the words of Sennacherib, which hath sent to reproach the living God."

I shall, in making a few remarks upon this subject to-night, depart a little from the usual form or order, and gather up a few important and instructive lessons from the course taken by Hezekiah as indicated in the text and its connexion. The subject suggests to us several sweet facts, and I hope we shall be able to give a little holy attention to them, for they are good and profitable. The text suggests the fact that every child of God has *unlimited liberty in prayer*, unlimited liberty before the throne of grace. Does that appear in the text? Well, there was the message, the blasphemous letter lying before God, lying between God and Hezekiah; and Hezekiah mentions the name of Sennacherib, and presents the whole of the affliction of himself and the children of Israel as a nation before that great God who dwelt between the cherubims. We do not find that on this particular occasion he prayed for an application of blood to his own conscience, or to the consciences of the people. Something else on this occasion oppressed his spirit and weighed down his mind, and he was permitted and enabled to take that circumstance and that sorrow into the presence of the Lord his God. Now I learn from this that we are not limited in prayer, that our God has imposed no restrictions whatever upon us. He has not said, you may make this and that and the other, half a dozen or half a score things the matter of prayer before me. He has been pleased to say, "Ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto thee;" "Ask what ye will, and it shall be given unto thee." We are not therefore limited in prayer. We may take all our concerns and all our affairs, all our enemies and all our friends, all our nights and all our days, all our fears and all our faith, all our pleasures and all our pains into the presence of the Lord our God. We have unlimited liberty as to the privilege itself, although there are times when our hearts do not experience holy freedom, when we are before the footstool of divine favour. In that prayer which is usually called "The Lord's Prayer," we find we may be very comprehensive and free before the throne of our Father, God. That prayer is brief; and you observe it was presented to the disciples by the Lord Jesus Christ himself, and that it embraces everything we need. "Thy kingdom come: Thy will be done on the earth as it is done in heaven: Give us this day our daily bread."—We may pray for our daily bread as well as for the coming of God's kingdom; and pray for our daily bread as well as for the accomplishment of God's will. "Forgive us our sins." We may pray

for the forgiveness of sin, and for the application of a Saviour's blood, just as we may pray for our daily bread, and pray for our daily bread just as we are permitted to pray for an application of the Saviour's blood. We may take the tempter and all evil into the presence of God, that is to say, looking at that short prayer, we may take the devil and his temptations before God in prayer. "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." Now you have, you see, in that prayer almost all the favours, blessings, and mercies mentioned, or at least, comprehended that you stand in need of; all that you need as a creature, all that you need as a sinner, all that you need as a saint, all that you need as a son of God, and all that you need as a soldier of the cross of Jesus Christ. Why, that prayer comprehends all the different aspects of our character, and all the various forms of grace and pity, power and mercy, that circumstances seem to render it necessary we should be visited with; and, therefore, upon the knee of prayer we have unlimited liberty. When our hearts are favoured with the spirit of prayer and the grace of supplication, we are enabled to take advantage of this fact, and to avail ourselves of this vast and most extensive privilege of making known all our requests unto our heavenly Father. "In all things by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." Now, dear friends, the ground of this unlimited liberty appears to be the following fact or facts. In the first place, the great Object of prayer is our heavenly Father, and he is as a Father divinely and eternally perfect. Your little child feels that he has perfect liberty to tell you all his pains and all his wants, and to mention to you the names of all his enemies and all his friends; he feels that he is free to tell you what his hopes and expectations are, and to ask you for what he believes he stands in need of. And this extensiveness of privilege on the part of your little child arises out of the fact that you are his father, and that he is your own dear child; and *your heavenly* Father has been pleased to say, "Ask what ye will, and it shall be given unto you, or done for you." You see our privilege is vast, and its ground divine; and not only divine, but soft, attractive, and fragrant; for how blessed it is to kneel before God, believing the great fact, that he that sits upon the throne as our covenant God and Father. If we might not mention all our feelings before God, we should be miserable; if we might not take all our affairs into his presence, prayer would hardly be (I had almost said) a sufficiently extensive privilege; but

"In trouble what a hiding place
Have they that know the throne of grace."

We are permitted to take all our mental sorrows and afflictions, all our bodily pains, and all our social circumstances into the presence of the Lord our God; there is no limit laid down by him in connexion with heartfelt prayer. We are not restricted by God at all in relation to this holy exercise, while we desire the accomplishment of his will, and the glory of his name. If the devil tempts, if the world ensnares, if troubles press, if sins rage, and if afflictions are numerous and deep; or if on the other hand we have pleasures, and joys, and hopes, and happy aspirations, we may take them all if we can—only we cannot always do so—into the presence of our Father; and like Hezekiah, we may spread them out before the throne of Divine grace, for there is no one near the throne, and no one upon it to say, Sinner, or child, hold your peace; you are not permitted to go any farther. This, and that, and the other, are not to be made subjects of prayer to God." No such words are ever heard at the mercy-seat; on the contrary, it is Call upon me, in relation to all your wants and all your enemies. "Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will hear thee, and thou shalt glorify me." Now, the universality, or the extensiveness of this privilege, comes farther, out of the fact that our Father is the great Ruler of all, the universal Monarch. If our God did not manage all things—if he did not rule over, guide, control and govern all, what would be the use of the believer's presenting all his circumstances before

his throne ? But, first of all, he that sits on the throne is my Father, and I may be very free with him, and tell him what I cannot tell my fellow-creature ; and secondly, my Father on the throne is Universal Monarch. He guides and governs and controls all, and therefore if a Sennacherib rises up against me, I know that my God can well control him ; and if a hundred foes, human or otherwise, meet me, I know they are all under his almighty hand. I may therefore be bold before God, and present before him all the affairs and circumstances of my life. And not only so, all the circumstances and changes of our pilgrimage have an influence upon our life and progress from day to day through this world to a better. Indeed, I believe, my Christian friends, that the conflicts of life, and the vicissitudes and changes which we experience, are in a great measure intended by God to promote intercourse between the Christian and himself. I do not know how it would be with most of us, if the path were continually smooth, and the sun continually shone ; if circumstances were never interrupted or ruffled, and our wishes were always fulfilled ; if we had no pressing wants, and everything were perfectly agreeable to our nature and feelings. In such a state of things there might not be much intercourse between God and the believer. But there are nights as well as days, and there are *days* as well as nights, there are foes as well as friends, and bitters as well as sweets ; and these are intended by God, as I understand the matter, to promote intercourse between himself and his family on the earth. The storm drives us to the throne. The temptation induces and obliges us to creep under our great Protector's wings, and a daily sense of sin in minds that love holiness, and would be pure, compels them to have recourse to the sacrifice of Christ and his most precious blood. If you did not feel your blackness, when would you pray, " Wash me ! wash me ! Lord ? " If you did not feel your weakness, when would you say, " O Thou Strength of Israel, strengthen me, I pray thee ? " If you met no enemy, when would God hear you present this petition, " Be thou my Shield and the lifter-up of my head ? " Therefore, Christian friends, those trials which are so bitter, and those difficulties through which you press, are permitted and appointed by your heavenly Father to develope your spiritual life, and strengthen and intensify prayer and supplication within. Hence Hezekiah, being helpless and in great distress, took the letter and spread it before God, for he was at liberty so to do.

In the second place we learn from the text that prayer is a *marvellous and mighty weapon* ; and hence one old writer speaks of " the weapon of all prayer," according to the Apostle Paul, who says, when describing the Christian's armour, " Praying always, with all prayer and supplication." Hezekiah was fighting a great battle on his knees, and perhaps the Christian always fights best in that posture. Indeed, the Christian warfare is carried on most successfully by earnest wrestling prayer before the throne of Divine mercy. He fights courageously and victoriously when he fights prayerfully. Hezekiah used the weapon of prayer ! There were a hundred and eighty-five thousand men against Jerusalem ; those soldiers together with Sennacherib and Rabshakeh threatened Hezekiah and Judah with destruction. It is not said that the king of Judah called his soldiers together and set his army in battle array ; yet he went forth against Sennacherib and the well-trained army of the Assyrian Empire, and fought against them by presenting himself before the Lord of hosts, the God whose people were threatened, and whose name the enemy had blasphemed. Perhaps I ought to say he went *in* against them, for he went into the house and presence of God, and thus he went alone against a hundred and eighty-five thousand soldiers and fought against them with the weapon of fervent and acceptable prayer. " Incline thine ear, O Lord ; open thine eyes, O Lord and see ; and hear all the words of Sennacherib which hath sent to reproach the living God." Here, then, behold Hezekiah fighting ! And now let me observe on this point that prayer is a divine weapon ; and therefore, excellent, sharp, and mighty ; and must be effectual when used by one whose heart has been sanctified

and saved by the God of salvation. There may be a great deal of carnal policy, a great deal of persecution, and much infernal power brought to bear upon and against you : mighty men, kings, princes, magistrates, popes, and fiends may all bear hard upon and fight against a weak and feeble child of God ; yet, if that child is favoured with the spirit of prayer and the grace of supplication, he is more than a match for all of them. Let me say concerning the weapon of prayer, it is frequently used most effectually by the believer when he is faint and almost exhausted. The more faint, the more feeble, the more exhausted the petitioner is, the more effectually he fights his enemies by deep and heartfelt supplication. He says, " O Lord, I am oppressed ; undertake for me." Or like poor, sinking Peter—" Lord, save ;"—I am helpless and hopeless without thee, " Lord, save ; or I perish." Prayer is a weapon made by God ; for the Spirit indites prayer in the heart, and enables the petitioner to appear with acceptance before Jehovah ; and, therefore, it is frequently most powerful when the tried saint does nothing but seek the Lord and sigh and groan before him. There were times when he sang very loud, and prayed very fluently, and his devotions lasted for three quarters of an hour, it may be ; but then he did not fight half so well, nor strike half so many terrible blows, nor were his conquests half so great as when he fell down faint and wounded ; and presented a short and pithy, but comprehensive, heartfelt prayer before the footstool of his heavenly Father. David says, " The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me. I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I on the name of the Lord." Well, what did David say ? Say ? He had not time to say much. He was very weak and feeble ; but he aimed at the powers of hell and darkness once, and through Divine favour he smote them. What weapon did he use ? " O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul." That was the weapon he wielded, and one blow was all that David dealt ; that is to say, he offered prayer to God ; and he heard, hell was defeated, the snare was broken, and the poor, feeble petitioner was released and escaped ; therefore, prayer is a marvellous weapon. My beloved friends, humanly speaking, our circumstances or our experience would sometimes be different from what they are if we had more prayerfulness of heart. I do not know how it is with you—but is there not a backwardness to pray ? at least, let me limit my observations to myself, for I will not wrong you if I can help it. There is a backwardness in myself to prayer. Do we always when the temptation comes upon us run away to the Throne ? Is there not some hesitation, some parleying, a delaying for a few minutes or a few hours ? Do we not always betake ourselves to the Throne, and flee away to the Lord our God when the trouble first reaches us ? O our God—we talk about revivals ! we need reviving in this respect. O that the Lord would give us larger measures of the Spirit of prayer and the grace of supplication ! Whenever we shake and shiver because of a cold and contrary wind, the best thing we can do is to flee to the Throne of mercy ; and whenever the arrows of the devil reach us, the moment we are pierced, sure I am the best thing we can do is to repair to the Lord our deliverer ; therefore, may the Lord be pleased to give us a larger portion of the spirit of prayer. Incline thine ear and hear, not only my groans but the threatenings of the enemy. Open thine eyes and see, not only the wounds, but the enemy that inflicted them upon me. Look on me thy child, and look on Sennacherib by whom I am hated and who hath reproached thy great and glorious name. " I fear," said Mary, Queen of Scots (I have mentioned this before), " the prayers of old John Knox more than a whole army of soldiers." She did not know much about prayer, or God, or the throne of grace ; yet she had an idea (and it was tolerably correct) that prayer was a terrible and powerful thing in the mouth of, and as coming from the heart of a good man ; dangerous to the enemies of religion and dangerous to those persons against whom it might be offered. Yes ; prayer is a weapon, and that man shall be victorious over all the powers of darkness who possesses its spirit, and can say—" A

glorious high throne from the beginning is the place of my sanctuary," and there I hide in trouble. Why, you see the child of God in prayer, when his heart is really prayerful, creeps beneath the wings of Almightyness and takes all his valuables with him. Hezekiah on this occasion trembled and shook, being afraid of Sennacherib and the Assyrian army,—and having no power whatever against his enemies. He immediately gathered together all his valuables, ran into the presence of God and crept under his protecting wings. Then he might have defied, and eventually he did defy, Sennacherib and all the powers that were against him. And if you and I are helped to take our all and creep under God's almighty shadow, we may rest assured that we shall be safe, and shall look down upon and defy all hostile powers : for "He that abideth under the shadow of the Almighty" shall be safe from all the dangers by which he is surrounded and threatened.

