

THE SAVIOUR'S PROMISE TO THE SEEKING SINNER.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, 29th APRIL, 1883.

"And him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out."—John vi. 37.

GREAT is the mystery of godliness. "God was manifest in the flesh." He is so now, and He will manifest Himself in the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven for ever. But God was manifest in the flesh of the Lord Jesus Christ on the earth. The eternal God, or all the fulness of the Godhead, dwelt in Him, and will dwell in Him for ever. The fulness of the Godhead appeared in His person, in His sermons, in His miracles, and in His work, when He was here. On one occasion He fed five thousand with five barley loaves and two small fishes. He multiplied the bread and the fishes, so that there was quite sufficient for them all, and much left after they were filled. And then, lower down in the chapter, it is said the disciples were on the sea, and it was dark and stormy, and Jesus was not come to them. Jesus, however, was subsequently seen walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship, and they were afraid; but He said unto them: "It is I; be not afraid." He entered into the ship, and immediately they were at the land whither they went. Here, again, God was manifest in the flesh; for He walked upon the sea, and stilled the tempest, and calmed the minds and spirits of His followers. We are then told that the people passed over, and came to the other side, where Jesus was; and that He proceeded to preach that marvellous sermon which is recorded in this chapter, portions of which have been spiritual meat and drink to God's people ever since the discourse was delivered. Jesus here speaks of Himself as the hidden Manna, or the Bread of God and of Life, which came down from heaven; declaring that, he that eateth His flesh shall live for ever. He says: "I am the Bread of Life. He that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." These are not the words of a mere man, nor of a mere creature; nor are they the words of abstract Deity, but the words of the great God-man, the Mediator between God and man. Without His humanity, there would be nothing for us to eat; and, if He were not God as well as man, the eating of His flesh and the drinking of His blood could not possibly give eternal life to poor sinners. "He that cometh to Me, shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me, shall never thirst. But I said unto you that ye also have seen Me, and believe not." Faith is a marvellous power. Thousands

saw the person of the Saviour when He was on the earth, and were not saved or benefited by the sight; and, if He were now living in this world, a sight of Him by the natural eye would have no saving or sanctifying influence upon the heart. "Ye have seen Me, but believe not. All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me, and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out."

Let us look at the words, "And him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." In the first place let us contemplate *the character* indicated in the text, or the act performed, that of coming to the Lord Jesus Christ. Coming to Christ is a matter of faith; and faith we know not only from the Word of God but by personal experience is the gift of God. We know that many at the present time are inviting all men and women to come to Jesus, and offering the Saviour and the bread and the water of life to all the sons and daughters of Adam. They seem to think it is as easy to come in a spiritual way to the Lord Jesus, as it is to walk from one point to another. They thus reason, because we can naturally walk from one point to another, therefore we can mentally and spiritually come to Jesus Christ and be saved; whereas the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. A natural man cannot perform a spiritual act, and the act of coming to the Saviour for eternal salvation and life is a spiritual one, and before it can be performed the soul must be made spiritual. The character must be formed by God, the new birth must take place, and divine life must be lodged by God Himself in the poor sinner's heart before this act of coming to Jesus Christ can take place. It implies three or four things. In the first place it implies the existence of a life that is in sympathy with Christ, the great object mentioned in the text. If there is no sympathy between Christ and the sinner, and the excellencies of Jesus have no attractions for him, he will never come to Christ. When, however, the Holy Spirit conveys divine life into a sinner's heart, it is found that that life is in sympathy with Jesus, the living Saviour; and we are not surprised, therefore, that Christ should have a drawing influence upon him. Having been born again by the Spirit of God, the life that is in the coming sinner is in all respects similar to, indeed, it is of the same nature as, the life of Jesus Christ Himself; as the sap which is in the root is the same as that which is in all the branches of the vine, so the life which is in the coming sinner is like that of Christ Himself. "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." If the Christian possesses the life of Christ, he is in sympathy with Him. Having a living faith, though it be small, in the glorious person of the Lord, the soul is drawn, not dragged nor driven, but gradually drawn towards Him, and into the presence of the dear Redeemer, "And him that cometh unto Him He will in no wise cast out." In the next place, this coming to Christ implies a measure of liberty, and I use the word measure intentionally, for if there is life in the heart and no degree of liberty, the soul cannot come to Jesus. Therefore, if you are coming to Him, or if you have come to Christ and embraced Him, and feel that He is really embracing you, you are in the liberty of the gospel, and may rejoice in hope of the glory of

God. But, perhaps, you are coming to the Saviour and have not yet satisfactorily reached Him, and fear you may never embrace Him as your own ; yet, since your face has been turned towards Him, and you are trying to advance towards His cross and His throne with the prayer, "Say unto my soul, I am thy salvation," there is a holy life in your heart, and you have been liberated and set free. I do not say that you possess the full liberty of the gospel, or that you can say with David, I will walk at liberty ; yet if you were the devil's slave, and under the power and dominion of sin, you would not be coming to the saving Christ of God. Burdened you are, and broken hearted too, and your spirit is filled with sorrow ; but hell does not hold you fast ; you are not under the reign of sin. I almost wish I could bring you to believe you are under the power of God's grace. Had not mercy touched you, you had not been where you are ; had not reigning grace liberated you, you would not have been coming to the Saviour, who will in no wise cast you out. In the third place, this coming to Jesus implies need, want, poverty, wretchedness, ruin. Those who come aright to the Lord, come not as gentlemen, not as visitors, but as poor sinners, lost, ruined and undone. They want a Saviour, or they would not come to Him, and a great one, else they would not come to the great Christ of God. They are ruined, and Christ only can set them free, and save, and enrich them for ever, and "will in no wise cast them out. Now, take these three points : the coming sinner is a living soul, he possesses a measure of holy liberty, and he comes because he is empty and wants to be filled ; filthy, and wants to be washed ; naked, and wants to be clothed ; poor, and wants the true riches ; an outcast, and wants to be accepted ; a hell-deserving sinner, and wants—and it is a wonderful want—to be accepted by God, and finally to be taken to heaven, and Christ "will in no wise cast him out."

Sinners come to Christ for refuge. There is a storm approaching them, their eyes have been opened to see it, and their hearts quickened to realize the awful character of their position. They know that the coming storm is a righteous one, and they flee for refuge to the hope set before them in the gospel. But will they run fast enough, and reach Jesus Christ before the tempest overtakes them ? Will not the curse fall upon the fleeing sinner, before he reaches the great Curse-bearer, his refuge and enters in ? No, my brother, no. If there is a little trembling one here this morning, one fleeing from the wrath to come, one possessing a measure of the Holy Ghost, and running towards the refuge of which I am speaking, the storm shall not overtake you ; you shall not, you cannot be destroyed. The Lord having begun the good work in you, will see that it be carried on and perfected ; for he is Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Three things, then, the poor sinner who comes to Jesus wants ; he wants a refuge from the storm, a resting-place for his poor, troubled mind and an everlasting residence and home. Have we come to Jesus as poor sinners exposed to the righteous storm of wrath ? Be thankful to Him, and bless His name. If you know Jesus as a Refuge, you possess a knowledge which gold cannot purchase, which nature cannot give, and which its best powers cannot acquire. If you are in Christ, He is a Refuge from the storm and from the tempest. Sit down, if you can, and sing,

“More happy, but not more secure,
The glorified spirits in heaven.”

To enter into this refuge is to feel as some persons do not and cannot feel who find an earthly refuge. Many thousands run before a storm into some place of refuge, but they do not rest when they are there, for every refuge is not a resting-place. Jesus is the Refuge of our souls, and in Him and Him only we find rest and peace. There is no peace out of Him, and no rest for the weary sinner until Christ is reached. The sinner continues to journey and to labour, weak and faint, worn and weary, finding no rest until he finds himself in this Refuge, for Jesus is the Refuge and the Rest of the soul. How sweet to sit down as a saved sinner in the Lord, and say with the Psalmist, “O Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations!” What a habitation this is; it is all divine—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—and Christ says, “Come, enter in by Me; I will in no wise cast out him that cometh.” Christ is the Door, if I may so speak, into the fulness of God, into intercourse and communion with Him, and into His great and eternal salvation. The sinner, therefore, comes for these three blessings; or, take it in another form, he comes to be prepared for God, to be saved from all evil, to be presented to God, and to be finally introduced into rest. He comes to be prepared—for he is filthy—and he comes, saying, “Wash me, Saviour, or I die.” He comes, not with his rags on, for he will never reach Christ with them. He clings to them and holds fast his own righteousness as long as he can, but he is taught eventually to cast them behind his back—account them but dung and dross. Thus he comes filthy, to be washed; naked, to be clothed; and to be inwardly prepared and adorned, for the King’s daughter is all-glorious within. Well, then, the soul is washed; for “If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me.” The soul is washed in the blood that was shed for it. It is well and good to talk about the shedding of the blood, for had not the blood been shed it could not be applied; but the shedding of the blood is only one branch of salvation. The blood shed must be applied, for it is by its application that a sinner is prepared for heaven. “If I wash thee not.”—He does not say, “If I teach thee not—if I die not for thee, if I obey not for thee; but if I *wash* thee not, thou hast no part with Me.” The fountain is opened, and the sinner comes to be washed and cleansed in the Saviour’s blood, and prepared for heaven and for God. And what then? He comes not only to be prepared, but to be preserved unto the heavenly kingdom. And what a thought is this—that Jesus is the One to keep and preserve him! “I will in no wise cast him out.” Having received him, He will hold him fast for ever, and in no wise cast him out; and He will take care that no one shall pluck him out of His hand. And to express fully his eternal security He says, “He is in My Father’s hand, and no one shall pluck him out; and not only so he shall not only not be cast out or plucked out, but he shall never depart from Me, for I will put My fear into their hearts and they shall not depart from Me.” Glorious salvation! may we be interested therein.

Before I pass on to the next point, let me speak a word to trembling souls—for there are trembling ones here—and, as I think, in every con-

gregation also. There are fearing ones whose hearts are right in the sight of God, who love Him and are living souls, but they have never laid hold of eternal things for themselves. They see them at a distance, but cannot reach them; like your young child, if I may be permitted to illustrate the subject in so homely a manner—against your table, in the middle of which is a plate or a basket of tempting fruit. The eyes of the little one are on the fruit, and it stretches out its little arms to reach it, but it cannot. The child desires and wants the treasure, but cannot reach it. He gets a hassock—perhaps two—and stands upon them, and then he cannot reach it; and as the mother or father enters the room, he says, “Give me some, will you?” So, these great blessings cannot be always reached by those who need and want them. The arm of faith is too short, and its legs are not long enough, and the poor soul longs for them. The blessing must be given by the Holy Spirit, or it can never be possessed. Notice, then, if this is your condition; you are the character mentioned in the text, and the storm is behind you; and I tell you that for your comfort. The storm, curse, and eternal death are all at your back, and will fall on those only who are in outer darkness. You have been brought out of spiritual darkness and death, and although you cannot yet reach Christ or embrace Him for yourself, yet an eternal calm and everlasting peace are before you; for “Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out.” I will just observe here that coming unto the Lord Jesus Christ is in some respects a life-long work, and when the hearts of God’s people are right, it is a daily work; and if you ask me for a scriptural definition of experimental godliness, or living Christianity, I should not be afraid to say, it is a daily coming to Christ. If our hearts are right, and our graces are in exercise, we want washing every morning and every night. We want the Bread of Life and heavenly water morning and night; yea, all day long. Happy is the saint who lives a life of faith upon the Son of God, and whose faith is so in exercise every day, that he is continuously coming unto the Lord Jesus. Peter has it thus: “To whom coming as unto a living Stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious.” I have taken up a little too much of our time on the first point, but so much for the character and the act.