Then in the third place, I learn from the text that *names may be mentioned in prayer to God*. Now I should like to make one or two remarks on this. Incline thine ear and hear ; and open thine eyes and see ; and hear all the words of *Sennacherib*. Hezekiah might have said, "The king of Assyria"—or "that mighty monarch"—or, "that potent king"—or, "that great warrior." He might have gone a roundabout way for the purpose of presenting that man, that royal personage before God ; but there was a directness in his prayer ; and, my dear friends, saints cannot be too direct in their petitions. "Hear all the words of *Sennacherib*, Lord." And I find my friends, especially in the Old Testament that names both of men and places were literally mentioned by petitioners before God's throne. "O God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob." Why didn't they say, "Thou art the God of the father of the faithful and the God of his meek and unobtrusive son," and so on ? We use a deal of circumlocution in prayer. We go round about when we want to mention a place or an individual before God. Such was not the case under the Old Testament dispensation. It was—"Lord, bless David," "Remember David, Lord, and all his afflictions," not merely "The king of Israel"—"that royal personage"—"that great man," but "Lord, remember David and all his afflictions." And here Hezekiah says, "Hear the words of *Sennacherib*, Lord," and it seems to me that we too should mention names, and that prayer would sometimes, perhaps, be more acceptable ;—at any rate in public it would be more acceptable to congregations generally if the names of persons and places were mentioned. I am guilty ! Yes, I am guilty here. Oftentimes, friends have said to me at the close of a service—"To whom did you refer in prayer ? You prayed for someone who had been bereaved, or someone in deep trouble and we tried to think who it could be and could not give much attention to the rest of your prayer, recalling as we did this friend or that friend, and, the other friend, and their probable circumstances to our minds." How much better it would have been and would always be to say, "Bless brother Hazelton, Lord," (if he should be the subject of prayer,) "Brother so-and-so," or "Sister so-and-so," as a friend praying for me once in this place said, the day before I preached at High Wycombe, in Buckinghamshire, as had been announced—"Bless our brother Hazelton to-morrow, Lord, in the town of High Wycombe." Everybody present knew all about it then ; and the Lord would have known had not my name been mentioned, and had not the name of the place been stated ; but the people would not have known ; and if the congregation does not know to whom the minister refers, it cannot unite in prayer at the moment with him, for the particular individual whose case is laid before God. When *Sennacherib's*, or any other name is plainly spoken in prayer, all that hear may respond—"Amen, Lord, Amen. Hear all the words of *Sennacherib* that hath sent to reproach the living God." My brethren, let us aim at directness in our petitions. Let us aim our thoughts straight at the Throne, and not go a roundabout way in expressing ourselves before our heavenly Father. We want something ;—let us say at once

what it is, and remember, we are before God who requires not many words but the heart. If we remember an individual in prayer, let us tell God his name, and thus resolve to be direct and reach the point quickly. If you are pleading for or pleading against an individual, do as Hezekiah did—mention his name. Hear the words of Sennacherib which hath sent to reproach the living God.

Fourthly, I learn from the text *that circumstances and facts have always given a particular form to prayer*. Now there is much talk in the day in which we live, about forms of prayer; and some that are called Nonconformists have written papers, preached sermons, delivered addresses, and expressed their opinions on the question of the necessity, or otherwise, of the use of forms of prayer in public worship; and a few Nonconformists have adopted set forms of prayer, and believe that they are better calculated to promote devotional feeling than extemporaneous addresses to God. I do not know, but I cannot think there would be much prayer in my heart if I adopted that system, and stood or knelt in the pulpit and read three or four forms of prayer. I do not think it is possible for a human creature to compose a form or forms of prayer that will meet all the requirements of God's children in this changing and dying world. And then there is in set forms another awkward thing—at least it is so to my mind—and it is this—The Spirit of God is a Free Spirit, and will not, I am sure, be limited to any set and human form; and when the heart is influenced by divine grace, one's prayerful thoughts will not run in the old grooves which even good men may have made, but will flow just as they are directed and guided by the Spirit of God. I do not know what forms of prayer may have been in existence in the days of Hezekiah; but here was a new trouble! Here were Sennacherib and a hundred and eighty five thousand men, and here was the trembling city of Jerusalem apparently about to be swallowed up. I suppose there could not have been an appropriate form of prayer in existence for these distressing circumstances; and Hezekiah, therefore, had to pray in accordance with the exigencies of the time; and the Spirit of the Lord helping him, he said, "Incline thine ear, and hear: open thine eyes, O Lord, and see: and hear all the words of Sennacherib, O Lord, which hath sent to reproach the living God." Ah! one may not be grammatical in his expressions and utterances in prayer, and when trouble pinches and the wound gapes and bleeds, one's cries and petitions may grate a little at the time upon the human ear—God understands it all; he knows the meaning of the heart, and what is wanted by the sufferer. I do not believe, my friends, that any man, be he priest, or bishop, or pope, or the best Christian man or woman that ever lived; that any son or daughter of God can contrive or put together a form of prayer that will meet the requirements of God's people every day and everywhere. No; we must pray, are obliged to pray, and forced to pray according to the circumstances of the time. Sometimes the occasion of prayer will be the fire of temptation; at other times the raging of sin within; at other times the waves and billows of affliction; at other times trouble from the world. The child of God is obliged at such times to gather together his feelings rapidly and quickly, and pour out his heart with all earnestness and fervour without a book or premeditation before his Father's throne. "Pour out your hearts before him, ye people." Circumstances must and will give shape, length, and form to our prayers.

Then, fifthly, learn from the text, and from the connection in which it stands, that *heartfelt and divinely-inspired prayer moves heaven and earth*. Read again the connection at your leisure. Hezekiah prayed—his prayer was short, but spiritual. The first Being that was moved was God; the second being that was moved was Isaiah. "Go!" said God to Isaiah, "for my servant Hezekiah has been into my presence and presented a petition before me," and the prophet went. Thirdly, an angel was sent from heaven; and fourthly, death overtook a hundred and four-score and five thousand men in one night; and fifthly, the next morning, Hezekiah and all the children of Israel were filled with gratitude and wonder, and overflowing joy; for, behold, the Assyrian army were all dead corpses.

Oh! says James, speaking of the importance of prayer, "Elijah was a man of like passions with ourselves; but he prayed that it might not rain, and the heavens were closed for the space of three years and six months. And then he prayed again and the Lord gave rain;" and James takes care to say, Do not think he was more perfect than you, for he was "a man of like passions with ourselves." "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." And do you not know how it is there is such a power in prayer? Prayer moves God, because it is God that moves the heart to pray. That is the reason; Jehovah the Holy Spirit is in the heart, and he moves the petitioner in prayer, and I should wonder indeed if God were not moved when the soul offers supplication to him under his own influence and at his own bidding. I should wonder indeed if God did not respond to that call which he himself is the author of. He puts it into the heart to pray, and when the prayer thus breathed into the mind by God's Spirit is offered, he responds; for he has respect to the work of his own hands. Jesus is the Head of the church. He pours influences from himself; those influences are diffused through the needy mind, and prayer is the result, and I am not surprised that the Head should sympathise with the member that prays; and therefore you see God in being moved by prayer, and in answering it, is simply fulfilling and completing his own purposes and designs. Ah! friends, there is a power in prayer. How strikingly David sets forth this fact. He says, describing the trouble in which he found himself, I called upon the name of the Lord; and he rode upon a cherub, and did fly; he made darkness his pavilion, and came upon thick clouds of the skies. He sent from above; he took me and drew me out of many waters, and set my feet in a large place. David simply called upon his name, and it thundered and lightened; it was dark, and God was in all that followed. My Christian brother, true prayer always moves God, and it moves him because he first moves the suppliant to call on his great name.

Now, lastly, all this *is recorded*. Here we have an historical fact recorded in the Bible. And what is it recorded here for? Think of the words, "Whatever was written aforetime was written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." No man liveth to himself, no man suffereth to himself, and no man dieth to himself; and therefore, probably, this trouble befel Hezekiah and the children of Israel not more for their own sakes than for your sake and mine, than for the sake of God's people in after ages of the world. Why, this historical fact will shine like a bright star in the Word of Truth, through all the long night of time, and saint after saint, saint after saint will think of Hezekiah and his prayer, and take courage again and again. Why, what is this that is recorded in my text and the chapter out of which I have taken it? What is it but the footsteps of the flock,—waymarks on the road to a better world, and the poor tempest-tost and afflicted soul says "There is hope! there is hope! for I see foot-prints here. Hezekiah was in distress, he walked in trouble, and was in conflict with mighty powers, but he prayed, wrestled, and he was successful, and trod down strength. And therefore "If thou knowest not, O thou fairest among women, where I feed my sheep, go thy way by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids by the shepherds' tents." May the Lord add his blessing, for Christ's sake. Amen.

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THE ATONING SUFFERER.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, MAY 2, 1875.

"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." Isaiah liii. 7.

WE can scarcely read this chapter of the Prophecies of Isaiah without thinking of two or three other portions of the Word. The first two or three verses remind us of the language of the Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the church of Christ at Corinth:—"The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness." This is similar to the fact stated in the second verse before us:—"For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground. He hath no form nor comeliness, and when we shall see him there is no beauty that we should desire him." The preaching of the cross was, in the days of Paul, foolishness to those who did not know themselves to be sinners; and that theme is still a foolish one in the estimation of men and women who are ignorant of the fact that they are sinners in the sight of God. That man who does not know he is a guilty sinner, and a vile transgressor of God's holy law, sees no beauty in the person of the Mediator, and nothing desirable in his saving and glorious work. Hence we have a multitude of creature ceremonies and rites. Ritualism and Popery arose out of the fact that men could see no beauty and no glory in the person of the Saviour. He that sees the spiritual beauties of the Son of God, and is acquainted with the attractions of the cross of Jesus, and knows experimentally the virtue and power of his precious blood, cannot be a Ritualist. To such a person gorgeous and pompous worship has no charms. The greatest simplicity in connection with the service of God suits and satisfies him; for, knowing the Lord Jesus Christ as "the chiefest among ten thousand" and as "altogether lovely," he cannot and will not have his attention attracted or drawn away from his beloved Lord by creature rites and ceremonies; and, therefore, we are reminded of the passage I have just quoted—"The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness." But when we read this chapter, we think, also, of another portion of the Word given by the same apostle—"I am determined to know nothing among men save Jesus Christ and him crucified."

The prophet Isaiah was divinely inspired. His faith looked forward to the No. 13.—MAY 15, 1875.

day of Christ, and he saw him as the glorious Mediator in his sufferings, death, and triumphs; and it seems that some such feeling as that which is expressed by Paul as just quoted, animated the heart of Isaiah when he penned this chapter, for it is full of the glory, excellency, and grandeur of Immanuel. Christ is here set forth in his complex person and lovely character:—"He shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground." Thus the prophet portrayed the humanity of Jesus Christ, and, reaching the end of his remarks on the great theme, he launched into a description of his majesty, victories, and honours. We have, therefore, a comprehensive representation—first, of Christ's person, and secondly, of his work. A third portion we are reminded of, is this:—"The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." The prophet appropriated the blessings which he set forth before the people. He put the hand of his faith upon them, and said—"Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted; but he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." "He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth."

My subject this morning is—Christ as a Sufferer, or the Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief. I shall not divide the text into two or three branches, but gather up a few facts from it as they may be found upon its surface.

"He was oppressed and he was afflicted."

1. I notice, in the first place, that Christ's sufferings *were in connection with sin*, and that he could not have suffered, had there been no connection whatever between his person and sin. I beg the attention of my hearers for a few minutes to this point, because I do think it is a very important one in connection with Christianity and godliness. I fear, my Christian friends, that while we talk so frequently about the sufferings of Christ, we may fail to look at them in connection with their meritorious cause. It is a fact that Jesus Christ was absolutely pure, separate from sinners, and perfectly innocent and harmless. That our Lord was immaculate, and really incapable of committing sin, is a truth for which we earnestly contend. He was perfectly and eternally unable to do wrong; and this inability was a personal excellency; but though Jesus could neither love, commit, nor tolerate sin, yet it must not be forgotten that had there been no connection between him and sin, he would not and could not have suffered; for the absence of sin leaves suffering simply impossible. There is no suffering among the angels of God, for there is no sin in them. There is no suffering in the spirits of just men made perfect, for they *are made perfect*, and are entirely free from sin. And our great Lord is also eternally above all suffering; for he is now eternally above all sin. He suffered once, and only once, because there was a mysterious connection between him and sin. "The Lord hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." There are persons who deny this doctrine, and sneer at the imputation of sin to Christ, and of Christ's righteousness to the sinner; but having tried to think and read upon the subject, and possessing some experience of both sin and righteousness, I contend, that, without this fact, it is impossible to account for the sufferings and death of Jesus. Without the imputation of sin to Christ, I cannot see what his sufferings arose from, how death could put his terrible hand upon him, or how his Heavenly Father could justly and righteously hide his face from him. We admit the fact, and we are bound to proclaim it; and for God's sake take heed here, and be very careful concerning the character of your

Lord ; that he was personally sinless and innocent, but he was *constituted* sin ; for “ the Lord hath made him to be sin for us,” and “ the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all. . Having been constituted sin by Divine sovereignty, and having had transferred to him the guilt of his people, then the sufferings of Jesus Christ followed as a matter of course and necessity. His sufferings, however we may regard them, were, from first to last, the terrible, woeful, and penal consequences of the fact that our sin was imputed to him.

Now I want to tarry here a few minutes, and look at *the cause of the depth and greatness of Emanuel's sufferings*. They were unspeakably deep and inconceivably great ; for we shall never be able to fathom, express, or explain them. We may, however, form some solemn idea of their depth, and of the greatness of his woe, by looking at a few facts which I purpose now to bring before you.

In the first place, look adoringly at *the infinite purity of Emanuel's nature and character*. There was a perfect contrast between Christ the Sin-Bearer and the sin which was imputed to him. Christ himself was infinitely pure, transparent, holy, and God-like ; he was essentially and immutably perfect. Sin is the worst and the filthiest thing in the universe. It is hated and hateful, and damnable. It is the only thing God loathes, the only thing he detests, and the only thing away from which his holiness turns her face. Sin is the only thing that incenses Justice and arouses the righteousness of God. The only thing that can darken the future, or surround the Almighty One with terrors. That damnable thing, that filthy, defiling, and deforming evil, that hated, hateful, and loathsome abomination was imputed to the pure person of God's beloved Son. A person of naturally cleanly tastes suffers, when he is in contact with filth and uncleanness. How would one feel if he were surrounded by vipers, or if vipers were upon him, (it is difficult to illustrate this marvellous subject,) would he not shrink from and loathe them ? What sufferings, even if they did not sting him, the very presence and contact of such reptiles would occasion. My dear friends, Christ bore all the penal evils and stings that are inseparable from sin. They were all charged on him, and he bore what he hated, he carried what he loathed, he was bowed down beneath the weight of that which he detested ; but the love which he had in his heart towards his church and people, carried him calmly and triumphantly through all the dreadful yet glorious work. He detested and loathed the sin that was on him, he voluntarily and freely suffered beneath it, gradually expiating our guilt as he suffered, until the last viper died, the last stain vanished, and the whole cause of condemnation sunk ; and then, he that was oppressed and he that was afflicted ceased to suffer, and said—“ It is finished, and bowed his head and gave up the ghost.” Sin, then, my friends, being so utterly opposite to the nature of Jesus Christ, and a perfect contrast to the purity of the Son of God, occasioned, when imputed to him, unspeakably deep and unutterable sufferings.