In the second place, observe *the privileges of this character*. Him that cometh *unto Me*. No one is admitted by Christ because he is good, and no one is rejected by Him because ~~He~~ he is bad. One cannot by his goodness get into this position; and, if taught of God, no one shall be cast out for his badness. You may be too good for the Lord, but you cannot be too bad; you may know too much, that is, you may be conceited, but you cannot be too ignorant. You may possess too much, but you cannot be too empty. But with regard to these privileges, to be brief, he that comes to Jesus Christ, is where Jesus is. I sometimes wish, when in the pulpit, I could apply these truths to the minds of my hearers; but I cannot do that; I can only make statements and declarations, and preach the Gospel, and leave it to the Holy Ghost to apply; yet he that cometh to Christ, is where Christ is. And where is that? Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth; and, if you have come

to Him, and are sitting at His feet and learning of Him, you are in this respect at the end of the law. Again, see 9th of Daniel, "He shall finish transgression, and make an end of sin." He that comes to Jesus is interested in that state of things in which there is no condemnation, for there is no unexpiated guilt on Christ. There is sin in you, but the guilt of sin has been expiated by the Saviour, who is now on the throne. He atoned for your guilt and sin, and you are not in condemnation; and though you are a sinner, you shall not be destroyed. But I will not tarry on that point. If you are in Christ, there is nothing uncertain as to your state and standing, for you are united to Jesus, and that inseparably. Why, if everything connected with Christ is certain, everything connected with your salvation must be certain also; but let me quote one word of Paul's: "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Where, then, are your breaches of the law? Buried, obliterated, forgotten. Where is the guilt of the sinner that comes to Jesus Christ? It is not where it was. It was before God's eye. It is not there now. It was upon Christ; for the Lord laid on him the iniquities of us all. It is not there now. But where is the guilt of the sinner that has come to Christ? Hear God's own testimony, and the Church's also: "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Thou hast cast all our sins into the depths of the sea, and Thou hast cast them behind Thy back!" and I do not know where that is, for God's face is everywhere. It must, therefore, mean that if our sins are behind His back, they are nowhere to be found. If you are thus resting on the Saviour, you are in this happy condition; for the curse, and guilt, and condemnation, and all penal evil are gone. The Father may chastise you, hide His face from you; you may find yourself in the dark, and immersed in trouble; penal evil is for ever past, and the storm has for ever ended, and you are in the eternally safe Refuge, and shall not be cast out.

Thirdly, *the promise*—for the text is in the form of a promise or an engagement: "I will in no wise cast him out." I have already said a few words on the character of the person or persons that come to Jesus. Allow me to repeat some of them. "They come as bankrupts immersed in debt, having nothing to pay. I will not cast them out, on account of that. If they bring a penny in their hands, I shall not accept them; but if they have nothing, I will not cast them out." If we may speak for others, we are penniless; but He will not reject us on account of our poverty. Well, bankruptcy is bad; but that is not, perhaps, in some respects as bad as crime; and we come not only as bankrupts, but as criminals. Our character is bad. We have broken the law, insulted justice, offended holiness; and are not criminals necessarily offensive to God's equity and righteousness? "I will in no wise cast out him that cometh. If he comes as a bankrupt, without a penny, I will take him; and, if he comes as a criminal deserving death, I will not reject him." But further, Lord, the people that come to Thee are not only bankrupts and criminals, they are diseased, and their disease is of no ordinary character, for they are lepers, and unclean; and that disease is so contagious, that they should be outcasts, and not permitted to live in a walled town or city. "Well, if a leper comes.

covered with sores, let the world know that I will in no wise cast him out, if they are unclean, let them come. I do not require them to cleanse themselves, nor to heal themselves, nor to enrich themselves; nor to pay their debts before they come. I will do all that for them, and in no wise cast them out." But they have been enemies, Lord, and used to blaspheme Thy name. "I will not cast them out on that account." But some of them actually crucified Thee, Lord; and we, my brethren, do not feel aright in relation to this matter, unless we place ourselves in the position of the Jews and Gentiles, and realise, in some measure, the fact that each of our sins formed a nail, and unbelief the spear. We have pierced Thee, Lord, crucified and nailed Thee to tree. "Yes, but I will in no wise cast you out." That is a very blessed promise, is it not that He will not cast out on account of character? He will not cast out on account of the time the sinner comes. He comes very late; and, to use the expressions which prevail, the best part of his life has been given to the devil; and now fifty or sixty years are gone, he comes to the Lord at the fag-end of his life. That is how people talk. They condemn their fellow men because they do not come early, and give Jesus Christ all their life. The fact is, "No man can come unto me except the Father which hath sent Me draw him." The time is right, as well as the circumstances. The Father draws them to Christ; and, if he draws a sinner when he is sixty years old, he shall not be cast out. But, suppose he becomes at seventy or eighty, and even falls on his dying bed a stranger to these things, and comes to God just before he steps out of time into eternity, will the Lord receive him then? "I will in no wise cast him out." Come late or soon, come young or old, come early or otherwise, I will in no wise cast out him that cometh. There is no reason in the sinner why I should cast him out, for I am raised up for the purpose of saving sinners, and the worst of them; for, if he were good, and pleaded his goodness, I should turn a deaf ear to him. He has debts, and he knows it, and confesses it, and he wants salvation. I will not withhold it. There is no reason in Myself, and no reason in My Father, why I should cast him out; and no reason in the devil or his accusations why I should do so."

Then, fourthly, and with one remark or two on this point, I must close. *The form in which this promise or pledge is given, "Cast out."* There is something, to my mind, very significant in this—"I will in nowise cast out him that cometh." Where is Christ, again I ask, or where does the sinner find Him? In the holiest of all—in God's most holy place, Christ is now found. He ever liveth within the vail, to make intercession for all that come unto God by Him. And does the guilty sinner come unto His presence there? Yes; and Christ says: "Let him come, though it is the residence of God—the most holy place. I will not cast him out of My presence. He is the character I am exalted to give repentance to, and forgiveness of sins. Let him remain before Me. I will not reject him, nor suffer him to be drawn or dragged out. Not cast him out of the family. Having adopted him, and constituted him a child, and brought him into a vital and loving connection with My people, I will not cast him out of the family, nor out of My presence, nor out of the

fold, nor out of the kingdom ;” for we are translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God’s dear Son. The exercises of His mind may be peculiar, and the devil’s accusations may be numerous. “ He is a brand plucked out of the fire by My own hand, and his enmity I have for ever quenched. Take away the filthy garments from him, and clothe him with change of raiment. Put—not a mitre—but a crown upon his head ; for he is a monument of mercy, and shall live with Me for ever, and he shall not be cast out.

Lastly, *this is a comfort*. He will not cast you out, on account of your own apprehensions, for your dear Lord is not governed or influenced by your exercises of mind. I am so fearful, one says, that I never came aright. Are you *there*? Are you at His feet? Is He your All? Do you feel that you must perish without Him, and that if you perish, you will perish trying to trust in Him, and hoping in His mercy? Is that your feeling? Then you are before Him. Never mind how you came ; for, if you are there, the Father drew you ; “ for no man cometh unto Me, except the Father draw him.” If you are there, God brought you, and you did begin wrong ; you are right. The great question is, not *when* you came to Jesus, nor under what circumstances, but are you there? for if you are at His feet, a sensibly guilty sinner, pleading His precious merits, His mercy, and His blood, you have been taught of God, and drawn by Him ; and Christ has bound Himself to save you, saying, “ I will not cast him out. If I did so, I should act in direct opposition to My Father’s eternal love. The Father has drawn that sinner to Me, and loves him, and if I cast him out, I should be opposing Him. If I cast Him out on account of sin, I should be nullifying My own work ; for I bled and died for him, and redeemed him, else he had never been here. If I cast him out, I should oppose the Spirit in His heart, for He is in that soul, though he is so great a sinner, else he would never have been here. Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.” God add His blessing, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

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GOD'S TEMPLE—ITS FOUNDATION AND ERECTION.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,
ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, 20th MAY, 1883.

“And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets; Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord, in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God, through the Spirit.”—Eph. ii. 20, 21 and 22.

THE Apostle Paul dwelt largely and blessedly upon the gracious state of the church of God, but he always deemed it necessary to remind his hearers of what and where they were when grace divine apprehended them; and this feeling prevailed in his mind when he opened the chapter out of which our text is taken. He compared a state of nature with a state of grace, and reminded those Ephesian believers that God had quickened them when they were dead in trespasses and sins. All men are by nature dead in trespasses and sins, and have no spiritual power nor principles, and nothing whatever in their hearts or minds that is spiritually acceptable to God. God's people are loved with an everlasting love, and are interested in the work and triumphs of the Redeemer, and all of them must be quickened into life by the Holy Spirit, for whilst the Father set His love upon them in eternity, and the blood of Christ was shed for them in time, they can have no experimental knowledge of these two great facts until divine life is given. Life divine is breathed into their hearts by the Holy Spirit, and hence it is said, “He that hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ;” and, inasmuch, as they were called by grace, and quickened into life they were God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God had before ordained that they should walk in them. New creatures are the workmanship of the eternal God. God approves of His own workmanship, and this is especially true of his new creation in Christ Jesus the Lord. He that is loved with an everlasting love, and is washed in the precious blood of Jesus, and possesses the Spirit of God, His body being a temple of the Holy Ghost, will be zealous of good works, and will honour the precept, whilst He loves the promise, and will desire to be led and guarded by Him that breathed divine and holy life unto his soul. The children of God are saints, and a saint is a holy one, who is in some measure conformed to the Holy One of Israel. Holiness is the element of hearts that have been renewed by grace, and the foundation of the happiness of heaven; for without it no man shall see the Lord, and neither saints nor angels could be perfectly happy, if they had a sinful stain. Happiness is owing more to the state of one's mind, than to the position one occupies, and therefore if an unsanctified person could be taken to heaven, and placed im-

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mediately before the throne of the holy God, he would be unspeakably unhappy. Well, the Apostle says, God has quickened you ; you are His workmanship, and have been brought near to Him, therefore live not as Gentiles live, nor as foreigners and aliens live, who have no hope, and are without God in the world. You have been made nigh by His precious blood, not only to God, but to His beloved church, and people, and, therefore, come to God ; for through Him both Jew and Gentile have access by one Spirit, unto the Father. We are, therefore, no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets—Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone.