But if you look in the second place at *the weight and measure of sin that were upon him*, you will be able to form, not an adequate or full, but a proper though faint conception of the greatness and depths of the sorrows of the Son of God. “ The Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of *us all*.” Yes ; we are told, “ of all the world.” Well, you may believe as you like about that. I read in the chapter—though I do not intend to tarry here—“ All we like sheep have gone astray ; we have turned every one to his own way ; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” Believe what you please—if you can do so—concerning the extent of the atonement and redemption of the Lord Jesus Christ, but you must allow me to say, however, that when God the Holy Spirit convinces a sinner of sin, and applies the law to his conscience, salvation-business becomes a personal affair, and generalities and universal matters yield no comfort to such a person.

The convinced sinner wants to know not how many Christ died for, but whether he died for him. Christian brethren, salvation matters are personal realities from first to last. But to the subject again. The weight and measure of sin upon Christ, what were they? I do not know. I only know somewhat of the weight of my own sins; but let me come to the Bible for an illustration. Look at David's one sin in relation to Bathsheba. When he saw it as sin should be seen; when he felt it, as the enormity of guilt is felt by a quickened mind; what effect had that one sin upon him? It pierced his heart, broke his spirit, and brought him into that state which he describes as having broken bones. And if one sin can so pierce a heart, if one transgression, one crime against God, can so crush a mind, what must be the weight of all the sins of one's whole life? And if the weight of all the sins of only one is so great, what must have been the weight of the accumulated sins of accumulated millions upon the person of the great Sin-bearer? Oh! what masses of guilt were on him! There never was so much of it seen together before. Guilt came in upon him under the imputing hands of God from all quarters,—from east, and west, and north and south; it came pouring in from every point, and from all the days and hours of time. And having received the whole, the penalty which was due was inflicted upon him.

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

If one sin was so weighty that David was crushed beneath it; if one—or rather the three sins committed by Peter, (for he denied his Lord thrice,) pierced his heart through and through, broke his spirit, and filled his eyes with tears, what must all Peter's sins, and all David's sins, and all your sins and mine have been upon the suffering Son of God! Yet we are told that he was not God—that he who groaned beneath the weight of sin, was not Jehovah Jesus. Why! millions of mere creatures would have been eternally crushed, had they been found beneath that load. I do not want a better argument for, or a better evidence of, the Divinity of the suffering Jesus, than I have in the fact that all our mighty guilt was laid upon him, and he was strong enough to bear it all away into the land of eternal oblivion and forgetfulness.

And then notice, in the third place—and I am still trying to open the cause of the greatness of Christ's sufferings—that *he retained the perfection of his powers and sensibilities to the end*. I do not know whether you have caught the idea or not, that Christ was perfect, and keenly alive to all he was passing through, until the last moment of his life. The sin that was on him did not blunt his feelings, nor impair or damp his sensibilities, neither did it dim his holiness. He was unutterably sensible, and sensitive, and tender, down to the moment of his death. This is not the case with dying creatures. Their sensibilities are gradually blunted, and become weaker and weaker, so that before they depart, they may not experience much pain under the hand of death. But Christ was all sensibility to the last. His sufferings were perpetual, or without intermission. There was no cessation, no change, no moments of comfort, and nothing that could produce a painless interval. From the commencement to the end of his redeeming work, his sufferings were continuous and unmixed; and at the end of his terrible mediatorial journey, having borne and passed through all that was necessary to save and satisfy, he bowed his head, and cried with a loud voice, as the conquering sufferer for sin, “It is finished!” The dreadful but glorious work is done. “He was oppressed, and he was afflicted.”

I might proceed to show that the greatness of his sufferings resulted from the fact that *no abatement was made* by justice, or his heavenly Father. Nothing

sweet was dropped into the bitter cup that he received and emptied. The sweetness and joy were realized by him after he had emptied it. All penal evil, all that can be conceived as inseparable from the terrible curse of the law, was in that cup. It was a combination and collection of all penal affliction, woe, and evil ! All was mixed together, and presented to Christ, at once, in one mass. Justice would not and could not alleviate his sufferings, or change her conduct, alter her demand, or reduce the number of stripes that were to be inflicted. Therefore, "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted." But what is most marvellous in connection with this is, the fact that "he opened not his mouth." Perhaps we shall read the penal consequences of sin, and our salvation therefrom, in the scars—the shining scars of our beloved Lord in heaven; but we do not know much of them here. Jesus Christ was deserted by his Father, who had never before hid his face from him. He was left in total and thick darkness—in darkness that was deeply felt, even that of Divine wrath. He was left with Satan and with evil. He went where no being ever went before, and where no being can ever go again. And when he was in that awful place, then he *did* open his mouth; then, being oppressed and afflicted, he *did* speak: "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" Then the curse pierced him, and the wrath of God enveloped him. Then death, in its native form, (and I beg you will go home and think of that,) with its native stings and power, met the Lord of life and glory. He was led, not to a dying bed, but to be slaughtered. Wounded and bruised, he was led to pour out his soul unto death, not in the ordinary manner, but as no being ever died before. Well, all is done, all is finished. And may the Lord the Spirit bear witness to our souls, that "He loved us, and gave himself for us," that each may shout with thankful joy: "He loved me, and gave himself for me."

II. Secondly: the text exhibits Christ as a *willing sufferer*. "He opened not his mouth. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." Was he Almighty when he stood before Pilate and refused to answer his questions? He was as Almighty then as he is now. Was he really in possession of his omnipotence when the soldiers took his garments off, platted a crown of thorns, and thrust it on his head; put on him a purple robe, and smote his head with a reed? Was he then as Almighty as he is now? Yes; he was then the Almighty Jesus. Well, then, we see, my friends, that his omnipotence at that time was exercised, not in screening, defending, nor vindicating himself, but in saving his people, and executing his Father's business. His omnipotence was at work when he opened not his mouth, and he was dumb as a sheep before her shearers. His omnipotence was in full operation in a particular direction when they spat on him and buffeted him, and said, "Prophecy who is it that smote thee." Why, that arm that he gave to the nails could have smitten Pilate, the whole Court, and all the soldiers dead in a moment; but he came not to destroy, but to fulfil and to save; and therefore his omnipotence was atoning and saving in its operations. "Why," said a French writer, "if Jesus Christ, your Saviour, as you call him, was God, if he was an Almighty Being, why did not he strike the wretch dead in a moment that spat in his face?" Why, simply because he *was* God, and because he *was* an Almighty Being. A devil from hell would have struck the miscreant dead; a mere man, if he had the power, would have done the same; but it was a God that was spat upon, and only a God could bear that ignominy, and despise that shame. He willingly and cheerfully gave his soul an offering for sin, and the voluntariness of the Saviour's sufferings was essential to God's acceptance of them. I do not know that we should praise Christ very fervently or feelingly in heaven, if, when we were there, we knew that he had been forced to die for us, or that he reluctantly suffered for us; but the depth of our gratitude, and the ardour of our thankfulness will arise from the fact that he might have passed us by and left us; but he would die for us because it

pleased him so to do. Now, the voluntariness of the sufferings of Christ is, we say, that element in them, without which they would not have been accepted. God smelt, and still smells, a sweet savour of rest. There was a willing Lamb, a willing Victim, the Almighty Immanuel, offering himself with all his excellencies to the justice, righteousness, and truth of God. Omnipotent worth pouring out its merit at the feet of divine justice, and that voluntarily and cheerfully. Strangely we are redeemed ! Marvellously we are saved ! I wish I had deeper feeling in my own breast in relation to this point. There is nothing like the sufferings of Jesus Christ when rightly viewed and deeply felt to affect the mind, purify the soul, and produce deep abhorrence of sin. Oh ! well has the poet said—

“Sweet the moments, rich in blessing,
Which before the cross I spend;
Life, and health, and peace possessing
From the sinner's dying Friend.”

“His name is as ointment poured forth.” The sacred odours of the Saviour's sacrifice fill all heaven, and the Bible, and the Church ; and this sacred fragrance fills also the hearts of those men and women who can say, “He loved us, and gave himself for us.” There is another place, too, which is filled by the odours of Emanuel's sacrifice, and that is the valley of death, a dying chamber, and a dying bed, and the deep solemnities of a dying hour. These sacred odours are diffused, as I believe, through all the solemn scenes of a believer's death, hence, “O death ! where is thy sting ? O grave ! where is thy victory ?”

III. But, thirdly, the text exhibits Jesus Christ as *a mute, or silent sufferer*. His sufferings were unspeakably great, and borne cheerfully and voluntarily ; but the text says that they were borne silently,—“He opened not his mouth.”—“As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.” He did open his mouth and speak to certain persons on certain occasions, and for certain reasons ; and that as we read at the commencement of the service this morning, when Pilate put certain questions to him, he opened not his mouth, he answered him never a word, inasmuch that Pilate marvelled. And what may we learn from this ? His personal excellencies. That Jesus Christ was dumb, mute, or silent, is an indication of the fact that his personal excellencies were infinite. Patience in suffering is silent. To suffer acutely without murmuring or complaining is said to be heroic. Well, it is an excellency. Christ, who stood beneath all the weight of sin, was dumb, and opened not his mouth, although the wrath of God, and the ignominy, scorn, slander, and misrepresentation of the world were upon him. He did not say, the cup is too large, too full, too bitter. He did not speak a word against the people. He did not speak a word against justice, nor against the conduct of his Father towards him. He did not say, I am smitten too severely,—the fire is unrighteously hot,—the bitters are too intense,—the suffering is more than I am willing to endure,—I regret that I engaged to stand in this position. “He opened not his mouth.” He did not say a word against his Father, against justice, nor against law. Blessed be his name ! Did a word fall from his lips against the sinful people for whom he was suffering and dying to indicate regret that he stood in their place ? He opened not his mouth ; he is led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth,” for his honour was involved. He had engaged to be where he was, and had he opened his mouth to express regret or dissent, his honour would have been tarnished. No ; “Father, here I am, and I engaged to be here to bear all the consequences of sin ;” and when they fell upon him he was dumb, he opened not his mouth. Salvation demanded it. Had he opened his mouth against the suffering, salvation would have been imperilled and rendered impossible ; and, my friends, if Christ

had opened his mouth to express regret or dissatisfaction, you and I must have had our mouths closed for ever. I beg your attention to that. He opened not his mouth that we might for ever open ours. Our songs come from his silence. Our prayers come from the fact that he was mute. He did not speak in suffering that we might speak in suffering and in prayer. He did not speak in death, or against death, that we might shout when there, "Victory over the King of Terrors!" "He opened not his mouth." I have sometimes thought (and I think this formed a part of the reason) that the Saviour's silence on this occasion arose from the overwhelming grief and sorrow of his mind. We can enter a little into the language of a good man who is now in heaven, but who said when he was here, "I am so troubled that I cannot speak." You know what it is to have a heart too big for the mouth; what it is to have feelings that are unutterable; what it is to be so overwhelmed with grief as to be unable to speak, so overwhelmed with sorrow as to be unable to express it. "Now is my soul troubled," said the Lord of life and glory. When all the terrors of condemnation rolled in upon him, and all the waves and billows of God flowed over him, then he was dumb. His experience was new and terrible, and he was dumb, not only because he had engaged to save, but because his sorrows and grief, and the terrors through which he was passing, were unspeakably deep and overwhelming. He opened not his mouth.

Well, he was a *comprehensive* sufferer also,—“As a sheep before her shearers is dumb;” and was Christ shorn? Yes, of everything; of everything that the people could strip him of. And he was shorn, too, by his heavenly Father. He was shorn of his royal honours; for had he had his political rights, he would have had the throne of Canaan, the throne of the children of Israel. He was David's true Son, and, politically speaking, he was the rightful heir to the throne:—he was stripped of that. That was not much. He did not care for that. He did not come to reign politically, or in a carnal or worldly sense. However, when we speak of the shearing-work, we may take that in. And what stripping-work was there before Pilate when the soldiers took the garments from off Jehovah-Jesus. As a sheep before her shearers was Christ shorn; shorn of his royalty, shorn of his garments, shorn of his robes, shorn of his good name, shorn of his comforts, and shorn of the common right of the poorest,—the right to a fair, just, and legal trial. He was robbed of that, and robbed of his good name, degraded and reduced to the level of a thief and a murderer. They desired Barabbas rather than Jesus Christ; and Christ, the Lord of life and glory, took the place of the murderer. “Release unto us Barabbas:”—and it was fulfilled which was written, “He was numbered among the transgressors.” A *comprehensive* sufferer.

A *representative* one. A Lamb led to the slaughter, to the place of slaughter, and to the slaughterers. What was the place of slaughter? Golgotha. Who were the slaughterers? Well, there was a combination of powers,—men, devils, and justice; but death may be regarded as the slaughterer. How was he slaughtered? As lambs had never been slaughtered before. He poured out his soul unto death, and extinguished the fires of wrath, and thus he became at once our sacrifice and spiritual food. He was a *representative* sufferer; for he represented sin, sinners, law, salvation, God, and glory.

A *life-long* sufferer. From the moment he entered into the world to the moment of his death, when he commended his spirit into the hands of God, he suffered. From the manger to the cross, the Lord of life and glory was a sufferer.

An *atoning* sufferer. No other sufferings can atone or set us right. Christ, by his sufferings, has honoured the government of God, reduced all to righteousness, peace, and order; and, therefore, his were atoning sufferings.

Lastly, he was the *only* sufferer, penally considered. Do none of the people of

God suffer? Yes; but Christ was the only penal sufferer, the only one of the family that ever felt, or ever shall feel, the penalty of sin. We suffer in relation to sin, more or less, but, brother, we are not, through favour, to suffer penally for our guilt. God has ten thousand times ten thousand sons and daughters, but only one that was sinless, and he suffered for sin; only one that was personally and absolutely holy, and he suffered for the unholy; only one Son that never offended his Father, and the Father laid all the offences of the offending brethren upon that unoffending Son: and therefore he was afflicted and oppressed; but he bore our sins, and carried our sorrows; and we are therefore saved with an everlasting salvation. Amen.