In looking at our text, this morning, we shall remain upon its surface, and mention a few points which it suggests. In the first place, let us notice the *stability and security of the church of God*. We are reminded in connection with this subject of the great words of our glorious Redeemer delivered to his apostles immediately after Peter's confession of faith, "Whom say men that I am?" and they said, "Some say, Thou art Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. "But whom," said He, "say ye that I am?" and Peter, speaking for the rest, said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." "Blessed, art thou, Simon, bar Jona, for flesh and blood have not revealed this unto thee, but my Father, which is in heaven; and I say unto thee that thou art Peter, or a stone, and upon this rock, which thou hast confessed, I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Beloved hearers, where are you building? There is only one foundation laid by God for men to build their hopes upon, and only one church of God upon that one foundation; "for other foundation can no man lay than that is laid," which is the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is here represented as the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Of course, the apostle did not mean that the church of God in the new and the old dispensations was built upon the apostles and the prophets themselves; for the church is built upon no creature, however great he may be as a saint, however high he may stand officially, or however near to God he may be favoured to live. Neither did the apostle mean that the church was built upon the doctrines merely, which were preached by the apostles, and proclaimed by the prophets; he meant rather to convey the idea that Jesus Christ Himself was the foundation of the apostles, and of the prophets also. The prophets predicted Christ, and foretold His coming; they saw Him in the distance, especially the good prophet Isaiah, when he was inspired to deliver these words, "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste." It has been said that the prophets and old Testament saints had not very clear views of truth, nor of the person and work of the Saviour. Dear friends, faith is the same under both dispensations, and in all ages; and the prophets and saints of old leaned upon the Christ, upon whom you and I are leaning. They built upon that glorious Person, upon whom you and I are building our hopes; the only difference between them and us being this, they saw Christ in the distant future, and we behold Him as having died for sin in the distant past.

“My soul looks back to see
The burdens Thou didst bear,
When hanging on the cursed tree,
And hopes her guilt was there.”

We look back through a period of 1800 years and more, and by faith behold our crucified Lord. The prophets and Old Testament saints looked forward through the ages, and by faith beheld the crucified Redeemer; and, therefore, they knew Christ as the Lamb of God, and as the Messiah, and as the Saviour of sinners, and built, and rested upon Him; and hence the language of the text, “And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets—Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.” How wonderful is the thought that our great Lord sustains the whole church, and bears all its weight! All in heaven, and all the saints on earth rest upon Him. Every saint will rest here until he dies, and in death all lean all their weight upon His glorious Person and finished work, and when they are in heaven, bearing the weight of glory, which now awaits them, then they will rest for ever upon this glorious Saviour and Lord. God’s temple is a large one, and the interests involved in its creation and perpetuity are divine and weighty, and no angel could bear any part of it. There is not a creature in existence that can sustain a single soul, or one immortal hope. I say immortal, for there are hopes which have nothing to do with immortality, but every immortal hope rests on Him; all saving faith is based on Him, and all the weight of our requirements and necessities is upon Jesus Christ; and if He is underneath us we have that between us and hell, which will sustain us for ever. “The foundation of the apostles and prophets.”

Now, let us remember that the foundation is a part of the house or the temple, and I trust I shall not be misunderstood when I say that Jesus Christ must be regarded as a part of the church of God.

“Christ, be my first elect, He said,
Then chose our souls in Christ our Head.”

As the foundation is the first part of a building, so Christ is first in the church of God. The foundation of the world was laid early; but that of the church of God was laid earlier. The foundation of the world shall be destroyed, and the world itself, though it is a glorious structure, shall be no more; but the foundation of Zion is an everlasting one, and the temple that rests thereon shall stand for ever to the praise and glory of God. Hence Christ represents Himself as the first and the last, as the Alpha and the Omega. The very first step that was taken by grace related to Jesus, who was laid in the eternal mind, in the mighty purposes of God as the great foundation of God’s church, and then all the people were loved into, and in Him, and for His sake, and will be so loved for ever. Again, the foundation is not only the first part of a building, it is the principal part of it, and Christ is the greatest in the church of God, the mightiest in the family of heaven, and the principal part of God’s temple; and His Person is absolutely necessary to the perfection and glory of His people. The foundation of a building is an essential part of it. There can be no permanence in a building without a foundation, or with a bad or a doubtful one. There is nothing doubtful or uncertain in the glorious Redeemer,

and His person and work are essential to the existence and growth of this living temple. Lastly here, a foundation is invisible or unseen. The structure is visible, but not the foundation; and Peter says, "Whom having not seen we love, in whom though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory." We are resting on a person who is invisible to us. His character is divine and holy, and righteous; but personally considered Christ is in heaven, and our foundation is invisible; and yet we know Him, believe in Him; love His dear name, build our hopes for heaven upon Him, and all our expectations are from Him. We know Him with a knowledge that is certain, and not doubtful; and are as satisfied as to His existence as we are of our own, and that He is absolutely necessary to our salvation. By faith we have been in contact with Him, and embraced Him, and have realised the fact that He is ours, and we have built our everlasting hopes of an everlasting life upon the everlasting Son of the everlasting God. "This is the foundation of the apostles and prophets." The Father laid this foundation in his own mind, and covenant, and purposes for His own sake. It was His intention that His people should be infallibly saved, and that beyond all uncertainty whatever. Therefore, he laid a foundation, which should endure for ever. Whatever disappointments take place among men, none can ever take place in the mind of God. The Father's purposes shall be accomplished, and His promises shall be fulfilled, for he has constituted His dearly beloved Son, who is the great God-man, the basis of the eternal welfare of His people. This foundation was laid for Christ's sake. It was His honour that the Father constituted Him the foundation of all His people. This foundation was laid for our sake. We are guilty sinners, and we feel that it requires very much to save us. Our immortal souls are wonderfully important and precious. There is an eternity before us, and we desire to be certain and assured, in connection with the future; and there are times in the experience of the saints when they rest on Jesus, and sweetly confide in Him; and can sing amid the storms of life—

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

Some of us feel, if one may speak for others, that in the morning of our spiritual life we had a stronger and happier confidence than we have now. We look back to the time when we were as sure of heaven as we were of our existence, and could have left the body, and departed to eternal glory. We felt we were on the Rock, that Jesus was underneath us, that He had saved us with an everlasting salvation, and that there was no probability or possibility of our being cursed or lost. Well, dear friends, God has not altered, and the foundation remains the same. I shake on the Rock, but the Rock never shakes under me. I change on Christ, but an unchangeable Christ is underneath me. My soul passes through changes, but He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. This is the divine order. The Father has laid for the foundation his dear Son; his person, and His finished work; and the Holy Spirit is bringing materials

together, and laying them upon Him, "The foundation of the apostles and prophets;" and Christ says, The gates of hell shall not prevail against my church; for I will build it upon this Rock.

"On Christ, the solid Rock I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand."

Our knowledge may be shallow and limited, but a simple living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, shall be followed by glory; for it is inseparable from it. I do not ask, neither does the Word of God ask you, whether you are happy or joyful; whether your faith is strong, and you are confident. I do not ask that; but I do ask, Is your faith a living one—a little one it is—but is it upon the foundation, the work, and person of the Redeemer? Oh, the storms of life may rage; your changes may be numerous, and you may have a thousand fears that you will be cut off at last; yet having a little living faith in this living foundation, the whole of Christ comes in between you and eternal death and condemnation, and your future is divine, your death shall be a victory, and your endless existence shall be passed in happiness and glory. "The foundation of the apostles and prophets."

Secondly, *the unity of the church of God*. "Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone." The members of the one church are an innumerable host, and hence no man can number them; but although, it is so great that none but God knows it, they are all united together in one body, or one temple, and "Jesus Christ is the chief corner-stone." He is the corner-stone that unites the Apostles and prophets together. Without Christ there would be no living union between the two. Go on this side the building where the apostles preached, and you find them united to Christ; go on that side, where the prophets predicted, and you find their prophecies enter into Him, and that the prophets themselves rested upon Him, so that here we have the Apostles preaching Him on this side, and the prophets predicting Him on that side; and hence, He is the chief corner stone. And then He unites dispensations together. The ceremonial dispensation was of and for Him, and the gospel dispensation is vitally connected with His glorious Person. What were the types but shadowy representations of Jesus. The lambs, goats, pigeons, turtle doves and red heifers, that were offered to God, typically represented the person and work of the Lord Jesus. Hence Christ is the chief corner stone, uniting the two dispensations, or the chief corner stone of the two Testaments—the old and the new. The chief corner-stone of the Jew and Gentile. Jew and Gentile live apart from each other, and there is a wide interval between them if Jesus Christ unites them not together. The Jew hates Christianity and the child of God cleaves to the Saviour. If the Holy Spirit, however, enters the heart of a Jew, his prejudice at once melts; his enmity is destroyed, and he becomes conformed to the Saviour, and unites with his Gentile brother in the Lord. The Gentile becomes united to Christ, and the Jew becomes united also to Him; hence, in Himself, of twain He has made one new man. Thus the Jew and the Gentile, the learned and the unlearned, the rich and the poor, the young and the old, unite in Him. Regard the people of God as you will, as His

people they are all one in Christ Jesus the Lord. Take the promise and the fulfilment, Christ is the corner stone that unites the two together; all the promises unfulfilled are in Him, and all shall be fulfilled in and by Him. Take the promise and the precept. Some will not have the precept; they will take the promise only. My friends, if you are lovers of Christ, and followers of the Lamb, you will love the precept as well as the promise. The precept is in Jesus, as well as the promise, and both unite in Him. Let us have the promise for purposes of comfort, and let us have the precept also to direct us to live, and to walk so as to please God. He connects all the saints together. There is a large company in heaven, but we are here, and Jesus Christ is the uniting corner-stone. In Him the host in heaven are one with us, and we one with them. They are built on Christ, and He is the corner-stone, by whom they and we are united together. Of the past and the future Christ is the chief corner-stone, and hence we have an illustration of the fact that Jesus is the Lamb, slain from the foundation of the world; the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. The Lamb slain—His precious blood, His justifying righteousness, His Godhead, His glory, His greatness, and His office,—all these appeared to, and were known by God's people in the past. Look at the present and the future—it is still the Lamb slain, or a precious Jesus. The church of God is one body, one house, one family. There are not two religions. Talk about sects, and they are many; and new sects are being formed almost every year; but as the Lord liveth, there is but one religion, and one life for heaven. It is not true that there are many ways to heaven, and that they all meet at the throne of God, or at the threshold of glory. This is one of the delusions of the devil. There are many ways to hell; for "We have turned every one to his own way;" but to heaven there is only one way, one foundation, and one divine religion. The church of God is built on Christ, and all its members are united together in His great person.

In the next place, we notice, *the church's properties or qualities*, "in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." The foundation is holy, and the materials, of which the temple is composed are saints. They are brought out of the quarry of nature rough, deformed, and unclean. They are, however, polished and prepared by the Holy Spirit, for their several positions in this glorious temple of the Lord. When God forms a soul for Himself, it becomes a holy soul; so that here we have a holy foundation, holy materials brought together by the Holy Spirit, in connection with the holy apostles and prophets; and a holy God, it is said, will dwell in this temple in a mysterious and glorious manner, for ever and ever. "A holy temple." This holiness is neither loseable nor terminable. The temple of Solomon was holy, but its holiness was not abiding, and the temple itself was destructible, but the living temple of the living God is an eternal structure, and its holiness is inherent, and can never be lost. If the foundation remains holy for ever, and the holy God inhabits the building, the saints of God will be holy ones for ever. Dear friends, your religion is an eternal life. This cannot be insisted upon too fervently or too frequently. Many of God's people fear they may not hold out until the end, or that something or other may pos-

sibly arise which will lead them to bring a blot or reproach on God's holy cause and interest. Well, I was going to say, if you are blest with that fear you will be kept. "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." I trust our consciences may be kept tender, and our hearts may be kept alive all the days of our life. I would never be self-confident, but would always lean upon my Lord, and build on this foundation, resting on Him who has said, "I will never leave thee; I will never forsake thee." It is a holy, a living temple. Life is in the foundation, and in the materials, and there is not a dead stone in the building. Death is not in the building, for the life can never perish; the holiness can never be lost. God will never desert the place, and all shall endure for ever.

Then, in the next place, it is said that *this temple is a growing one*; it groweth into an holy temple in the Lord. We are informed that the word "groweth" may be connected with the words "in the Lord." This temple groweth in the Lord. The church is vitally one with Jesus, whose life is communicated to all its parts; so that, however small a stone in the temple you may be, the life of Christ is in you. The temple is growing numerically; it is rising higher and higher, and you are personally growing in grace and in knowledge; in a knowledge of sin, of salvation, and of the Saviour, and it is useless to say you are not growing, but stationary. You know more than you did of sin, of yourself, and of Christ's preciousness; more of His ability to save, and more of your absolute need of what He is, and has done to save from death and ruin. This building is progressing, as creation was also a progressive work. Creation, however, was finished in six days, but God will occupy the whole of time in building His spiritual temple. As the foundation has been laid, the top-stone shall be brought home with shoutings, crying, "Grace, grace, unto it," and then all will be alive with holiness, alive with love, alive with peace, and alive with power for ever.

I desire in the next place, to make a few remarks upon *the beauty of the whole*. Look at the words, "All the building, fitly framed together," Christ and saints united, and also all saved sinners united together in heart, in life, in doctrine, in judgment, in affection, and in character. It is said, ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem; but more than that, we are said to be come to the spirits of just men made perfect; hence we are "fitly framed together" with them. Is not the union between saints in glory and saints in grace a beautiful union? It must be so; for God the Holy Spirit is the all-efficient agent who unites us with those who are gone before. But how are we come to those who are in heaven? By coming to Jesus; by being built upon Him as the foundation in Zion. Have we not communion with them? Yes, truly we have. We have communion with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and are fitly framed together with them even now. We have the history, and the experience of those great and good men, and we feel a union to them in their troubles, their temptations, and their deliverances, as we read their respective biographies recorded in the Word of God. And then, there are numbers of immortal minds in heaven, who have left their writings here; and when I take down Goodwin, and Owen, and Flavel, and Manton, and Dr. Gill, for I will not ex-

clude and despise him, as some do; when I take the writings of those great and gracious men, and read them under the Spirit's unction, I am knitted to them, and feel that I belong to the same family, and am a subject of that grace, which was in their hearts. I feel that my soul and theirs are framed together upon the same foundation, and that Jesus Christ, the corner-stone, unites us, and makes us one. Thus the building is fitly framed together. We love them, and they love us, and expect us there, for our mansions are ready, and our seats are erected. The family in heaven is not yet complete as to numbers; therefore all in heaven are waiting for the arrival of the remainder, and so the building is fitly framed together, and groweth in the Lord. One justified character unites with another; one quickened soul becomes united to another, not only by the blood of Jesus, but by love divine. Fitly framed together.

Further, we have *the design*. Builded together for an habitation of God, through the Spirit. God will dwell in His temple, and in every saint, for ever. How glorious is the church of God, and how wondrous will be its glory in heaven. All based on God in Christ, and God in Christ pervading the whole. O may it be yours and mine to be found in Him. A word lastly, as to *particular churches*. "In whom ye also are builded together." Addressing the particular church at Ephesus—"Ye are builded together." Now bricks and stones, and timber lying together in heaps, are not a building. There may be sufficient for one, but they are not one. They must be brought together, and united, and cemented, in an orderly manner, before they become a building. So a multitude of saints scattered about in different places, not knowing one another, are not a church, which is builded together. A multitude of flowers here and there are not a garden. Many twigs and branches separated from each other are not a vine; and hence, "ye are builded together." I wish the people of God felt the importance of this, and bowed to the Master's authority, and yielded obedience to His command. I would be a member of Zion's city here, and live in fellowship and communion with the saints of God, while I rest on the one foundation, and am cemented and united with all His people here, and in heaven. "Ye are builded together for an habitation of God, through the Spirit. All this requires the person and presence, and operations of the Holy Spirit. Here, therefore, we have our triune God, in connection with this glorious temple. The Father laid its foundation, and loved all the materials in his Son. The foundation of Zion is Christ's person, and perfect work; and the Holy Spirit brings poor sinners to build on Jesus Christ, and unites them to one another, and to the Lord; and this temple will be God's residence and rest for ever. May the Lord add His blessing, for Christ's sake. Amen.

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THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,
AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,
ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, 24th JUNE, 1883.

"Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds." Col. iv. 3.

IN the first place, let us look at *the character of the Gospel as it is represented in the text, it is the mystery of Christ*. Let us never forget that the Gospel is in all respects a mystery, and that it will remain so until the end of time, and that the great facts which it indicates will in some measure remain mysterious in heaven for ever. I do not believe in a gospel that creatures can exhaust, and I am not a worshipper of that Lord who can be fathomed, explored, or fully understood. Our God is unsearchably great, and the riches of Jesus Christ are said to be unsearchable; and that gospel which is a faithful representation of this glorious Christ must necessarily be a mystery. The apostle preached and exhibited it as a mystery, and he always told his hearers that his subject was divinely deep. Now this mystery is a very unattractive one. There are thousands of other books unspeakably more attractive to the world than the glorious gospel of the blessed God; yet the best book under the heavens is the gospel; the richest volume that men ever held in their hands, or that human eyes ever fell upon, is this sacred word of God. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new:" and when my eyes were opened, many years ago, and my heart was renewed, the Bible became a new book, and I then realized some of its mysterious preciousness; for the mysteriousness of the Bible will apply to its preciousness; for it is mysteriously precious. This mystery can never be explored, or exhausted, or fully understood. The minds of men can never possibly comprehend the mystery of Christ. It requires for purposes of revelation the presence of its Author—God, from whose heart it came. He that writes a letter to a friend is supposed to understand the meaning of its contents. There may be mysteries in it which the person to whom it is sent cannot quite comprehend, but the writer is supposed to understand it well; and this will apply to the great Author of the gospel, which is the mystery of Christ. If I may so present the matter, God has written a letter, a loving letter to His beloved people, and its contents are so divine, and wonderful, and grand, and mysterious that it was necessary that a special arrangement should be made for the purpose of enabling the people for whom it was written to understand it; and therefore of the Spirit it is said, "He shall lead you into all truth." Would not a person less great than the Spirit have sufficed? Who is the Spirit? The Spirit is God. But does it

really require the presence and operation of Jehovah the Spirit to open one's eyes and enable one to savingly understand the Gospel? No man, no woman knows experimentally or spiritually the meaning of the mystery of Christ without the operation of the Spirit of God. Hence the Lord says to the churches, "Anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see." There is only one eye-salve that can with profit or advantage be applied to the eyes of the mind, and that is the unction of God the eternal Spirit. When you were called by grace you opened this sacred volume, and read and wept; and then dropped down upon your knees, and rose again, and read and wept again. You had never so read a book before; you had never had such feelings before; you had never before wept and wept again over the volumes you had read. It is a mystery, my brother, even the mystery of Christ. The gospel is a secret, whose preciousness is divine, and will so remain. And it is a mystery to be believed, not to be known; a mystery to be received by faith and lived upon, but not to fully understand. Not that I would say the child of God has no spiritual understanding of the mystery of Christ; for he has an experimental knowledge of it, he knows it to be a living and a divine mystery; but he holds it in his heart or in his hand of faith, and declares that it is so deep that he cannot fathom it. Do you not love to lose yourselves in the grace of God; and do you not love to be choked with a fulness of feeling when you are on the knee of prayer, or when you are reading the word, or meditating upon eternal things. Oh Christian friends, there is a mysterious power and form of grace and mercy in the sacred volume which leaves the word mystery the most appropriate word to apply to it. That I may speak the mystery of Christ. Some people will not believe this and the other, because it surpasses their mental powers. They reject what they cannot understand or reconcile with natural facts. Now if you admit no more than you understand, or receive no more than your knowledge can grasp, you will be a very small and limited believer, you will not believe much. God subsists in a trinity of persons: do you know how? No, but faith receives that fact, and leans upon a triune God. "All things work together for good to them that love God:" can you see it? Or do you know how they will work for your good? Do you know what events will be connected with other events, or what will happen so as to bring good out of evil, and meat out of the eater, and honey out of the rock; can you see how it will happen? No; but the Word says it shall happen and it does happen, and things have always so turned out that "All things work together for good to them that love God; to them that are the called according to His purpose." The gospel therefore is a mystery; it is held as such, prized as such, and as such Paul exhibited it and requested an interest in the prayers of good people that a door of utterance might be given to him that he might speak it.