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THE WIDOW'S OIL MULTIPLIED.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON THURSDAY EVENING, MAY 27, 1875.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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SPIRITUALITY OF MIND.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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THE SOUL AND THE WORLD ESTIMATED

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JULY 25, 1875.

"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"—Mark viii. 36, 37.

IN the preceding verses we have a description of the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and also a view of the true believer. It is said in the 27th verse that "Jesus went out, and his disciples, into the towns of Cesarea Philippi: and by the way he asked them, saying, Whom do men say that I am? And they answered, John the Baptist: but some say, Elias; and others, One of the prophets. And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art Christ." Here, then, we have represented the person and office of the great Christ of God. Peter having avowed the fact, it is said that Christ "began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again." Now, just as we have in Peter's confession of faith a view of the person and office of the Lord Jesus; so in this 31st verse we have his glorious and saving work brought out. Then in the 34th verse, we have a portrait of the experimental and practical Christian. And when he had called the people unto him, with his disciples, he said unto them, "Whosoever will come after me, let them deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." First, then, we have Christ; secondly, we have his bleeding, dying, conquering, and saving work; and thirdly, we have the saving and sanctifying operations of the Holy Spirit in the heart of the Christian. Whosoever will come after me (and every soul that is spiritually influenced will follow Christ,) must deny himself; for religion is a self-denying life. Perfect bliss and happiness are reserved for another world—"In the world ye shall have tribulation," and "Many are the afflictions of the righteous:" therefore, "let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Not mine, but *his* cross: (it is a mercy that we are not called upon to bear the cursed cross which Immanuel carried:) let him take up his cross of persecutions, of afflictions, of disappointments, of sorrows, and of sufferings; but not the penal cross which was put upon the person of Incarnate God. Let him take it up, and not expect to avoid it; for afflictions will lie in his way: and let him follow me; for whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life, for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it." Thus

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we have Christ and the Christian before us, and we have also in the two verses which I have read as my text this morning an implication of the fact that--

"None but Jesus, none but Jesus,
Can do helpless sinners good."

"What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" One thing is certain here, viz., that these words are solemnly and absolutely true, inasmuch as they fell from the lips of Him who is Eternal Truth. This was not the opinion of Peter, nor the opinion of Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John; nor was it the expression of an angel's mind, nor of the minds of a multitude of angels; but the utterance of Jesus Christ himself,—“What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” Let me remind you of the fact that the Speaker of the text knew the worth of the world; for he made it, he governed it, and he will judge it: and he knew also the worth of souls; for he made them, and came to redeem them, and he sanctifies them by his Spirit. He that keeps, protects, and searches an immortal soul, knows its worth, and, therefore, we are perfectly safe in relation to our text this morning. The words are solemnly true, having fallen from the lips of Him who knew the worth of both the world and the soul of man; and (he puts the fact before us in the form of a question,) “What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”

I shall take my text as suggesting facts, which to my mind are exceedingly important and solemn.

Let me in the first place observe *that man has a soul*. There can be no doubt of this. The text means that man has an immortal soul. Now I cannot describe the immortal mind of man, nor set forth as I wish I could, and as perhaps my hearers wish I could, all the peculiarities of an immortal soul. It is God's creature, and it is exceedingly mysterious, and naturally immortal. I wish to impress this upon the minds of my hearers, and especially upon the minds of my younger friends, that the soul of man is, by the will and power of God, naturally immortal. I lay as much stress as possible upon the words “naturally immortal,” because there is a sect of professors (whether they be Christians or not, I do not know) that tell you, and profess to believe themselves, that the grace of God immortalizes the soul, and that the whole of man, as a sinner, is mortal in consequence of sin, and that there is no kind of immortality out of the Lord Jesus Christ. Now we believe—at least, I hope we all believe—that the soul of man is naturally immortal—immortal, whether it be saved or lost, whether it be cursed or blest, whether it goes to hell or to heaven, whether it be washed in Christ's blood or appear before God in all its moral defilement and filth. Get rid of the natural immortality of the soul, and you remove one of those important and salutary barriers which naturally and necessarily lie before sin and the sinner. Oh Christian friends, if the doctrine of the final annihilation of the wicked were universally believed, it seems to me that iniquity would flow through our streets with more tremendous force than it does now. However, man has a soul, which is a deathless power, an immortal principle, and there are two worlds in which minds or spirits dwell; one of blackness, and darkness, and despair; (the Lord save us from it; for this present world cannot, as my text says;) and immortal minds, my friends, are there as the Lord liveth, if the Bible is true, in perfect and deathless consciousness. I will not say much respecting eternal fire and flames; but the wrath of God rages there,—there the justice of God appears in all her awful glories, and the worm that dieth not, but creeps and stings eternally, is there. God is not there with any intimations of favour, but all is darkness and eternal despair. And

then there is another world of minds ; and God himself, the great independent and self-existent Intellect, is there, in Jesus the God-man, millions of angelic spirits, and millions of saved human minds are there also; but what it is to be in a world of minds, we do not know. However, man's immortal mind, when separated from the body, will either sink beneath the weight of its own guilt into the blackness of eternal despair, or be carried by the sweet force of the atonement and blood of Jesus Christ into the regions of everlasting happiness and joy. And we are taught further that the world cannot save the soul, nor savingly influence the mind. "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Take the world materially, and there is no saving power in it ; take it politically or socially, there is nothing in it that can save. All political ties break in death, all social ties then dissolve, and all material possessions and worldly pleasures are then left behind. My fellow sinner, (and it is sometimes said I do not preach to sinners,—I preach to sinners now,) in the deep solemnities of death, all that is worldly and secular will break down and give way, and the immortal spirit will retain its own character, and possess one of two qualities, and that in perfection for ever and ever—either sin, or grace,—salvation, or misery and woe. The mind will go into the presence of God, uncovered, filthy, deformed, and devoid of spiritual excellency, or it will return to God, washed in Jesus' blood, sanctified by the Spirit, filled with divine grace, clothed with the garments of salvation, covered with the beautiful robe of righteousness, and enter as having a right so to do into the King's palace, to live there for ever and ever. Hence the terms used by the Holy Ghost, and by men also, to express death, whether it be in relation to a saint or a sinner. We say when a friend is dead, he is *gone* ; he has left his tabernacle, and there it lies in death. His tenement is here, but he is gone. He *gone*?—then there is an existence, a being, a life, the perpetuity of which is independent of the body. Yes ; the life of the mind is independent of the body, and will exist when the body is dead ; and hence we use the term, "He is *gone*." Paul said, "The time of my *departure* is at hand." This implies a place which one leaves, and another to which he goes. Hence, further, we use the word "*fled*." The Christian is dead, so far as his body is concerned ; but the soul is fled and gone. "Not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." I have sometimes, in my study and elsewhere, tried to realize somewhat of the solemnity of the fact that all that constitutes the immortal mind or one's personal consciousness (I wish I could impress it upon your minds) will go into eternity, in its entirety and never cease to be. My memory, my conscience, my affections, my understanding, my judgment, my will, and all that is essential to the being of my mind, and inseparable from my spirit, I shall carry with me either down to hell (the Lord prevent it!) or up to heaven (the Lord grant it!) to be for ever with the Lord. This is all I will say on the fact implied, that man has a soul.

Again ; the text suggests *the infinite liberality of Jehovah*. "Why, sir, you are not preaching from the text as a great many persons would preach from it." I am trying to preach the gospel, and I hope whether I take a text such as this, or one which refers directly to election, I shall keep within the lines of God's everlasting and precious truth. I am not going to preach Arminianism because I have taken a text which is sometimes dilated on to drive men into religion. Therefore notice the infinite munificence and liberality of God. How does that appear? "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Then for all saving and sanctifying purposes the world is simply and absolutely worthless. Well, then, if God had given each of us a world, or permitted each of us to gain one, we should have been comparatively poor. The poverty would have been showy, gorgeous, and splendid; but it would have been poverty nevertheless. Yes; and, therefore, God did not content himself with giving each of his dear

children a county, or a province, or a country, or a continent, or two or three continents, nor did he content himself with giving each of them a world like this. Eternal life was so deep and high, so profound and marvellous, that it prompted God, the Lover to give himself, the Maker of worlds, and not worlds merely. Hence, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son," and he spared not his own Son. "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift." God would not put into the hands of his people that which could do them no spiritual good. He gave them his darling Son, and in him he gave them his great Self for ever and ever. There, then, friends, we have the infinite liberality of Jehovah. If you will allow me to use the word "offer" for a moment—we all know what the decision of the world and free-will as it is called, would be, if it were our duty to take Christ in one hand, and the world in the other, and make an offer to the sinner; we know which men generally would choose. We know also how the poor penitent sinner would choose; and what the contrite heart would say,—“Give me Christ, or else I die.” I would humbly ask thee, dear Father, to favour me with as much of the world as may be necessary to render my journey to the grave and to heaven comparatively comfortable; but give me Thyself, thy dear Son, and thy salvation: for less than these will not suffice, and thou canst give no more. Here, then, we have the infinite liberality of God.

And then you see, *there is no vital connection between this world and the soul*. If there were an essential and vital connection between this world and the soul, one might be able to carry his worldly wealth away with him; but it never was known, and, I suppose, it never will be known, that a soul carried, or ever will carry, anything out of the world with it, except what was moral and spiritual. But there is a vital connection between God's gift and the receiver's mind, between the donation of heaven and the sinner's heart. We shall leave behind us our wives, should they be living, our children, our friends, and our material, social, and official all; for of all those things we must be divested and utterly stripped, and emptied, too; but one thing we shall carry with us out of the body into worlds unknown, and that is, the glorious grace of that God whose honours and glories I try to set forth from time to time. All that is perishable will be behind us, and all that is imperishable will be before us; and we shall be in divine sympathy with the imperishable world of glory for ever and ever. Well, we may ask God to favour us with a sufficiency of temporals on the road, to favour us also with such a road to walk in, and such circumstances as shall tend to our comfort while we are on the earth; but for all saving, endless, and undying purposes, something higher, nobler, and better must be possessed. The influence of the world is limited to its own sphere, and it can never go into the region of eternal things. That is a higher and nobler domain in which we have Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Father; and, therefore, love, blood, and power. Christian brethren, could we gain the world by trading, by fraud, by force, or by any other—means, could we get possession of it all, from the north to the south pole, and from east to west, we should then hold only that which we must drop in death; but if Christ is in the heart, the hope of glory, we possess a gift, a blessing, which can never waste, fade away, nor be lost. There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus; and who shall separate us from the love of God?

Again, the text suggests the fact—and I hope some of my tried brethren and sisters will be able to take this home to themselves—that *a little faith in the heart is worth more than a whole world*. Not any kind of faith, I mean a little of the right kind, a little of that faith which is the gift of God, and which worketh by love, and in connection with which the soul is saved; a little of that faith is worth more than the world. The empty, proud, and conceited worldling would meet me and say, "You may have your faith, give me the world. You may have

a little of it or much of it. You may have a mind full of it, and believe with all the powers you have, and welcome; give me the world." We do not ask a blind man for his opinion of colours, nor a deaf man for his opinion concerning sounds, nor an ignorant man questions concerning matters that are highly intellectual. The child of God knows that the world is blind, and deaf, and dumb, and dead, and utterly incapable of forming a correct judgment concerning the great matters of life and death. What is it that makes faith so precious and important? "It is the gift of God." Now look at the difference between God's gift and man's getting. Let me read the text again,—part of it, however: "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain [or get, by trading or otherwise,] the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Now faith is a divine gift. It is not got or acquired by labour, thought, turmoil, sorrow, trouble, sitting up late and rising early, or by eating the bread of carefulness, and so on. Faith is not acquired by the creature; it is altogether, from first to last, the gift of God. The act of believing is yours; but the power by which you believe came from God. The act of moving your arm is yours, you are supposed to move it as you please; but the power and ability to do this are God's gifts and favours. Faith is more than a mere assent to divine things; it is a living power and a heavenly principle, by which the mind is enabled to take hold, not of the world, nor of mortal things, but of heavenly, immortal, and deathless; realities and hence even a little of it in the heart is worth more than all the world.

Then, secondly, *the faith that comes from God is a saving faith.* We have already observed that there is nothing saving in the world, nor in the mind's connection with it; but faith is a saving grace, being connected with salvation and its Author. How is this? It takes hold of eternal things, and will not let them go; and the realities which it holds save the soul. They become vitally connected with the believing soul, and faith strikes her roots into them; so that there is a vital connection between eternal salvation and the heart that believeth unto righteousness. Faith unites to the Saviour, and lands the soul in the kingdom of God's dear Son. My dear friends, you are towards God and eternity just what grace causes you to desire to be, and where your faith prompts you to wish to be. Well, where would you be? In Christ? You are there, although I cannot induce you to believe it. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth in Christ Jesus, I lie not, my own conscience bearing me witness, and the Word of God also, that you are in Christ. If you have faith in Jesus, your soul is in him, and he is in your soul. If you have faith in eternal verities, they are in your mind; for the believing soul receives and embraces the things of the Spirit of God. Thence it is that faith is so precious and important, a little being more precious and important than all the world. This faith is also said to be a conquering or an overcoming faith:—"This is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith." "We have not overcome the world, Sir." You have, my brother. Hitherto, you have been an overcomer and a conqueror: up to the present moment, through grace divine, (eternal thanks to God!) you have overcome and conquered. If your faith in the beauties, charms, and preciousness of Jesus had not been stronger than your love to the world, you would have given up your religion and returned like the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire, or like the dog to his vomit again. You have left the vomit and the mire, and can you return to them? Could you freely, cheerfully, and voluntarily relapse into your former circumstances and condition? No, no; the Lord prevent it by his grace. You see more in Christ, then, than you do in the world, and love him with a flame superior to that with which you regard all things here, and your heart is at times lost in the beauties and glories of the dear Emanuel. Since, therefore, faith is both saving and conquering, it is worth more than a world. Did you ever hear of large possessions? Imagine an individual capable of possessing the whole world; and for argument's sake just

suppose a person in possession of it. Well, now, contemplate him as its master and proprietor. Would his wealth and greatness sanctify him, and make him pure in heart? Would they elevate him into heavenly places? would they produce hatred to sin and love to holiness and God? would they conform him to Christ? would they help in prayer? Would they not be sure to embarrass him, if he had a deep desire to love God and serve him? If he had the world it would be sure to perplex and entangle his mind. Nothing out of Christ can sanctify or save the soul of man. "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Oh for that faith which is infinitely better than all worlds, with their gold and glories, whatever men's estimation of these things may be!