But is not its very existence a mystery? We sometimes sing,

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

Why was the gospel given? God had made a world and had given man His law, which was holy, just and good; that law was violated and

the creatures of that good Creator and kind and merciful God, became transgressors. And why did not Jehovah pass us all by and leave us to be lost for ever? We deserved it, we fell and if one may speak for others, we hated Him and His ways; and He knew that we should do so. Why did He not leave us to perish in our sins and to sink into the unfathomable depths of woe and ruin? Oh! behold how He loved us. Here is a mystery again. Out of His heart came love Divine, which took special forms, and out of the breast of Deity came the glorious gospel of His grace. The law came from His nature, and not from His sovereign will merely; for having made man what he was, it was necessary that His Maker should give Him just such a law as He did give him; but the gospel of God's grace was not a necessary exhibition, it did not flow from necessity, but from sovereignty, and its gift was an act of His gracious and holy will. It was, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight." Thus we have good news where we might have heard nothing but curse for ever; and we have glad tidings from another world, whence we might have heard the language of wrath and indignation for ever. Instead of the curse we have a blessing; instead of eternal death we have eternal life; and instead of a gloomy, awful, and terrible eternity, the gospel shows the eternal future divinely clear and without a curse and with no indication of wrath divine. Pray for me that I may speak the mystery of Christ. But some of you are ready to say, You have not yet reached the real point. It is so, and let us now come to it.

The gospel in itself is a mystery, and so is its very existence. The mystery of Christ. And what shall we contemplate here? Is it not a mystery that Christ is God? and does not the gospel set Him forth as such? "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." I do not understand this, you know; and I have not a line sufficiently long to sound this mighty depth. I can neither measure nor pourtray it. It is, however, a divine fact that the poor—and I hope I am solemn and serious—Jesus of Nazareth, who had not where to lay His head, and who was dependent upon His friends,—it is a fact that that poor Jesus of Nazareth was the mighty God and the everlasting Father. And we have not only the mystery of His Godhead, but the mystery of His manhood also. I cannot explain how this inferior nature is united to His Godhead; but then I do not understand my own body and soul; and therefore it is not surprising that I do not understand the person of my Lord. His body was sinless, and His soul spotless, and His perfect humanity was united in a mysterious manner to His Godhead, and this complexity of person is a divine mystery. How those two natures are united, and constitute one complex person, is past finding out. This mystery, however, is essential to that salvation which the angels desire to look into, but cannot comprehend. I am thankful that I have a little knowledge of this mysterious Christ, and that my God has not left me altogether in the dark as to the Godhead and the humanity of my Lord. I do not fully understand the nature of this union, or the Person Himself; for Christ is unsearchably high and great: I know Him, however, to be so, and sometimes I have thought and felt that He was my Lord Jesus Christ. If He is my friend, He cannot be too great for me; but if He is my enemy, His greatness will be very terrible to me for ever. He is a

glorious friend, but He is a terrible enemy. Then there is the mystery of His work. This complex Redeemer takes the sinner's place and bears his sin and curse: for "the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Now you do not know how this was done. You say, it was imputed. I know it was, and that is the word we use. Let us not be thoughtless when we talk about these precious mysteries. Sin was imputed to the Saviour, but that is a mystery; for how the Father laid all the guilt of millions upon His dear Son you do not fully know. It is a fact for faith to receive, and to hold fast to the joy of the believer's heart. Well, He took our place and bore our sin, and carried our sorrows, and and was cursed with that withering curse which we must have felt for ever had not this divine arrangement been made. The curse of man is something. I do not know whether I should care very much about the curse of the Papacy if it were hurled at me; but there have been times when that curse was a withering and terrible power. If there has been so much that has been terrible and destructive in the curse of creatures, how awful and destructive must be the curse of an omnipotent Judge! and the Almighty Judge of heaven poured the curse upon His well-beloved Son. "He loved Him, sir." I know He did, yet Christ was made a curse for us. Well, you do not understand it. Neither do I. It is one of the mysteries of Christ, which Paul would make known. He that was cursed with the curses which we had incurred and merited, was the object of His Father's love, and He delighted in Him when He poured His wrath upon Him. The mystery of Christ not only in taking our place, but in dying for our sins atoning for our guilt, reconciling us to God, justifying our souls and in saving our persons; and God delighted in every branch of this loving work from beginning to end.

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

It is a thousand times better to have a little experience of this, than it is to be critical concerning this mystery, or to try to explain it. Paul did not say, "Pray that I may have a door of utterance, that I may critically set forth the mystery of Christ;" but that I may speak, proclaim and exhibit it, for which I am also in bonds. The mystery of Christ comes to this, my dear friends—Christ in God, and God in Christ, is a mystery. God in the man and man in God is a mystery. The God-man in the sinner's place, in death, in the grave, and sitting on His throne is a mystery. Christ in providence, pervading all by an influence that is uncontrollably and constantly fulfilling the Bible, is a mystery. The Saviour in churches and in congregations: "I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world, and also in your hearts the hope of glory," is a mystery; the Son of God coming from the greatest heights into the lowest depths of humiliation; for He went deeper than being ever went before; for which God hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: and that Christ is ours, and it is all a mystery.

Paul was a prisoner at Rome when this letter to the Colossians was written, and looking at his chain, he said, as it were, I am in bonds, neverthe-

less the word of God is not bound, and when you go to the throne for yourselves remember me and Timothy. I do not ask you to pray that I may be delivered from my bonds, but that a door of utterance may be opened for me, that I may speak the mystery of Christ. The Gospel, therefore, is preached and received as the mystery of Christ.

Is not the gospel mysterious as to its adaptation to the human soul and mind? Take two individuals, one black, and the other white, and the gospel suits them both, and not one better than the other. If both are sensible sinners, the gospel is just what each wants. One comes from Greenland and another lives under a vertical sun; and if they both want salvation, the gospel suits them both. One individual is five or six years of age, and another is seventy, and if the little one five years old knows and feels he is a sinner, and the old sinner wants salvation, the same book does for both. There is not a simpler or a smaller book for the babe. No; the glorious gospel of the blessed God suits babes and sucklings.—He that makes minds made the gospel, and He that so well understood the requirements of the young, and of the aged, was the Being to bring together glorious facts, suited to their special needs. “Sir, you are going to preach in a peculiar place, and all your hearers will be learned people.” Well, I shall preach the gospel. “You are going to preach to a congregation of servants, and they are all illiterate.” I shall preach the gospel. The learned and the illiterate are sinners, and the gospel is what they should hear, and I must preach the gospel to every creature. If I go to a prison to conduct a service among hundreds who have been sentenced to penal servitude for twenty years, or for life, I must preach the gospel. Can any system be found that will meet the requirements of all sorts of minds under all sorts of circumstances, like the gospel which is the mystery of Christ? And is it not mysterious in its operation on the mind? It separates its possessor from the world, and spoils him for it. Oh, Joseph used to be one of us, and a jovial friend he was. It was a pleasure to spend an evening with him; but since he became connected with those Methodists or Baptists, he is spoiled for society and for the world. That is the mystery of Christ or of the power of the gospel; if it has not spoiled a man for the world, it has done nothing for him. These operations on the mind are a mystery; for do you not see that he that has received the gospel in the power of it, loves Christ more than he loves the world, and it requires a wonderful power to produce a change like that, for it is quite natural for us to love the world. Children laughing and manifesting all their young vigorous spirits, naturally love the world, and desire to be of it, and like it; but if one of your dear children has become dead to it and has become a real child of God, look at that little one as miracle of mercy; for a power more than human has touched its little heart. There is a mysteriousness in the power of the gospel. Christ is dearer than the world. The power of the gospel brings one from the love and dominion of sin. I have heard and read, and so have you, of lovers of the Lord Jesus Christ who have prized Christ more than their liberty, and have gone to prison for His sake; others have prized Him more than their property, and have taken joyfully the spoiling of their goods; and have you never read or heard of not a few who have prized Christ more than their friends. “Father, mother, I

am sorry I must leave you, or take a particular course, but it must be so; for I have a conscience which is my Saviour's, and like Luther I cannot do otherwise." Christ's power over the mind is mysterious. And, further, have you never read of others who have prized Christ more than their lives, and have been burned, or hacked to pieces, meeting death with a cheerfulness that has astonished persecutors? I might go further into this, and speak of the riches of the gospel, but having made these few remarks on its nature, let me notice—

Secondly, and I must be brief,—*that the gospel is controlled by its Author.* That God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ. It is controlled by its Author. The door of utterance may be considered in relation to time, places, and hearts. In relation to time or opportunities: you know the word opportunity is frequently used in certain places. This is the opportunity, you may never have another. Well, God has His opportunities, and the apostle Paul asked the Colossians to pray that God would furnish him with opportunities of preaching His glorious gospel. He found it in his heart to preach when there was not an opening for him to do so, for he was a prisoner, bound to a Roman soldier who always accompanied him, and therefore he had not so many facilities for speaking the mystery of Christ as he desired to have, and he said, "Pray that the Author of the gospel, who has authorised me to preach it, would favour me with opportunities of speaking this mystery. It is sometimes painful to have a heart full and not to be able to give expression to it. Paul's heart was brim-full, and running over, and though he was a prisoner, he wanted hearers. He could not go after these people himself, therefore he wished the Colossians to pray that God would send hearers to him, for he lived in his own hired house, and was permitted to see a few people occasionally. That is part of the literal meaning of it. Then the door of utterance will refer to places. Pray that God would make a way for me and for my brethren, to preach the mystery of Christ; ask him to remove, or to restrain the opposition that prevails, in order that the Word may run, have free course, and be glorified. Sometimes human laws or magistrates, or, the bitter spirit of enmity stops it,—pray that God would remove every obstruction that I and my brethren may have abundant opportunities and many places in which to speak the mysteries of Christ. And then again, it will refer to hearts. Ask Him to bless the Word, and open the hearts of hearers to receive the truth in the love of it. Why did Paul want all that? Why, simply because like myself and all my brethren, he could not force anything. We have a class of ministers now-a-days, and new denominations and "armies" springing up here and there, that represent themselves as being able to force almost everything and every person; but Paul could force nothing. He could not force his own heart, nor his own mouth; he could not force times and seasons, and opportunities, nor human hearts, nor Satan's power. He knew by experience the meaning of the words, He openeth and shutteth; and when the Lord opens, none can shut; and when He shuts, none can open; and, therefore pray the Lord who has the key of all on His girdle to unlock opportunities, and places, and human hearts, for "the mystery of Christ. There are certain powers that close the door, and God has permitted it to be done. Paganism has

closed the door for a time, and God has opened it again. Magistrates have often closed the door, and it is within the recollection of some aged men and women now, that in the counties of Suffolk and Essex, and other places, magistrates and haters of the truth of God, closed the door against the preaching of the gospel. I could describe a scene or two in connection with opposition to "the mystery of Christ." The gospel has always been hated as well as loved, and there have always been people to close the door, while there has always been a God to open it. Popery has done it, and we charge popery with having committed one of the blackest and guiltiest crimes by closing the door and preventing God's servants from speaking "the mystery of Christ." We have "the mystery of Christ," it is said in Ritualism; I have to say it is "the mystery of Satan. Ritualism and the mass, and priestism are in no way connected with the Lord Jesus Christ, nor with the vitalities of our holy religion. Nothing would more gratify the Man of Sin, or better fulfil his desires, than the extinction of "the mystery of Christ," and the closing of the mouth of every godly preacher of the word. Pray that God would give us a door of utterance to speak this mystery. Well, God controls the gospel.

Then in the third place, the text teaches us *that ministers are dependent upon the Lord*. "That He would open unto us a door of utterance." The Lord does this by providence sometimes, but that we have dwelt upon, and I must speak experimentally. Just one word here, for I know if not all, yet something about the matter, "a door of utterance." How does the Lord open that door for His servants? Now you must let me preach myself for a minute. Sometimes a minister of the gospel stands in the pulpit for an hour, and cannot start a thought, nor raise a feeling, and he hardly knows what words to use, as the moments come and go; Oh what bondage that is! At other times, an hour slips away, and seems as if it were only a few minutes. How great is the difference between liberty and bondage, light and darknes, help and helplessness! How does the Lord open a door of utterance for a preacher? He fills his heart; and when that is done and he has a sense of the love of God, and the preciousness of the blood of Jesus, and the importance of God's truth, and of eternal things, it would be easy to stand for half a dozen hours and preach all the time. And who can do this? God can do this, and God only. God opens unto us a "door of utterance" by filling our hearts. Then, again, a minister will not have much freedom in speaking, unless his affections are deep and strong, unless he has a personal experience of the matters he is dwelling upon. Now if I had not been convinced of sin, I should have spoken hypothetically and conditionally about sin; but I know what it is, for I have been stung, and weighted down almost to the gates of hell by it, and I can speak positively about it. And I know something about the power of a Saviour's blood, and therefore I can speak pointedly and positively about these things. My friends, it comes to this: we have to bring the Bread of Life to the people, and as we place it on the table, we are able to say it is good, heavenly, divine bread; God Himself made and gave it, and we live upon it ourselves, and therefore we are prepared to speak positively about it.

Is that wine good? Where did it come from? The kingdom. Who made it? It is the pure juice of the grape, pressed by God's own hand; we use it ourselves, and it nourishes and strengthens us. Then pray that God would fill our hearts, and our minds, and give us confidence. Ask Him to enable us to stand as a brazen wall against all our enemies, and to be afraid of nothing, that we may speak "the mystery of Christ," as we ought to speak it. God's servants are dependent on their Master.

Paul's bonds—"for which also I am in bonds:" For what? For the sake of "the mystery of Christ. Not for any crime he had committed, but, for preaching "the mystery of Christ," he was in bonds. Well, that was no disgrace, but an honour, for "Unto you it is given, not only to believe on His name, but also to suffer for His sake." It would be very degrading and disgraceful on our part, if we suffered for the sake of certain persons and characters; but if we suffer for Christ's sake, and for truth's sake, the very sufferings are an honour: "for which also I am in bonds." Nero the Emperor of Rome was in bonds, *but* Paul's bonds were not like his. The Jews were in bonds; but Paul's bonds were not like theirs. A criminal is in bonds in prison, but Paul was not a criminal, but a persecuted saint, a suffering child of God. Our enemies and the enemies of the church, have been able to bind bodies, but not souls; to bind hands and feet, but not consciences; to bind the child of God, but not God's Word, nor the prayers of God's people, nor God Himself.

Then lastly, *the request made*, that they would pray for him. "Pray also for us—myself and Timothy, more especially now "that God would open unto us a door of utterance." The apostle was not so great as to be above entreating an interest in the prayers of God's dear people. However little, weak and feeble saints may be, they may be helpful in and to the cause of God. Paul said, "Pray for me a mutual advantage—the benefit was mutual; for I am persuaded, that in proportion as people pray for their ministers, they will hear them profitably, and to their spiritual advantage. I will venture to present the same request—Pray for me, my friends. If you love yourselves, and love the gospel, and love your Master, and your Lord, pray for me that "a door of utterance may be given to me, that I may speak the mystery of Christ" and not be in bonds, if it be the will of God. Through favour we do not suffer outward bitter persecution now. Pray that I may with liberty and with power preach the mystery of Christ, and His unsearchable riches. May the Lord add His blessing, for Christ's sake. Amen.

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THE GOD OF HOSTS THE OBJECT OF PRAYER.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,
AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, 8th JULY, 1883.

"Turn us again, O God of hosts, and cause Thy face to shine; and we shall be saved."—Psa. lxxx. 7.

THE text naturally divides itself into three branches. First, *the great Object addressed*: "O God of hosts." Secondly, *the prayer offered to Him*: "Turn us again, and cause Thy face to shine." Thirdly: *the confidence expressed*: "And we shall be saved."

In the first place, a few thoughts on *the great Object addressed*: "O God of hosts." It is our mercy and privilege that our God is infinitely great; that His throne is the highest in the universe; and that He is doing according to His will, in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth. It is our privilege to know that there is no authority or power in existence, that can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou? Our God is in heaven, and on earth, and everywhere, at all times: but as to His personal presence, He is in the heavens, and He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased. He did what He pleased in His own mind before time, or the foundations of the world were laid. He loved His people with an everlasting love, and pleased Himself with His own thoughts, arrangements, and plans, "Infinite years before the day, and heavens began to roll." God's love necessitated the creation of the world, and He came out of His divine obscurity into manifestation, and spoke, and it was done; and commanded, and it stood fast: and ever since man was created and fell, to the present moment, God's eternal thoughts have moved on His undisturbed affairs. God rules all, and His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; and it is very blessed when the child of God can approach His throne, influenced by the Spirit of adoption, and say, My Father in heaven. If He is ours He cannot be too great for us; but if He is not our friend, His greatness and supremacy will be terrible to us for ever. We have now for a few minutes to contemplate the object of prayer as the "God of hosts."

Let us first look at *the fact itself*, that God is the "God of hosts." Now for your encouragement, I remind you that God's hosts are many, and that each host is composed of numerous beings. He has not one or two, or three hosts or armies, but many; hence host stands in the plural in the text. I do not know the number of angels, but we read of thousands and thousands of angelic intelligences in heaven. There is therefore God's angelic host, and there is not one among them but what is known to, and controlled by his Maker, and all the millions of that host constantly obey the nod and word of God. Hence the church in trouble addresses God as the "God of hosts." Then there are the hosts of saints which are already before God's throne.

"Part of the host have crossed the flood,
And part are crossing now."

Sometimes newspapers and worldly writers are very flippant when they refer to death and the wondrous hereafter. Dying, they say, is going over to the majority. I do not know whether it is the majority or not; but, taking all the departed into consideration, hosts have left this world, many of whom have, it may be feared, sunk into hell, whilst many happy saints have been taken to heaven, and are now before their God: and—

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

All this is taking place under the management and control of one great mind, namely the “God of hosts.” He presides over all the millions of angels that sing and serve, and over all the millions of blood-bought minds that are in heaven. And then there is a sacred host here on earth of which we form a part. We are wending our way towards Canaan. How many believers there are in this world, I know not; but the members of God’s church on the earth constitute one of His hosts. Then there are the host of devils. We will not tarry on that, for it is not pleasant to preach Satan. There is, however, such a being, and his power is mysterious and wonderful. I suppose there are degrees among fallen angels, as there are degrees of might and strength among the angels, which keep their first estate; and I imagine that the most inferior fallen spirit is far too great in power and cunning for man. Now all these millions of evil spirits are divinely controlled, and not one of them may ever go abroad without a chain, or a bridle. A world of mischief and disappointment would take place if hell were unchained, or the devil unrestrained. God says as it were to all the powers of darkness, “Thus far mayest thou come, but no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed.” Hast thou considered My servant Job, Satan? Yes, he had considered him, and arrived at the conclusion that he did not serve God for nought—was of a mercenary spirit, and a great hypocrite. Hast Thou not set a hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hand, and his substance is increased in the land. Only permit me to break through the hedge, and I will unfold his character. “All that he hath is in thy hand, but save his life.” Our God is the God of hosts, and no fiend can move without His permission, and no evil spirit is permitted to go forth without a chain. Thus we have hosts of angels: the sacred host of the saved church, and the hostile army, of which we have just been speaking, the devil and all the powers of darkness. Another host is that of wicked men, and the false church, or the world professing and profane. Our God presides over them all.

When people have reached this point, they stop, and fancy they have enumerated all the hosts which are controlled by God; but there are others which are presided over by Him, and they have proved very terrible and destructive, and fatal, although the power of each member of those hosts was not great, but on the contrary, very small. God sent a host of lice into Egypt, and the result was terrible. Then He sent a host of frogs into that country, and every frog was His; and they entered into every house, and into the king’s palace, and into their chambers, and

into their ovens, and although a frog is a weak, and in some respects, a helpless creature, yet when myriads of them were sent by the "God of hosts" into the land, the result was terrible, and the mighty monarch as he loved to be thought, soon proved how helpless he was. "O God of hosts, turn us again." In the days of Joel the prophet, God had an army ready, and the host which was a mighty one consisted of locusts, cankerworms, caterpillars, and palmerworms, and the whole country was spoiled by them. Our God has many instruments at hand, and all sorts of means to employ. But one of the most wonderful facts in the Word, I say one of them—is that which occurs in the chapter we read at the commencement of the service to-night; the fifty-first chapter of Isaiah. "The moth shall eat them like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool." Let me invite you to concentrate your thoughts for a few minutes upon that subject. A moth; why, you put finger upon it, and crush it in a moment. But though it is easily put to death, and its strength is small, yet how destructive it is! and its work goes on noiselessly and invisibly, and the result is loss and sore disappointment at some future day. You go to your wardrobe for a garment, and it is destroyed, and that too in your own house, and almost beneath your own eye. Nothing was seen or heard, yet the work of destruction is complete.