Once more: the text suggests *the infinite worth of Jesus Christ*. How does that appear? In this way;—I beg attention to this, for I want to exalt, or be the means of exalting, your thoughts to my Master and your Master if I can—if one world (and the text must mean this) is too poor to save one soul, what must have been the power and worth of Christ who saved countless millions of them? Now, do you not see this fact in my subject this morning? The whole world would leave a soul in damnation, destruction, and eternal death. There is not enough in the world; its worth is not sufficient, and it does not possess those properties and powers which are necessary to save immortal minds. But Christ saved millions, and saw them before he left the earth, and said, "It is finished!" The glorious work is done! There was, of course, infinitely more in Jesus the Maker of the worlds than there was, or ever can be, in the material works of his hand. It follows, my friends, if what we see over our heads be worlds similar to our own, that if each human creature could gain one, and the entire material universe were owned by sinners, that fact would leave all souls in sin, destruction, and death; but Christ comes down and hangs on the accursed tree, where he bleeds away the curse and exhausts the damnation righteously due to us, by which he redeemed millions from that despair in which the possession of worlds must have left them. Precious Jesus! O that our souls may be found in thee! O that our immortal minds may now be covered with thy righteousness, and bathed every day in thy sweet and blessed atonement! Take an illustration. "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Here is one who is supposed to have gained the whole world, and God requires his soul. The trembling creature says, I offer the world instead: Justice holds the balances, and God's requirements or law are in one scale, and the man puts all the world, all he owns into the other; and Justice holds the balance, and says, "Found wanting!" There is no proportion whatever between the requirements of God and the whole world. What can be satisfactory? How can Justice be pleased? Why, if worlds were heaped upon worlds, Justice would remain unsatisfied; but when Christ, the dear Son of God, is put into the scale over against the requirements and law of God, then she is satisfied, for there is a righteous state of things, and she says, Loose him, and let him go. The price is adequate and sufficient, the sword of Justice is sheathed, the debt-book is closed, the gates of hell are shut, and the gates of heaven opened, for souls are gloriously redeemed. I should like before I leave this part of my subject to make a remark upon an experimental aspect of it, viz., that the unspeakable preciousness of the soul as realised in certain relations, to say nothing about the rich man and Lazarus, the former of whom was in hell lifting up his eyes in torment, while the latter was in Abraham's bosom. Let me just call attention to a poor soul under conviction (here we have something experimental.) The law of God has been applied to his conscience, the clear light of God's countenance has fallen upon his understanding, his sins have been placed in terrible array before him, and he falls ashamed, confounded, and lost before God's throne, and confesses that he is guilty and undone. Take

sacks full of gold to that man, or a country ; or take a world and lay it at his feet, if you could so, and he would experience from the gift no peace for his guilt-stung conscience and burdened mind. There is nothing in gold, or honour, or pleasure, or the material universe, that could meet the case of that poor wretch. What is wanted ? Ah ! he says, I feel now somewhat of the meaning of the Saviour's words, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ?" Now I realize the fact that I have an immortal mind, and that I am lost and ruined for ever. Look at the mind in another relation—in connection with full forgiveness or God's forgiving love. Well, does he not want the world in that connection ? No, not he, especially when his soul is dancing before God as one whose sins are forgiven. I can remember the time (if I am not deceived, and I do trust I am not) when I lost my burden, and my soul came into the sweet enjoyment of liberty, when I felt that I was an heir of God through the Lord Jesus Christ; and I do believe that if a thousand worlds had been offered to me at that time, in those happy hours, I should not have been affected by their attractions. My whole mind, if I am not mistaken, was absorbed in Christ, swallowed up in the eternal greatness and glories of my own salvation ; for was I not a sinner saved by grace ? I would rather have died, than lived possessing a world without God and hope therein. When guilt and damnation are gone,—when hell is seen to be impossible to the soul, because it is loved with an everlasting love, and embraced by the arms of Jehovah,—then the world has no charms ; and such would not change their blessed state for all that earth calls good and great. And then, brethren, when we come to die, and reach the last day and the solemn judgment, what would worlds be to us then ? All around us will then give away. Then Jesus, and Jesus only, can be all in all. When mortals and perishing worlds are far behind us, may we sing :—

"Secure, when mortal comforts flee,
To find ten thousand worlds in Thee."

Yes ; the preciousness of Jesus, and the emptiness of the world, are facts that are realized in death, and will be realized in the wonders of the day of judgment. Caught up to meet the Lord in the air ; and, perhaps, we may look down upon a burning world as we go to be for ever with him. How much will the world or worlds be worth then ? And what will then be the preciousness and glory of Emanuel in our estimation ? To rejoice beyond a burning world, and shout Hallelujah while the wreck of nature is taking place !

Well, in the next place, just a word,—*an exchange*. What shall a man give in exchange for his soul ? An exchange has taken place. God has given us his dear Son, and Christ has given himself. Justice held the souls of the church, and Christ was given in exchange for them. Ah ! now you begin to see the plan of salvation ; for this solemn exchange is pleaded by the sinner. What can you give me, says Justice, in exchange for your soul ? The world will not suffice, it is not sufficiently valuable. What will you give ? Why ; He loved me, and gave Himself for me. If that should fail, O God, I have no other plea ! The world, I know, is worthless ; but His name, His blood, His righteousness are great and full, and they are my all.

Lastly, it suggests, in fact expresses, the solemn question—"What shall a man give in exchange for his soul ?" Gold ? That is not current coin in God's moral government. It goes for nothing, and is worthless. You "are not redeemed with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, from your vain conversation ;...but with the precious blood of Jesus Christ." Gold, then, being worth nothing, cannot be given in exchange for the soul. Works ? They are all imperfect and sinful ; and consequently God rejects them in connection with the ground of the sinner's

acceptance. Suffering?—Suffer for our own salvation! We are finite beings, and if we suffer for ages after ages, and ages after ages, our sufferings will merit nothing. What can you give? Lord, the world is mine, even the whole world, I have gained it. I have traded, and my various means have made myself master thereof—take that for my soul. “What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” And, therefore, an interest in Christ and a realization thereof, enables the child of God to form a correct estimate of the world and all things out of his great saving Lord.

“Let worldly minds the world pursue,
Earth has no charms for me.”

He who has seen “the King in his beauty,” will not be likely to be carried away by that which the world calls greatness and glory. God’s great Wonder, heaven’s great Wonder, the Lord Jesus Christ, the infinitely amiable, lovely, and beloved Son of God,—we have seen him; he is ours; we have tasted that he is gracious. Therefore we pray that he would, as far as this world is concerned, give us “all necessary things richly to enjoy,” and bless us with holy nearness to himself, for then shall we sing amid the sweet glories of his face:—

“What little things these worlds appear,
How despicable in our eyes!”

May God command his blessing. Amen.

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THE ARGUMENT OF MANOAH'S WIFE.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, AUGUST 8th, 1875.

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*"And Manoah said unto his wife, We shall surely die, because we have seen God. But his wife said unto him, If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt offering and a meat offering at our hands, neither would he have shewed us all these things, nor would as at this time have told us such things as these."* Judges xiii. 22, 23.  
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"WHATSOEVER was written aforetime was written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope;" therefore in causing this conversation which took place between Manoah and his wife to be recorded, the Holy Ghost had his eye upon the people of God and their circumstances in all the future ages of the world; and the facts stated in my text were intended for the comfort and instruction of the tried family of grace until the end of time. I need not go through the whole of the connection in which the text stands. We are told that after the death of Jephthah and other judges, Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord delivered them into the hands of the Philistines forty years. Israel was a backsliding nation, unspeakably prone to idolatry, and continually falling into that black and hateful sin. God was a jealous God, and ever will be; so when Israel fell into that sin, he gave them up into the hands of their enemies to be chastised and corrected. After they had been oppressed by the Philistines forty years, an angel of the Lord appeared to two good and godly persons,—for in the worst of times some gracious characters may be found, or a few grains of holy salt here and there in this corrupt and dying world. As in the days of Elijah, there were good men who had not bowed the knee to Baal; so in the corrupt and degenerate times to which we are now alluding, there were at least two saints of God in the land of Canaan. These two persons were Manoah and his wife, and their life was one of fellowship with God. They were heirs of heaven, and had holy and intimate moments in the presence of their covenant God and Father. They had no child; and an angel of the Lord appeared to Manoah's wife, and informed her that in the course of time she should have a son; that no razor should come upon his head, but that he should be a Nazarite from the womb. The angel departed from her, and she ran and told her husband that a man of God whose countenance was very terrible, had appeared unto her and informed her that they should have a son. Manoah, it seems, wanted a token for good for himself, and desired to prove God, and perhaps his wife also; and, therefore, he entreated the Lord, and said, "O my Lord, let the man of God which thou didst send come again unto us and teach us what we shall do unto the child which shall be born. And God hearkened to the voice of Manoah."—I shall have occasion

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to advert to this in the course of my remarks this morning, and therefore I hope you will give some attention to it now. The angel of God came again unto the woman as she sat in the field, but Manoah her husband was not with her. She ran and shewed her husband that the man of God was in the field and waiting for them, and both of them went and met the person whom they supposed to be a man. It appears that after the angel had repeated the promise of a son, and the directions previously given, Manoah said unto the angel, *Let us detain thee until we shall have made ready a kid*; and the angel said, "If thou detain me," I will not eat of thy bread. He was not a human being, but a spiritual person, and from heaven; therefore he said, I will not eat of thy bread; and if thou wilt offer a burnt offering, thou must offer it unto the Lord; for Manoah knew not that it was an angel of the Lord. He killed and prepared a kid, and returned to the angel with it and a meat offering also, and offered them upon the rock; and it appears that fire either ascended out of the rock, or descended from heaven, and consumed the sacrifice; and we are informed that whilst the sacrifice was being consumed the angel of the Lord did wondrously. Manoah, prompted by feelings of curiosity, said, *Tell me thy name*; and he said, *Wherefore askest thou my name, seeing it is Secret (or Wonderful, as it is in the margin;)* and this, let it be observed, is one of the names of the Lord Jesus Christ; and, therefore, I conclude that this mysterious personage was the Angel of the Everlasting Covenant, the Angel of God's presence, that glorious Person who was to be the Child born and the Son given, and whose name was to be called Wonderful. Well, we are informed that the flame went up towards heaven, and that the angel of God disappeared ascending therein. And after all this had taken place, Manoah, trembling and full of fear, looked at his wife, and said, *We shall surely die, for it was not a man, it was not merely an angel; we shall surely die, because we have seen God.* "Two are better than one," said the wise man; because if one falls his fellow may raise him up, and if one is weak his fellow can strengthen him." The woman was the weaker vessel, but the stronger believer; and perhaps many a husband has had to thank God all the days of his life, for precious, and pithy, and important observations made by his wife when he himself was drooping, dejected and depressed. "We shall die," said Manoah, "because we have seen God." His wife proceeded to reason like a most excellent and accomplished logician, for she said unto him, "If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt offering and a meat offering at our hands, neither would he have shewed us all these things, nor would he as at this time have told us such things as these."

My subject this morning is this, That the merciful intentions and designs of God concerning his people may be inferred from his conduct towards them. This is the subject, and having defined it, let me proceed to make a few observations thereon.

In the first place we may infer the merciful designs of God concerning us, from the fact that *he has accepted a sacrifice for sin on our behalf.* This is one of the first thoughts the text suggests, and it is a very important fact. Let me first look at the type. There was a kid prepared: that kid was laid upon the rock, and fire from God (whether from the rock or from heaven, I will not say,) came upon the sacrifice and consumed it, probably reducing it to ashes. I want you to bear in mind that the flame was limited to the kid, and confined to Manoah's sacrifice, and did not scorch or even touch either him or his wife; and they were most deeply interested in all these solemn proceedings. Now let us apply all this to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; the Lamb of God, because provided by God, but provided by him for the objects of his eternal love. He lay, so to speak, upon the altar, and the flames of wrath and curse fell upon him. Manoah and his wife looked on whilst the angel of the Lord did wondrously; and you and I have been privileged by a holy faith and

with solemn spiritual feelings to contemplate God dealing with his dear Son as the sinner's Substitute, and punishing him instead of the actual transgressors. Now just as the flame which fell from heaven upon Manoah's kid was confined to the kid itself, so the curse of a broken law and all the expressions of God's righteous wrath fell upon Christ and upon him only. They fell upon and enveloped Jesus Christ, while the sinner or the onlooking and adoring church, like the man and his wife, is uninjured and untouched thereby. There was an affinity between Christ and the wrath of God which consisted in the fact that the Lord had laid on him the iniquity of us all. There is a strong connection between sin and curse ; for guilt must be followed by punishment, and the transgression of God's law by expressions of his solemn wrath. Had sin been imputed to, or left upon the church, the fire of divine wrath would have fallen upon her, but inasmuch as it was transferred by God from his people to his dear Son, the consequences thereof fell upon him, and him only: and it is sweetly solemn to stand in the place called Calvary, and see the Saviour dying for us. "He loved me, and gave himself for me." Well, God expressed his approval of both Manoah and his sacrificial kid ; for when fire came down from heaven and consumed their sacrifices, the offerers always considered that fact as a token of the divine approbation of themselves and their offerings ; and in this instance God's fire consumed the kid, the flame ascended to heaven, and the angel of the Lord ascended in it. Now from the sacrifice of Jesus Christ a fulness, a power, a fragrance ascended to the throne of God, in which Jesus Christ himself ascended ; for he has entered by his own blood into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.