Our God can work by soft as well as by hard means, and accomplish His purposes as well by a worm, as by a snake, a serpent, or an army. Nothing is impossible to the "God of hosts," and the great object of prayer. I mention these things because the text leads me to do so, and because they occur in connection with the holy exercise of prayer. We go then when we pray into the presence of a God that can and does hear and help, having bound Himself by His promise, and by covenant relationship to do so. He says, "Call upon Me; leave all others: do not be terrified by the complicated character of your case, nor try to set it right yourselves; but, "Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me." This is the God we adore, our constant and faithful Friend, and the God of all the hosts of heaven, earth, and hell. On one occasion you know it is said they fought from heaven; the stars fought against Sisera, the enemy of God's people. God can call the lightnings out of His treasury, and strike the rebels dead in the twinkling of an eye; He presides over all the elements, and can bring them into a stormy and tempestuous condition; and men, families, communities, or armies may be destroyed. He can work secretly beneath the surface of the earth by earthquakes, and swallow up countries if He pleases. This God is the Object of our prayers, and He says, "My hand is not shortened that it cannot save, neither is My ear heavy that it cannot hear." I need not tarry here to remind you, for it has already occurred to your minds that, the hosts of God are not only numerous, but each host is a multitude. Millions of angels, millions of men, millions of evil spirits, and millions of inferior creatures, have accomplished some of the most solemn purposes of our God. Well, He is doing as He pleases upon His throne, and will work, and who shall let it? He says, "I will do all My pleasure;" and He is the only Being in the Universe, that can so speak. Satan would be glad to be able to say, I will do what I please; and ministers are so imperfect, that they would occasionally be glad if they

could do all their pleasure: but there is not a minister, nor a deacon, that can do all his pleasure, and it is the mercy of all that it is so. The Pope in Peter's chair cannot do what he pleases: if he could, what would be the state of countries and kingdoms? There he sits, having thoughts such as we cannot express nor understand, but his arm is too short, and too weak for his will. But there is the "God of hosts," whose arm is long enough to reach the most distant being, and strong enough to accomplish the mightiest purpose of His mind. Since He has said, "I will do all My pleasure," will this great Being prove a dangerous character? Great power is dreadful, unless its possessor be affectionate, wise, and tender. Our God is almighty, and His tenderness and holiness are infinite, like His power, and He cannot do wrong; therefore rejoice that He will do as He pleases. He has given many promises to cheer us on the road, and among the rest He has said, "Israel shall be saved in the Lord, with an everlasting salvation." Let Him do all His pleasure, and be it ours to sit down at His feet and look on with humility, and hope, and adoration.

God creates His own hosts, not because He needs them, but because it pleases Him to have them. God's strength does not lie in the number or character (like that of military generals) of His armies. A general, however great he may be in military knowledge and qualifications, can do nothing without an army, which even when well disciplined and tried, may prove very disappointing. Military strength is mutual, an army is strong in the military excellencies of its leader, and a general is strong in the number and prowess of his soldiers. One cannot do without the other. The armies of our God are not His strength. He employs hosts, but He needs them not; He does not lean upon them, and He could have done without them had He willed it; for He is an absolute Sovereign.

I should like in the next place to say that this part of *the text suggests one or two important thoughts*. We connect with a host the idea of order. It is not a promiscuous multitude, running about without regard to rule or arrangement. Just so with our God, who is a God of order, and has made arrangements for Himself and His people. Devils do not move about as they please, and angels come and go at His bidding. There is order prevailing everywhere in the dominion and government of our God. And this is the God you go to, and to whom you say, "Turn us again, O God of hosts, and cause Thy face to shine." Hosts suggest the idea of resignation. The persons constituting a host have surrendered themselves to their general and their country, and are supposed to have no will of their own. They are guided and directed by one mind, and one will; and it so with the hosts of God. All are directed by one great mind. One Being sees and plans for all. "Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel." The flock consists of thousands, but the Shepherd is only one person; the sheep are saved by His eyes, not their own; by His head, not their own; by His hands, and not their own. Well, the hosts of our God are all subject to His will.

"The fictitious powers of chance
And fortune I defy;
My life's minutest circumstance
Is subject to His eye."

Let me close this part of the subject by observing *the appropriateness of this title of God* in connection with prayer. "Turn us again, O God of hosts." How beautifully and divinely appropriate was this title on this occasion ! It indicates this fact, that God is never at a loss for instruments, nor for servants. We have the will, but not the power, or we have the will and the power up to a certain point, but we cannot fulfil our desires, because a second or a third person is not at hand. We are always embarrassed by something, and cannot do as we would. If we only had brother so-and-so here, the matter could be settled ; but he is not here, and the business is left undone. But the God to whom we go in prayer, is the "God of hosts," and always has at hand what is necessary. If angels be required, they are there, and if one saint on the earth be required to help another, he is at hand, and God is ready to send him. If Daniel is in the den of lions, and it is Heaven's intention that the lions shall not touch him,—during the night an angel, nay, God Himself comes down and closes their mouths. If Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego are to be cast into the furnace, there is the furnace and the people willing to burn them ; but God is among them also. Nebuchadnezzar looked into the piercing flame, and said as it were—I do not believe we have realised our expectations, nor fulfilled our desires. Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire ? Lo, I see four men, loose, walking in the midst of the fire ; and they have no hurt : and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God. Your God is the "God of hosts," and nothing is impossible with Him. All that was burned of these three good men, were the bonds with which they bound their hands and feet : the fire set them free ; but the smell of fire had not passed on them. "O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee."

Let us look, secondly, at *the prayer itself*. I have intentionally dwelt the greater portion of the time upon the first point, because I am so frequently dwelling upon the other point indicated—prayer and confidence. However, as they are in the text, let us consider them for a few minutes. You see the church prayed for two blessings,—first, for *restoration or conversion*. "Turn us again," and then they wanted *fellowship and communion* with God : "and cause Thy face to shine." Let us look at these two wants for a few minutes. Restoration. It at once occurs to everyone, I should think, that this is the prayer of a regenerated person, or the prayer of the living saints of God. They did not say, "Let us be born again, or regenerate us ; but convert us, restore our souls." David's soul was restored, "The Lord is my Shepherd ; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures ; He leadeth me besides the still waters ; He restoreth my soul, and leadeth me in the paths of righteousness, for His name's sake. Now these petitioners were living people, and they had backslidden from God. It is still true that Israel is prone to backslide from their God. We backslide every day, I fear ; not as to our outward walk and conversation, but as to our hearts. I would not attribute more importance to external than to internal matters ; nevertheless if there are evils within, and there are many, it is a blessing if they do not break out. If there is gunpowder near, it is most important that it be carefully guarded, or kept damp, that there be no ex-

plosion. Well, the petitioners here were new-born characters, but had backslidden from God, and having been brought to a sense of their condition, they said, "Turn us again." It was well with us years ago, when we followed hard after Thee. "Turn us again." Thou canst if Thou wilt ; for Thou art "God of hosts," and all power is at Thy command.

"With heaven and earth at His command,
He waits to answer prayer."

"Turn us again, O God of hosts," is a prayer for restoration ; and I think this prayer suits the child of God, every morning and every evening. If you will allow me to advert to myself, I may say sometimes I feel most unfit to leave my home, for the house of God, and most unfit when here, to ascend the pulpit to preach the Gospel ; and I cannot by anything I can do, produce a proper state of things within, for my mind is in God's hand, and I cannot spiritualize it. I have sometimes wished I could. I am dependent upon God, and I come to Him, saying, Help me again. Then I try to look back upon the week, and turn my eyes within ; for we are sometimes the guilty occasion of our own darkness of soul, and in order that I may be right, I adopt the prayer, "Turn me again, O God of hosts, and cause Thy face to shine ; and I shall be saved." A person can be regenerated only once, for the new birth is final ; but he may be converted many times. People talk about conversion and regeneration as if they were identical, but they are not so. There may be conversion without regeneration or the new birth ; but the new birth can never take place without conversion. Conversion and regeneration are both changes, but not the same. Conversion naturally follows regeneration, and is inseparable from it. Conversion may take place as to the outward conduct of an individual, and his heart may remain dead and abominable. The new-born child of God is turned here and there. When God hides His face, he is sensible that he is at a distance from Him, and remembers the former days when the light of the Lord shone upon him, and his heart was expanded and melted under the Word in His house, and he goes again into His presence, saying, "Turn me again, O God of hosts, and cause Thy face to shine." Peter was converted many times, and never became perfect till God took him to heaven. "Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have thee, that he might sift thee as wheat ; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not : and when thou art *converted*,—and surely that did not mean regeneration,—strengthen thy brethren." Well, the church prayed, first, for restoration.

In the second place, they prayed for *communion with God*: "And cause Thy face to shine." Turn us, and then shine upon us. What did they want ? They wanted light and warmth, and the smiles of God. They wanted light ; for the saints are the children of light. They are born to live, and rejoice in the light for ever. Darkness is not their element, and when they backslide and get into a state of distance and darkness, there is no permanent happiness. I am sure such a one will have to be turned again. He feels his own inability to turn himself, for when one has got into that condition, hell, and sin, and the flesh hold him fast, and it is no use inviting him. If this prayer is answered,

something must rend and give way to turn the backslider from his position, and God only knows how to do that. Something must snap, and the child of God who backslides from his heavenly Father, is making bitter work for himself on some future day. Cause Thy face to shine, and give me to live in that light which is warm and divine. The light of God's countenance is not like a keen March morning. No: cause Thy living, loving face to shine; for the light of God's countenance is spiritual, soft, genial, and fructifying. "And cause Thy face to shine upon us, O God. And the smiles of God were wanted. "Cause Thy face to shine." Does God smile, and can you describe it? No, I cannot; it is better felt than described: but I know there is a marvellous difference between His smile and His frown,—between the state of things that follows the hiding of His face, and that of a revelation of Himself. God's smile is heaven; His frown is hell. If He hides His face, 'tis night; if He shows it, it is day. God's dear people who live in the light of His countenance, can walk through evil and good report. Well, let us leave that also, and notice thirdly, *the implication* which the prayer carries with it. Turn us, and cause Thy face to shine. Now this carries with it certain points, to which I beg attention. It implies that it is not enough for the believer to know that God is his God, and that he is going to Him, and will get to heaven all right at last. Do you say, If I really knew as much as that, I should be happy? No, you would not; for it is not enough to know that we are God's children. Zion says, Father shine upon us. Hide not Thy face, but shine upon us while we live in and travel through the wilderness. Oh it is sweet to know we are going to heaven, and shall reach our home and be for ever with and like the Lord; but what about travelling thither? Can we now be satisfied with icy hearts, or to travel to our God in midnight darkness, never to have a pleasurable feeling or an hour's communion with Him? Hence, cause Thy face to shine, and

"— Now and then, dear Lord, bestow
A drop of heaven on worms below."

Tell me not about being satisfied that we shall conquer when we die. We want to conquer now whilst we live; and we cannot conquer unless the God of hosts is with us, and keeps us right from day to day. Secondly, it implies the fact that righteousness is always important to the saint, and to God Himself. "Turn us again." "Oh, no matter, you will get to heaven at last." Yes, it does matter; for there is something seriously wrong now, and we are helpless, and God only can set us right, and it is important to be right; and therefore, "Turn us again, O God of hosts." Turn us from our own righteousness, to the righteousness of Christ; turn us from ourselves to Thee. Turn us from earth to heaven. Turn us in our affections, in our experience, and in our hopes, and as to our course. So turn us that we may set our affections on things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. I can turn my back towards that which is right, and get wrong in a minute; but it requires a God to set me right again; therefore, "Turn us again, and cause Thy face to shine." I should like to say a word before I sit down, on the beautiful order that appears in the text, which is not accidental. Observe—Turn *us*, not *circumstances*, not *others*, not *Thyself*, but *us*. O God set us right.

That is the first thing ; and then shine upon us. And what do you expect will result from that ? So shall we be saved. Thus you see there is a certain divine order here, which, like its divine Author is great and glorious. This is the order : set me right, make me happy with the light of Thy countenance, and then keep me in safety all the days of my life : so shall we be saved.