My Christian brother and sister, what is your relation to this great affair ? The kid was Manoah's, he brought it and presented it, and there was a union between the offerer and his offering. What is the nature of your connection with the sacrifice of Jesus, with that one offering which has for ever taken away sin ? Christ was God's Lamb, but he was slain for sinners. Was he not slain for you ? Christ was the great redeeming Lamb, he exhausted the curse of the law for sinners: did he exhaust that which you had incurred ? "I do not know," you are ready to say. Well, what is your hope ? What is your desire ? Are you a solemnized spectator, and a penitent inquirer ? Are you like Manoah, standing near the sacrifice and looking on ? Are you viewing Christ crucified, and hoping your guilt was there ? If so, the Lamb slain was slain for you ; the blood that flowed flowed for you ; the curse that fell was that which you had merited ; and the fire that consumed the sacrifice was that which your sin had kindled. God does not mean to kill you ; for had that been his intention he would not have provided a sacrifice for you, nor confined the tokens of his anger to him. Had God designed to destroy you he would not have punished his dear Son, nor would he have turned away his face from him. You may sing:—"He loved me, and gave himself for me." The sacrifice has been received in heaven on behalf of the men and women for whom it was offered, and every sinner that sheds a tear of spiritual penitence before God, every heart that is broken by the Spirit, every one that has a holy desire, every sinner that loathes himself and sin, is interested in that sacrifice, and God will never smite him ; for—

"Payment God cannot twice demand:
First, at our bleeding Surety's hand,
And then again at ours."

No ; a sacrifice has been offered, the curse of the law has been exhausted, and there is now no wrath connected with the throne of Jehovah ; all has been poured upon Christ as the sinner's Substitute and Surety, and you, like Manoah's wife, may infer from these facts, and from your spiritual connection with them, that you are eternally safe and secure.

But I do not desire to dwell long on that point, since there are several others which are perhaps equally important ; and, therefore, we proceed to notice in the second place, that we may infer the mercy of the purposes of God from the fact that he *has accepted our prayers*. Ah ! now you may say, "That is a very critical point." I am not sure that this position is a very critical one, my friends. It is, however, a very important fact in God's conduct and the believer's experience. You may infer that you are a saved sinner and a child of God, and, therefore, as safe as angels in heaven, from the fact that God has accepted the petitions of your heart. We shall not die, said Manoah's wife ; for if God were pleased to kill us he would not have shewn us these things, he would not have spoken to us, nor would as at this time have told us such things as these, or treated us as he has. I said at the commencement of my remarks this morning that I should return to the eighth and ninth verses before I concluded. Manoah entreated the Lord, and said, "O Lord my God, let the man of God which thou didst send, come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born;" and God hearkened unto the voice of Manoah. Manoah prayed and God heard him and answered his prayer. He prayed that God would send the man again ; that request was fulfilled ; and the angel re-appeared to the woman, and met Manoah, according to the desire of his heart ; and yet the petitioner, though successful, was filled with fear and confusion, and said, We shall die, for we have seen God. How groundless were his fears, and how false was the conclusion which he drew from what had taken place. We have seen God, and therefore we shall die. But in relation to prayer, let us attend to two or three points. If God has ever accepted your prayers, he has accepted you. If he has ever fulfilled the desires of your hearts, he will save and glorify you ; for you are approved in the Beloved. Do you think that God would accept the fruit, and then destroy the tree that bare it ? Do you think he would accept the sweet and heavenly music of a living harp, and then destroy the harp itself. Do you think he would accept the streams, and then destroy the spring from which they flow, as an object of his dislike and condemnation ? No, my brother ; if God has ever heard your sigh, your person is accepted in heaven. If he has ever heard the groaning of the prisoner, the prisoner himself is approved by God. If he has ever looked with favour upon your upturned and outstretched hands and panting heart, God has from all eternity had thoughts of peace and friendship towards you ; for he does not accept the servant on the ground of his services, but respects first the offerer and then his offering. *Persons* always go first with the everlasting God. Abel was accepted, and then his sacrifice. Noah was accepted, and then his sacrifice. Nay, I go further even. Christ was first accepted, and then his sacrifice. He was not accepted merely because he offered a sacrifice for sin : the acceptableness of his work was the result of the fact that he was the object of his Father's delight. Look back, remember the way in which God has led you. Have you ever had from God's hand a blessing in answer to prayer ? Have you ever had a holy moment, or a cup of mercy (ever so small) in answer to the desires of your hearts ? If so, you are accepted in Christ ; and if God had meant to destroy or reject you, he would not have heard your prayers, nor granted you in any measure the requests of your heart. Moreover we infer God's merciful intentions from the fact that the Holy Spirit dwells within, as the Author of the saint's prayers, and the root or spring of their heavenly and spiritual desires. God will never destroy his own temple ; for "Ye are the temples of the Holy Ghost;" and God dwells in the saints. No prayer ever ascended from the heart of a sinner to heaven, but that which was indited by the Holy Ghost, and if the Holy Ghost ever indited prayer in your hearts, it ascended to heaven ; and the heart from which it flowed, the immortal mind in which it was produced, the

breast wherein the Holy Spirit lives and works, are God's sacred, special, and eternal property. If God had meant to destroy you, he would not have given you the Spirit, not have indited prayer in your heart; he would never have led you to the throne of Divine mercy, nor have put the cry into your breast, "God be merciful to me a sinner." That is not all in relation to prayer. All prayer that is accepted by God is offered by persons who are within the lines of the mediation of Christ, or the limits of the precious blood of the Lamb. All out of Christ is condemnation; all in Him is justification and salvation. Here are the lines of a Saviour's blood: all on one side is rejected, all on the other side thereof is accepted by God. Prayer ascends to heaven through the merit and mediation of Jesus. If, therefore, God has given you any favour in answer to prayer, infer from that fact that you are interested in Christ's mediation, and that he received your petition and purified it by his blood, and presented it to his heavenly Father. Yes; if God had meant to destroy you, he would not have given you the spirit of prayer, or would he have heard the expressed or the unexpressed desires of your soul; for there is a great deal of unuttered prayer in the church of God here on the earth—prayer that never takes the form of words, and is never expressed by the lips before God. "He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him;" and, therefore, Christian friends, I say again, remember what God's conduct towards you has been; and if you can boldly stand up and say that God has never heard a prayer of yours, I have done with you on this point. I have no more to say to you just now, beyond the fact that you are a prayerless person, for I cannot preach anything comforting to you in relation to this great reality. But if before God you are bound to say that you have been sometimes admitted into the Holiest of all, and had sweet fellowship and communion with God, then let me assure you that you can stand where all is sacred to God, and where he was never known to smite a poor sinner; you stand in the mediation of his dear Son, and he will not therefore destroy you. Besides, my friends, real, heartfelt, Spirit-produced prayer is the simple asking of God for what he intends to give. It is the simple asking of Jehovah to do that which he has promised and covenanted to do. You see, therefore, that if the Spirit of God is the Author of prayer, and he teaches a soul how to pray and what to pray for, since he knows what the provision is, the petitioner asks, for what God has prepared, and decreed, and laid up for him; and, therefore, Have you, under the influence of the Spirit, asked for life? there is life for you; yea, you are alive. Have you under that influence asked for pardon? there it is for you. Have you asked for help? there it is, and much help you have already received. If God had meant to kill or destroy you, he would not have accepted your prayers.

Thirdly, the text suggests the idea of *divine manifestation or illumination*. The good woman proceeded to say, "Neither would he have shown us all these things." He has not only accepted a burnt offering and a meat offering at our hands; he has made a marvellous revelation to us. "Neither would he have showed us all these things." Now let us apply this to the child of God and the experience of God's dear family. Have your minds been illuminated? Has God ever manifested himself to you in connection with two or three facts which I will presently mention? If so, his designs towards you are merciful, gracious, and saving; and if you look at facts as Manoa's wife looked at them, you will draw the most consoling and comforting conclusions therefrom. First, (and if I introduce nothing very new or novel, never mind;) has God ever showed you that you are a poor, guilty, lost, and ruined sinner? Do not say, That is an old and threadbare subject, almost worn out. My brother, it is not so. It is, I acknowledge, an old-fashioned one, but it is God's way of dealing with sinners, and I must insist upon it. Has God shown you the fact that you are lost? Do you

know it? Well, we do know it; but the question that arises in our minds in relation thereto is this:—Is our knowledge the result of heavenly enlightenment? Has God taught us that fact? We know that we are ruined by sin. My brother, who in the universe but God could have shown you this fact? There is no being but Jehovah can visit the mind with light clear enough and strong enough to reveal that terrible fact to the heart. If you have trembled or are trembling as a guilty sinner before God, he has shown you yourself, he has blessed you with light from his throne; and had he meant to kill you he would not have given you such a revelation. Had he not intended to save and glorify you, he would have left you where you were, and you would have gone on until you had reached hell; the fact that you were a sinner would have been revealed to you in connection with eternal torment; but he has shown you that solemn truth in this world, and before you reach the grave, and so revealed it that you dropped upon your knees, and prayed for mercy through atoning blood. Will you say, We know that we are guilty sinners and we shall die, for we are lost and ruined? If God had meant to kill you, he would not have shown you what you were; and, therefore, cheer up and draw comfortable conclusions from the very misery that you experience as the result of divine illumination and teaching. But this is not all. God appeared to Manoah in a human form as the God-man Mediator. Is such a manifestation the precursor, or forerunner of damnation? Is a revelation of God in our flesh a token of approaching death, and darkness, and ruin? "Cheer up," said Manoah's wife to her husband; had God meant to kill us he would not have appeared to us in that form, or manifested himself to us in that marvellous manner. He spoke to us in our nature, and in a body like our own; and surely all this cannot be followed by death and destruction! Had he meant to kill us, he would not have shown us such things as these. And then in the next place, some of us hope we can go a little further. He has not only shown us that we were sinners, and revealed himself to us as in our nature, he has discovered his soul-cheering and soul-attracting charms to us,—has he not? There was a time when in your estimation he had no form nor comeliness, and you did not desire him. I know the feelings of your hearts now, and the experience of your spirits this morning. They are expressed in the language of the Psalmist,—“Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon the earth that I desire beside thee.” Oh have you not seen ten thousand beauties in the Saviour, ten thousand excellencies and charms in his dear face! I shall never forget many years ago hearing a few people singing—

“Dear Jesus, let thy beauties be
My soul's eternal food,
And grace command my soul away
From all created good.”

Has he shown you such things as these? Is Jesus thus precious to your hearts? If so, the conclusion which you should draw, and the only one which faith does draw from this fact, is, that God intends to save you—*nay, has saved you*, and intends to glorify you in heaven with himself for ever. Again, have you ever seen divine beauties and glories in the word of God? While reading a chapter or two, a single verse arrested your attention, the eye ran through it, the heart melted, the eye filled, and a secret and silent prayer ascended from the swelling soul to the throne of God. It was as if you saw God's face in the verse,—as if you saw the heart of Deity there; the fountain was opened there for sin and uncleanness. That verse was as a flame divine. There all that you required appeared, and your joy was full. Say not, You are fanatical this morning; for surely the word can never produce feelings like these, apart from the intervention of its great Author. Have you seen these objects in the word of God? If so, God intends to save you, and has already done so, and you possess a meetness for eternal glory.

But to pass on.—He not only accepted their sacrifice and meat offering, heard their prayer, illuminated their minds, and manifested himself to them, but *he conversed with them*. Has God, even the Most High, ever conversed with your spirits? And when the application was made, was it as if that promise came from the throne of God? And has it rested upon your hearts? Did you feel it was God's word, that it was spoken by God's mouth, and that it came from his heart? Were there any infidel thoughts concerning it as it lay upon your troubled spirits? No; you received it as the word of God, and sucked comfort and consolation therefrom. If God had meant to destroy you, he would not have done this. If he had intended that you should go to hell, he would not have whispered such sweet words into your minds. Besides, what was the promise? Whatever it was, it cannot be contradicted nor falsified. God cannot deny himself, for if the promise so applied should not be made good, unfavourable reflections or shadows will fall upon at least two persons in the Trinity; for should it not be made good, the Promiser's character will be tarnished, and the character of the Applier be untrustworthy, for the Father gives the promise, and the Holy Ghost applies it; and if what the Father has said, and the Spirit has applied, should not subsequently be verified and made good, God's character will suffer. No, Christian brethren; if God had meant to kill, or destroy, or to permit us to be lost, he would not have spoken to our hearts; but although worldly professors may sneer, laugh, and mock (and they do so when we allude to the fact that God speaks to the soul, and converses with his people,) let us insist upon it with all the power we possess, that there is a sweet sense in which God speaks to the heart; and when he does so, comfort and consolation are sure to spring up in the breast; and if he has spoken to you, you are saved for ever and ever.

There was *the creation of a hope*. Manoah's wife said, as it were, If he had meant to destroy us, he would not have created such a hope in our breasts; and it seems to me that the observations of Manoah's wife imply this:—How foolish you are! Has he not promised us a son? And will he destroy the root before the branch is produced? How foolish, how groundless and absurd are your remarks, that we shall surely die because we have seen God! Why, he has come and manifested himself, and spoken to us words which have kindled such a hope and fire in our breasts as we have never had before; and had he meant to kill us, he would not have spoken such things as these. And has he given you a hope? Yes; a good hope through grace. Let me tell you that it cost him more to produce that hope than it did to make the world. He made the world without the blood, the suffering, and the death of Christ; but he does not kindle a hope in the sinner's soul without the cross of Immanuel. Has he given you a hope? Notice what it cost him to produce it and think that it is unlike Jehovah to tantalise hope and disappoint it, to create a desire, and then permit it to die finally, to create a filial spirit, and an expectation of divine glory, and then permit them all to end in darkness, disappointment, and despair. Look within. I do not ask whether you have joy, rapture, or pleasure. Have you a holy and heavenly hope? God is the Author of it, and if he meant to kill you, he would not have kindled that new creature in your hearts.

Then again: *Interposition*.—At such a time as this, when the whole country is oppressed, when we are all in bondage, when we are in a state of degeneracy and worldliness! At such a time as this, Manoah, he has appeared to us and brought these mercies; and had he meant to kill us, that would not have been the case. Has God ever appeared to you in trouble? Has he been a very present help in trial? Has a gracious providence ever assisted you in your life? If so, draw the following conclusions therefrom:—That you are interested in the watchfulness of God; for had it not been so, he would not have interposed himself between you and danger at that particular moment when danger was at your feet, and another

step would have swallowed you up. Then God in a gracious and special manner shielded you from harm. Had he meant to destroy you, he would not have done so. You live under the watchful eye of God, under the kind fatherly care of Jehovah, under the helping hand of Heaven, and

“ Thus far you’ve proved the promise good,
Which Jesus ratified with blood:”

and had he meant to kill you, this would not have been the case. Moreover, very special favours have been manifested to you.

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

Thousands of your fellow-creatures have been passed by ; and you too would have been left in a state of death and unconcern had it not been for rich, free, and sovereign grace. Oh, it is a mercy to be deeply concerned about eternal things ; that feeling is produced in the heart by Jehovah, and is the forerunner of eternal perfection in heaven.

Lastly, we may notice *the impression left upon the minds of the two persons*, Manoah and his wife. Manoah trembled, being frightened ; he was exceedingly alarmed, and said, “ We shall surely die.” Nevertheless, he was humbled by what had taken place ; and if he was full of fear and greatly alarmed, he was deeply blest ; and I do not think it is in the power of anything but the grace or Spirit of God to spiritually humble the mind. Well, he was humbled. Both of them were humbled, and filled with holy reverence and deep awe by what had taken place. Their consciences were made tender, and I am sure that both of them at that moment, having seen God, loathed sin, and saw a glorious beauty in holiness. Is it so with you ? Have impressions like these been made upon your minds and left there by intercourse with God when you have been upon the knee of prayer ? If so, you are blest, you are saved, and eternal death can never follow such operations of divine grace and power. May the Lord add his blessing, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

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HEAVENLY ASSIMILATION AND SATISFACTION.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 12th, 1875.

"I shall be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness."—Psalm xvii. 15.

It is an unspeakable mercy to have a good conscience in the sight of God, a conscience purified by the blood of Jesus Christ, and sanctified by the indwelling operations and grace of the good Spirit of Jehovah. A person thus favoured is honest and upright in the presence of God, and to him the many exceeding great and precious promises are made which are recorded in the Word of Divine truth. "The upright shall dwell in the presence of God." "The upright shall have good things in possession." The upright shall be sustained in trouble, and, finally, delivered out of all his sorrows. "The Lord knoweth the days of the upright, and their inheritance shall be for ever." It was the high privilege and mercy of Paul to have a conscience void of offence in the sight of God; and of David also, the man after God's own heart, to be honest before the high throne of heaven. It was, however, the lot of both those holy men to be slandered and misrepresented. And this is not at all surprising, because our blessed Lord was so treated all the days of his life. Slanderers and calumniators followed David everywhere, and almost every day of his life. His conduct was continually misconstrued, and many of his steps and words were wilfully misrepresented. Not a few were constantly endeavouring to trip him up and to throw him down, and to plunge him into the mire, and then accuse him of gross inconsistencies as a professor of religion. Hence in the Psalm out of which we have taken our text, David commences with an expression of confidence in his personal honesty and uprightness. When he appeared before God as a sinner, as a transgressor of God's holy law, he shrank into nothing, and prayed for a manifestation of mercy; but when he took the misrepresentations of his fellow men into the presence of God, he could lift up his face with boldness and confidence beneath the eye of God, and lay his hand upon his heart, and appeal to the Omniscience of heaven for his integrity; and therefore he says, "Hear the right, O Lord; attend unto my cry, give ear unto my prayer, that goeth not out of feigned lips. Let my sentence come forth from thy presence; let thine eyes behold the things that are equal." The great Judge of heaven and earth will do right for ever. There is always a Court of Equity sitting in heaven. Divine Justice holds her balances with a steady hand, and David was not afraid to say in relation to the slanders of his fellow men, "Let my sentence come forth from thy presence." I appeal from human decisions to the infallible Judge who sits in the Court of Heaven. "Thou hast searched me, O God, and known me: thou knowest my down-sitting and mine up-rising;" and thou knowest that, notwithstanding the fact that I am a guilty sinner, and that as such I deserve to be visited with eternal expressions of thy wrath, I am perfectly innocent of the charges which are now brought against me, and therefore I appeal to thee: "Let my sentence come forth from thy presence." He then proceeds to say, "Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer." There never was a believer that more warmly and deeply loved the Word of God than David loved it. It was the man of his counsel, and the guide of his feet and tongue, and therefore he says, By shaping my conduct according to thy Word, I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer. When I was tempted to turn aside, or to take a particular course, I consulted the Word, and I endeavoured, O God, thou knowest, to frame my conduct according to thy revealed and holy will, and thus my conscience is void

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of offence before thee. Nevertheless, David was conscious of the fact that he was weak and feeble, and, therefore, he fell upon his knees, and said, "Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not." I shall slip, and slide, and fall, and bring a blot and a reproach upon thy holy cause and interest, if I should be left by thee. Therefore hold me up, and I shall be safe; "keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings, from the wicked that oppress me." The character of his enemies is fully drawn in the two or three verses which follow, and then he contrasts himself with them:—"As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."

I have selected these words this evening because I knew that I should be expected to make a few observations concerning the departure of our aged brother Smith, and I was informed that this portion of the Word of God was one of the last that he mentioned here on the earth. Whether portions of Scripture are mentioned in heaven I cannot tell. I saw him only a few hours before he died, but did not hear him quote my text. I am informed, however, by a member of his family that he did so. Therefore I thought I could not do better than read it as the basis of a few remarks on this occasion.

The text divides itself into two branches:—First, There is the marvellous *assimilation*; and, in the second place, the wondrous and blessed *satisfaction* resulting therefrom. In the first place, we have to notice a marvellous assimilation. David said, "*When I awake with thy likeness.*" We have not much experience in this direction,—perhaps, properly speaking, I should say that we have none concerning this marvellous matter. We shall be near our Lord, and we shall be like him for ever; and there is something solemnly thrilling in a consideration of the fact, that the ransomed spirit of that aged man who was eighty-three years of age is now near and like his dear redeeming Lord. Before we can be perfect, or see the face of Jesus, and experience this marvellous transformation, we must cross the river of death, and pass through all its solemnities. If, however, we have grace in our hearts, and the Holy Ghost dwells in our breasts, when the time comes we shall lift up our heads among the saints of God in glory with holy joy, and be thoroughly, perfectly, and completely like our Lord. We may, however, look at a few things in connection with this fact, although our knowledge of it is exceedingly shallow and limited. David, no doubt, adverted in the first place to the solemn moment when his spirit should be ushered into the presence of God:—"When I awake with thy likeness." The present life is a kind of sleep. There is not much vigour nor activity now. Our experience and knowledge are exceedingly limited, and there are times when we feel as if we were almost dead; but in heaven every power is perfected, every faculty is drawn forth and fully developed, and

"There we shall see, and hear, and know
All we desired or wished below."

But the Psalmist here adverts more especially to the resurrection of his body. I should not like to limit the text to the departure of the spirit for glory, and its entrance into heaven. David refers to the opening of his grave, to the rising of his ransomed dust therefrom, to the assimilation of his body to the glorious body of the Lord Jesus Christ; and he believed that when he awoke and rose from his dusty bed, and saw his Lord descending in the air, he should be perfectly assimilated to his image, and be at once and for ever satisfied. This implies at least some measure of spiritual knowledge, or the fact that he had some acquaintance with Jesus Christ, with that concatenation of things which is to result in the perfect conformity of the church of God to its great and glorious Head.

We may observe, in the first place—though we will tarry here only to mention two or three points—that if David adverted to the resurrection, he believed that his own body, which was then inhabited by his soul, should be raised from the dead. He believed in the *perfect identity of his body at the last day*, and in the perfect identity of the bodies of the people of the living God. So did Job and so did Paul. I shall see him, said Job, with these eyes of mine; and I shall behold him for myself, and not another. The resurrection of the body has been sometimes

misrepresented. Persons have so written and so preached on that theme, that they have induced a thought, or a kind of belief that the body will lose its identity, and that the child of God will not be veritably himself, but some other individual; whereas the body which now sits in God's house shall be raised from the dead. Otherwise there will be no resurrection; it will be a creation, not a resurrection, and another being will be produced; but David said, *I, I myself*, shall awake with the likeness of my exalted and glorious Lord. You observe in the next place, he was a firm believer in the *spirituality of the people of God*. I cannot describe a spiritual body. It is sown a natural body, but it shall be raised a spiritual body. The body of our Lord is a spiritual one, and if the people of God bear the likeness of Christ, and perfectly so for ever, not only will their minds be thoroughly spiritual, their bodies will be spiritual also. I shall awake with thy likeness, and be satisfied. Thirdly, David was a firm believer in the *absolute certainty of this fact*:—"I shall be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness." There are a thousand things which we expect which may never come to pass, a thousand circumstances which we contemplate in the future which may never arise; but nothing is more certain than death. But death itself is not more certain than is the resurrection of the body. Time shall end. Eternity shall swallow it up. The heavens over our heads shall be parted, and the veil that conceals the heavenly glory from us shall be drawn aside by God's own hand, The great Archangel, Christ himself, (for it seems there is but one Archangel) shall descend as the great Head of the Church, with the trump of God, and death shall lose all its prey. Ten thousand times ten thousand graves shall open at the authoritative bidding of Him who is the Resurrection and the Life; and the bodies of Abraham, of Isaac, of Jacob, of David, and those of all the saints, shall rise; and the moment they fix their eyes upon Jesus, this assimilation shall take place; they shall be "caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall they ever be with the Lord."

"A hope so much divine
May trials well endure;
May purge our souls from sense and sin,
As Christ the Lord is pure."

Christian brethren, what are the little, the empty things of time and sense! O for more grace from our God, and larger measures of his blessed Spirit, to enable us to live above the feeble and shadowy things of this brief life; to enable us to expect to share in those grand realities, the full display of which shall astonish assembled worlds.

What shall we say on the image or likeness here indicated? "When I awake with thy likeness." The likeness of God? Well, if you please; for the saints bear the image of God himself; but it will be the likeness of the great God-man, whom all the saved are to resemble; for we shall be like him. One Scripture explains or throws light upon another. "We shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." Will the Christian be deified then, because his whole person shall be made a partaker of the divine nature? Will he be a God? Will the assimilation, the transformation result in this? Some persons have spoken so unguardedly and incautiously, (I had almost said ignorantly) that the idea has been left in the minds of many that a kind of deification will take place in the experience of the creature when he enters into the presence of God. We shall be *like* him, but we shall never be the great "*Him*" himself. We shall be like God, but we shall never be God. Can such a thought enter the mind? Who are we that it should be imagined that Heaven will deify us? We who, the other day, so to speak, were within a hand's-breadth of hell,—we, who deserve to feel the terrible expressions of God's wrath for ever;—can the thought ever enter our minds that *we* shall become Gods, and cease to be creatures? It is much to have a hope that we shall live where he lives,—that we shall be near him, and shall sufficiently and satisfactorily resemble him; but the difference between the Creator and the creature, the Giver and the receiver, the great Majesty of heaven and man as a finite and dependent being, will never cease. Dignified the saints shall be; honours unspeakable and immeasurable shall be theirs; they shall be exalted and glorified, and the

glory shall be such that human language cannot describe it ; but saved sinners shall never cease to be the creatures of God. God can never communicate his essential attributes to the creature. If such a change could take place in him, he would become almighty, omnipresent, and self-existent. We loathe this thought, and bless the Lord our God for a hope that we shall live in the presence of the omnipotent and omniscient God, and sing the praises of the great self-existent One in Jesus, for ever and ever. What does it mean, then, if this assimilation does not mean that we shall be deified ? Can we believe that the glorified shall become Christs ? Now here, again, a great deal of presumptuous matter has been written and uttered. We shall be made like Christ, and therefore we shall be Christs ! so persons have blasphemously reasoned. What I have said concerning God and the godly might be applied to Christ and the Christian. This assimilation means, that our sanctification will be perfect, thorough, and complete ; that we as vessels of mercy shall be filled with all the fulness of God ; that we as Christians (mark and learn) shall be thoroughly, completely, perfectly, and satisfactorily *Christianized* : not deified, not converted into Christs ; but so Christianized that we shall be like Jesus Christ for ever, which state is the highest to which a creature can be raised. "With his likeness:" I suppose it will mean that as the portrait bears the likeness of the original, as the melted wax takes the impression of the seal, as the child has the features and the form of the father, so God's glorified people shall be like their great Lord and Head. The child is not the father. The impression on the wax is not the seal itself, and the portrait is not the original himself, and never will be. The Christian, however, is a living portrait of Christ, drawn by Heaven's great Artist, God the Holy Ghost. These portraits are unlike those which we have, whether from photography or any other form of human art. Our likenesses are all dead ; they may be called "speaking" and "faithful" ones ; so that if one knows the original, he may recognise him in a moment in his portrait ; but the picture is a dead one. The features are there, but they are immovable. The face, the form is there, but there is no vitality. The Christian will be a faithful, satisfactory, and living likeness of the Lord Jesus Christ. What does all this involve ? to be a little more experimental,—and I do love experience in preaching, and experience in religion. It is well to attempt to dig into the mines and mysteries of divine doctrine ; we want, however, the articles not only in the market, (if you will permit me so to express myself) and the money in the bank ; we want some of the former in our homes, and some of the latter in our pockets. So the great mysteries of Divine truth and doctrine are beautiful in the Bible, and glorious in Jesus Christ ; and it is important to dwell upon them as they there appear ; but we want Christ not merely on the cross, or on the throne, or in other people's breasts, we want him in our own hearts, the hope of eternal glory ; and to know that by-and-bye Christ will be the glory and fulfilment of that hope. Christ, now the hope of glory ; and Christ, then the fulfilment of that hope, and the realisation of all our expectations. This likeness involves the *entire and everlasting absence of all sin.*

"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."

Go though the universe, and ask, Where is the power that can thoroughly purify and sanctify the body and the soul of man ? Is there a power that can do it ? If so, how is it done ? Is it a fact that the people of God in heaven are for ever and perfectly free from sin and all traces thereof ? Yes. Then we may use a certain significant and weighty word, viz., that of annihilation. "Annihilation, sir !" I do not mean of the soul, I do not mean of the body, yet I use the word annihilation ; but I use it in relation to moral evil, and apply it to sin and all its consequences. If we are to be thoroughly like Jesus Christ, we shall be as pure as Christ is pure ; then the evils that now exist in the heart, and those which now pollute and deprave the body will be annihilated or cease to exist, being reduced to nothing. And what (again I ask) can reduce sin to nothing in the soul and body ?

The blood of Christ. Not God's abstract Omnipotence, for that without atoning blood cannot separate sin from the sinner. Sin is a moral evil, not merely a natural infirmity or derangement ; and, therefore, Omnipotence is free to glorify sinners through Christ's work, and takes the guilty soul and washes it, and makes it whiter than snow. The blood of Christ will thoroughly cleanse, and perfectly purify, and perfume the redeemed and regenerated church of God ; so when Satan and worlds shall look on the Saviour's right hand on the last day, they will see a stainless, and spotless, and a sinless multitude of Christians and believers. Not a spot shall be seen. Every trace of sin shall be gone. The guilt of it, the power of it, the defilement of it, the existence of it, and all the odour of it. Death which is the offspring of sin, will disappear, and the grave which is one of the last traces of it shall be broken up and cease to exist, for Christ will destroy it. Death, and damnation, and all the works of the devil will then have been annihilated by Jesus Christ. I shall be satisfied then, when I awake with thy likeness. But who does not see that this is a negative blessing. We have a vessel, a vessel, clean, transparent, capacious, and strong, no defilement upon it, and not a flaw in it, but it is empty. What next ? The likeness of Christ involves not only the absence of sin, but *the presence of holiness and happiness for ever*. Negative goodness is well as far as it goes, but the image of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the heart of a sinner will consist in positive holiness. The mind will be filled with sanctity, and the holiness of God will pervade every power ; a holiness, not differing from that of God, but divine holiness itself ; for the saints are partakers of the divine nature. "Be ye holy, for I am holy." The Christian's holiness will be divine, and if thoroughly like that of Christ, and of God, it will be perfect, and, therefore, satisfactory. Brother, the heart will never be out of tune there, the soul will never stagger and stumble there, the song will never end, and we shall never complain there as we do here of want of fervour and feeling in connection with the worship of God,

"But every power find sweet employ,
In that eternal world of joy."

What else is involved in this ? Why, the absence of sin and the presence of holiness must be followed by *nearness to the great Immanuel himself*. Like him. Like very frequently unites to like ; and to be like God will be followed by eternal peace and joy ; and to be like Christ will be followed by nearness to him. What makes a consciously ignorant man afraid of the highly intellectual one ? Why, the great dissimilarity that exists between himself and him. If he were like him in intellectual capacity and power, he would not be afraid to draw near to him. And what makes the sinner afraid of God, and keeps him at a distance from him ? He is so unlike him, a perfect contrast to him. But we shall not only faintly resemble Jesus, but be sufficiently and satisfactorily like him for ever ; but being like him that is on the throne, like the God of that world, like the glorious Author of that state, we shall not be afraid to lift up our faces as we enter into the heavenly glory. Our aged brother went home, he went up to the throne of God in that way, my dear friends. "I shall be satisfied," said the good and dear old saint ; *and he was*. That was not an empty wish, that was not a mere vague idea gathered from what was written in the Bible, it was indeed a fact gathered from the word of God, but that word was applied to his soul by the Spirit of God, and in passing out of the body he saw and felt what I cannot describe. At all events, he saw his Lord, the assimilation took place instantaneously ; and he went boldly and confidently into the heavenly world, and the eternal glory, for he was like Jesus on the throne. What shall we say further on this theme, the glory of God ? "I will that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." Oh I cannot illustrate it. I wish I had more descriptive powers. I do not know how to set forth the mystery. Enter into the glory of Christ and be transformed thereby ! How shall I illustrate it ? We shall imbibe the glory. We shall drink it in, and it will become incorporated with our spiritual existence and powers. Take a piece of iron (homely illustration,) put it into the fire, let it remain there, and it will become fiery - it will imbibe and retain the fire as long as it remains in it. So when the im-

mortal mind is immersed in the glory of Jesus it becomes glorified. That is perhaps a faint idea of what may be understood by glorification. And when the body at the last day shall be immersed in the glory of Jesus it will be glorified; for as the iron imbibes the fire and becomes fiery itself, so when he enters Christ's presence, the Christian imbibes the glory of God and becomes perfectly glorious. "When I awake with thy likeness." Now this fact is composed of several elements, and I may just point them out to you. When the child of God awakes with Christ's likeness in heaven, and when we shall awake at the last day and have that likeness impressed upon him, there will then be a *perfect fulfilment of God's decree of predestination*. We are requested to say nothing about predestination, but as it is so important an element in the subject before us, and the fact expressed in the text cannot be realized without it, and we love it well, we will introduce it now. I quote the words of the immortal Paul, and they are the words of the Holy Ghost himself,—“Predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.” Do you not like that idea? Well, you see that when the Church of God is perfectly conformed to the image of Christ, there will then, but not till then, be a perfect fulfilment of God's decree of predestination. That is not a repulsive doctrine, thus viewed, is it? Oh! it does good to millions, predestinated to be like Christ for ever! Blessed God! I thank thee for thy love. Is not this the language of every one of my hearers to-night? Secondly, this assimilation *is the scope and intention of the Holy Ghost's operations*. When he enters the heart of a sinner, he does so for the purpose of perfectly conforming that sinner to the image of God's Son. This work is commenced in regeneration, and it proceeds in various applications and operations of the Holy Spirit in daily life, for he dwells in his temple. The saint dies, but the Spirit prepares him for the solemnities of death and the wonders which lie beyond it, and then conveys him into glory; for

“The work that wisdom undertakes,
Eternal mercy ne'er forsakes.”

That is not all. This assimilation is the *great scope and end of all true godliness*. I shall be satisfied then, and not before. The grace of God in the heart, and all true godliness, are tending towards that marvellous point,—perfect conformity to Christ. If God should set the sinner down short of perfect conformity to Christ, he would feel agonising and bitter disappointment for ever. I had hoped, O God, the sinner might always say, to be carried farther than this. I had hoped that I should be thoroughly like Jesus Christ; and if such a soul could creep into heaven, eternity would find it unsatisfied. Hence, “I shall be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness.” The child of God until then will be in a restless condition; continually agitated; for something more than he has here is wanting to complete the full measure of satisfaction. He is growing, and is destined to occupy a higher position than that in which he now stands; and, therefore, his thoughts, and feelings, and hope, and religion will progress; rise higher, and higher, and higher, and higher, until he shall sing—

“My full soul can hold no more
Of everlasting love.”

We shall be satisfied with his likeness, and with his likeness only. I intended to look at what Jesus Christ himself is doing on the throne in relation to this fact. He will not cease to work until all his people are before him and are perfectly like him; but let us notice, thirdly, the *limitation* indicated in the text—Thy likeness indicates something that is boundless, but something which is also limited—thy likeness. It follows then, my dear friends, that the future is not obscure, undefined, and undefinable. “Who knows,” asks a great celebrated and poet, “anything about the future?” Who knows anything about another state of existence beyond this? Why, the Christian. The believer, the child of God does. “He guesses at it, sir.” He does not. “There is an idea of his, a mere idea that floats on his brain.” The idea was created by the Maker of the brain. The idea was produced by the God of heaven and earth. The future is not undefinable and obscure. We shall see—what? What? Ah! you must come to the Bible, you know, for an answer to that question. We shall be—shall be where? Shall be what? Shall be with whom? You must come to the Bible for an

answer, and the child of God sings, "I shall be near and like my Lord." He is coming, and I shall see him. More than that, sir; the sight will transform me, and I shall be like him. "It is mere guessing." Pleasing guess, is it not? Soul-satisfying idea, is it not? If it is a fancy, bring your fancy, and your imagination, and your ideal of the future, and place it side by side with this; and let us compare one fancy with another, and one ideal with another, and one future with another, yours with that which the Bible describes; and

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

We are going to heaven, my brethren, and we are going to be like the God of heaven for ever. We shall be satisfied when we awake with his likeness. In novels and works of fiction, some of which profess to be religious, we have certain characters drawn by graphic writers, which are, if possible, something more than perfect. Impossible characters are drawn, and people are invited and exhorted to resemble them. Oh! I care not to imitate the imaginary character of the novelist and writer of fiction; but I can imitate the great God of heaven, especially when he helps me; and not only so, I shall be like him by and by. Not like a creature of the human imagination, not like a being painted by fancy and art, but like Christ himself. "When I awake with thy likeness"—mark, *not like an angel*—David would not be satisfied with that. If the child of God were to bear the likeness of an angel in heaven for ever, he would be unembodied, but his soul shall not live alone in heaven; his body cannot be annihilated, and full and eternal satisfaction will not be felt until the body is glorified. Angels have no bodies. But he shall be like the Lord, who has a body like his own; like Christ, and not like either Adam or angels merely. "As we have borne the image of the earthy, so shall we bear the image of the heavenly. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven." Oh brother, aim high! God has aimed high for you. Aim high; your standard is a noble and heavenly one. Do not think of angels when you think of your destiny. Do not think of Adam when you think of your destiny. Draw no uncertain idea of the future in your mind when you think of your destiny; but go right up to Immanuel's Throne and revel in the fact that the time is coming when you will be like him. When you awake with his likeness. And my brother, *all this will be perpetual and immortal*. If not, we shall not be like him. If the holiness, the joy, the life should not be immortal, it will not be like his. Young sings (speaking of heaven and the perpetuity of the bliss of that world)—

"Could souls so rich in rapture fear an end,
That ghastly thought would drink up all their bliss,
And quite unparadise their heaven."

No mortality there. No end there. You will look around you as you wear the image of Christ. Look around you in eternity, and be impressed with the pleasing, wondrous thought. All this mine, and mine for ever! That will be a source of satisfaction.

Just one word on *the satisfaction*, and I must be brief. "I shall be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness." What does the word "satisfy" mean? To have enough. David says, "I shall then have enough, and not before; I shall be filled then, and then I shall rest." Take these three thoughts:—Enough—filled to the brim, therefore at rest. When I awake with thy likeness. "Satisfy" may be applied to God. God looked at his works after he had finished them as a Creator, and was satisfied, and rested on the Sabbath day. God, as a Moral Governor, looked at the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and said, "I am satisfied with your righteousness, and rested in it, and rests there still." And God the Father will look at his dear children when they are brought home, bearing his image, and will be satisfied, will be filled with pleasure and satisfaction, and say, Now I have enough. God the Father will not say I have enough, I am satisfied, until all the dear children made like Christ are before him in his heavenly home. Then, then, will commence the everlasting Sabbath, that Sabbath of rest and

satisfaction that will never end. But what shall we say about this satisfaction in relation to the child of God? He will be satisfied *with the likeness itself*. I shall be satisfied. Why so? It will fulfil, and more than fulfil his hopes and expectations. Nothing is more calculated to produce suffering and shame than the disappointment of large and ardent hopes. If a confident hope of some great good, cherished and held fast for years, be disappointed, suffering and shame are sure to result. But the hope of a child of God cannot be disappointed. He will not be disappointed of God's image, neither will he be disappointed in it. God will more than fulfil your hopes, my brother. Yes, you will be satisfied with the *likeness itself*. Then secondly, satisfied *with your possession of it*. Ah! this touches a tender point. You are not satisfied now, are you? Now, very frequently there is much laborious prayer and self-examination about it. Am I thine, or am I not? Is Christ in my heart the hope of glory? How you labour in reading and pressing out evidences in endeavouring to ascertain what your standing is, and whether your religion be genuine. Is he mine? Shall I be with him?

"How can I bear that piercing thought,
What if my name should be left out,
When thou for them shalt call?"

I think I do love his name, but I am not satisfied as to the nature of my connection with him. You will be satisfied then. Faith loses its hold here: sight will never lose its hold in heaven. Clouds come over the work of the Spirit on on the earth and conceal it from us; no clouds are there; we shall possess the likeness, and be satisfied concerning our possession thereof for ever and ever, and never lose our confidence concerning it. Then we shall be satisfied *with God's operations* which will result in our possession of it. The Father's choice,—my friend, you will be satisfied with eternal love then; and the Son's redeeming work, and the Spirit's power; and let me tell you that you will be satisfied with all God's dealings towards you as to his way of leading you home to himself. He strips in providence, mixes bitter cups, and uses rods of severity. Many are your pains, and hot, and bitter, and briny are your tears; but if you were God you would do just as he is doing; and could you see as he sees, you would be just where he has placed you; but at all events in heaven when you look upon God's conduct in the light of eternity, you will be satisfied that all was divinely right. —*Your capacity*. "Do you think, sir, there will be degrees in glory?" Well, if you ask me the question, for an answer, I say at once, No; I do not think so and I do not believe it. It does not appear to me at all consistent. But take this, we shall be satisfied,—satisfied with the dimensions of our minds, satisfied with our capacity, and satisfied with the image of Jesus Christ, for Christ's image; even the whole of it will be upon every saint there, and I do not mind how great some; may be, they will not have more than the whole of Christ's image. I do not mind how high they may sit, they will be nothing more than perfectly like Christ. We shall be satisfied, then, with the image itself, and satisfied with our capacity too. If the vessels should be small or large, every one shall be filled with Christ, and that will satisfy for ever and ever. But does it not seem impossible that there can be degrees in glory, when David, and Paul, and Jeremiah, and Isaiah, and your preacher, should it be his favour to reach that world, and you, and you, and you, and all my brethren, shall all bear alike the image of Jesus Christ? And all shall sit with Christ on his throne, even as he is seated with his Father on his throne. We all come to the same Mount Zion, the same Judge of all, the same Mediator, the same blood of sprinkling, and finally to the same heavenly home and rest, where we shall all alike bear the same image, to the full and endless satisfaction of a Triune God and ourselves. May God command his blessing, for Christ's sake. Amen.

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