Just a word on *the confidence expressed*, and we can only mention it, and close : “and we shall be saved.” Whatever circumstances we may be surrounded by, we shall be saved, if Thou wilt turn us and shine upon us. Whatever our enemies may be, however strong and bitter, if Thou wilt turn us, and shine upon us, and give us tokens of Thy love and approbation we shall be saved, notwithstanding our weakness. This was the case with Joseph. It did not appear at one time as if he would be saved, but he was, for God’s face shone upon him. It did not look at one time as Israel would be saved, but it was so, for God set them right, and shone upon them ; and brought them out of Egypt, with a high hand, and an outstretched arm. It did not look at one time as if Job would be saved from the state in which he suffered. Then there was the case of David who got wrong, and God set him right ; and Peter also : and his Master’s look set him right. The Lord’s look broke Peter’s heart, and he went out, and wept bitterly. The order is important, and so are the confidence and assurance expressed also. What is the extent of this salvation ? If God will turn us, and shine upon us, our character will be saved ; our reputation will be saved ; our influence will be saved : for the man who has fallen from his own steadfastness, and lost his name, and the confidence of his fellow men and women, has no influence for good. It is by God’s keeping grace that one’s influence and usefulness are saved. Well, if we depart from our God, (and we shall, if he does not keep us,) if we fall from our own steadfastness, and blot and blur our character and reputation we shall lose our usefulness, whatever the measure of it may have been. God’s salvation is so comprehensive, and its extent so great that when He saves a sinner He saves him altogether.

Take it in relation to sin ; so shall we be saved from its guilt, which binds over to the curse ; so shall we be saved from its love and dominion. There is only one power that can save us from the guilt and stain of sin.

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

So shall we be saved from the stain of sin, and from its consequences too, which are very woful. So shall we be saved from all. And all this was confessed before God upon His throne, by petitioners, conscious that they were in a wrong condition. Hence “ Turn us again ; shine forth upon us, O God of hosts. So shall we be saved.” The Lord add His blessing, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

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THE HEALING TOUCH.

A Sermon

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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THE TRIED BELIEVER APPEALING TO GOD.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,
AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, 16th SEPTEMBER, 1883.

"As for me I will call upon God; and the Lord shall save me. Evening and morning, and at noon will I pray, and cry aloud; and he shall hear my voice."—Psa. lv. 16, 17.

AFFLICTIONS do not spring out of the dust, but our God presides over them all. Therefore all things work, and they work together. One thing is not to be isolated from another, nor one event from another. One day's affairs are not to be separated from the affairs of another day, and all the matters of a week are connected in a wondrous manner with all the weeks and years of our life. What a glorious God we have upon the throne, and how wondrous are His wisdom and His ways! "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," said the Saviour. The operations of Providence are incessant. The hand of God is never still, and idleness is unknown in heaven. God is ever executing His will; fulfilling His purposes, and accomplishing the salvation of His people. The day will declare every matter that is now mysterious in salvation, and the wonders of Providence; and we shall see that our bitter sorrows, our rough paths, and our deep afflictions were all for the best.

David being in heaven knows more than he knew when he was here concerning the causes, and needs be of His affliction, but the complete revelation of these matters is perhaps reserved for the last day. There were times when David was enabled to leave himself in the hands of his covenant God, and feel that all was divinely right. The man after God's own heart was deeply tried from the very beginning of his spiritual and his public life to its close. I shall say nothing about his comparative poverty before he became king of Israel. He lived, however, all his days under the wings of his heavenly Father, and the shadow of the Almighty. He was more exposed to danger than many of his fellow believers, and he might well say, "The Lord is my rock and my salvation; whom shall I fear?" or "of whom shall I be afraid." God was his habitation, and he lived for the most part in Him. The Lord was his refuge and shelter, and his permanent abode. Why that gracious man should have been so deeply and constantly tried is not a matter for us to enquire into; and yet, having regard to the character of our God, we know there was a necessity for it. Well, the Psalm out of which we have taken our text to-night was penned by David under circumstances of great and bitter affliction. I need not enter into a description of the painful and unnatural conduct of Absalom. He revolted against his most affectionate Father, and led out an army with the intention of dethroning, if not of destroying him.

Ahithophel, whose character had been almost stainless, and on whom David leaned, had departed from his royal Master, and proved a traitor.

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and others had also become exceedingly treacherous, and David says, under all these circumstances, "I will call upon God, and the Lord shall save me. Evening and morning, and at noon will I pray, and cry aloud; and He shall hear my voice."

Let us make some observations on these words, and notice in the first place a few things *as to the use of trouble*. Perhaps it is not a desirable subject to preach upon, but, inasmuch, as it said, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivered him out of them all," the troubles and the trials of God's people necessarily form a part of the ministrations of a preacher of the Gospel. I do not believe that trouble is useless, nor that it is injurious or harmful to the living child of God. Our heavenly Father is too wise to permit anything finally injurious to lie in our path. He is too wise, too good, and too gracious to put or to permit anyone to put a single drop of poison into the bitter cups which we have to drink. Trouble is not only not injurious, it is really helpful. A very strange doctrine to preach! but, nevertheless, it is one of the glorious doctrines of the gospel. It cannot help, however, without the presence of God, nor be accepted as useful without the blessing of the Most High, for it is not in flesh and blood to believe that a rough road is the best; or to take up the cross, and walk off with it, acquiescing in the arrangement and sovereign will of our God. Trouble has proved useful to God's church, and it will prove so to them until the end of time. Trial tests one's religion, and I apprehend that that which proves the nature of one's religion to be heavenly and divine is a blessing,—a bitter one it may be, still it is a blessing.

"'Tis a point I long to know,
Oft it causes anxious thought,—
Do I love the Lord or no,
Am I His, or am I not?"

And if God strikes a blow, or permits an enemy to strike one, which causes us great sorrow and suffering; if that sorrow and pain demonstrate to us the heavenly and divine character of our religion; if the blow knocks down our doubts and fears, and gives us a measure of true and scriptural evidence of the work of grace in our hearts, that blow was a favourable and merciful one; and disappointment overruled for our good, by the grace and blessing of God, is among the greatest mercies of our life. Again, affliction tries the faith of God's people, and you are not to regard the trial of your faith, nor to speak of it as if it were an evil, because it is a divine mercy and favour. It is necessary that faith be tried, and God has arranged for this. He permits sins to arise, and circumstances to occur which will try the faith of His dear people—not for His own information, for He is the Author and Giver of faith, and knows all about its nature and properties, and that it is spiritual and divine, and will hold out to the end, but they do not know that, without proof. There are times when you are not satisfied concerning the nature of your faith, and are afraid you may not hold out to the end. Now if the fear that God permits to arise tries your faith, and thereby proves it to be good and heavenly gold, and you are divinely satisfied in your mind that

you are a possessor of this rich gift of God, you will have to thank God for the conflict. God sits by on His throne, and tries the righteous. He tries them for the devil's sake; for the world's sake, and for their own sakes. He tries the righteous, for Satan's sake, who tempts again and again, from week to week, and from month to month, and is finally disappointed. And by this trial it is proved to the powers of darkness that the saint they have been tempting is not a hypocrite, but a real living child of God. And He tries the righteous for the world's sake, but more especially for their own sake. Therefore trial has its uses since it demonstrates the character of one's religion, and tries one's faith.

Again, trouble discovers character. Oh how this has been revealed by trial!—our own character, and that of others also. That dear brother that loved you so well, and prayed for you so earnestly, with whom you walked to the house of God in company, and took sweet counsel, has of late acted strangely, and taken a course which you had thought impossible for him to adopt. My dear friends, changes and trials unfold the character of our fellow creatures, and discover our own, and that which reveals to us what we are, and what God is to us proves a blessing, and not an evil; and afflictions sanctified by God frequently have this effect. Moreover trial makes room for God Himself. If we were never tried, but were always surrounded by agreeable and pleasant circumstances, there would be but little room for God; and therefore something or other arises by which a breach is made in that by which we are surrounded, and our comfort and pleasures flow away, and when we are thus stripped there is room for manifestations of God's love, and displays of His power. God comes upon the scene, and enters through the gap with mercies in His hand. Having removed the prop on which we leaned He stretched out His own Almighty arm, as we were falling, and said, "Lean on that. "In Me is thy help found." The Lord says by the prophet, "I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness." A strange place to bring His people into, and strange means He employs for that purpose. Well, "I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably to her." She was not in a position to receive words of comfort and consolation in the garden, or the pasture, or on the downy bed, or in the sumptuously furnished room; and, therefore, I will bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably to her. I will give her; and God will do it all, and the promise is absolutely certain,—I will give her not merely some grapes when she is there, nor a vine, nor vines, but I will give her her vineyards from thence, which is more than a few bunches of grapes. Vineyards in the wilderness, and grapes growing in the desert! Who ever expects this? This is one of the dispensations of God's grace and expressions of His love. "I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor, or trouble, for a door of hope, and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt." Trial and trouble have their important uses in the kingdom and government of our God. Moreover the trials of God's people verify the Word, and endear the promises of God. I have heard some of the saints express, with deep emotion, their feelings concerning God's precious promises as they occurred to their

minds, and were applied to their hearts when they were in bitter grief and deep sorrow. They have said what we should have done under the circumstances, had it not been for such and such words, we know not. A minister may write a long or a very affectionate letter to his suffering brother or sister; it does not reach the heart as the Word of God reaches it. And a sympathising brother may call upon one passing through the depths of sorrow and trial, and words of sympathy may be spoken or prayer offered, and the case may not be reached; but if God drops the promise upon the heart, and applies His own Word to the mind, that calms the storm, and stills the tempest, which nothing belonging to the creature can quell. He speaks to the mind. "Peace, be still," and immediately there is a calm within, even if the storm without continues to rage. The storm without is sometimes the occasion of an internal calm, or a peace, which the world can neither give nor take away.

"Sweet affliction,
That brings Jesus to my soul."

Dear brethren and sisters, many things in this world are bad, but many things are worse than affliction and trial. Looking at the subject in connection with the child of God I hold that trial—though I do not invite it, and do not and cannot pray for it, since it will come of itself from God,—is better than carnality of mind, better than barrenness of heart, and better than worldliness in his character, walk, and deportment. Trial may be deep and bitter, yet it may prove a greater blessing than the greatest temporal comfort that ever dropped upon our heads or homes from the liberal hand of God. A blow from God is disliked and deprecated; sweet blessings we want, and are always asking for them, and we hold out our empty hands to receive them, and we thank Him if they come; but a blow may be as good as a gift, and sometimes much better. This was the case I apprehend with David, on the occasion indicated in the Psalm. He says, "As for me, I will call upon God, and the Lord shall save me."

Trial produces prayer, calls it forth, intensifies it, and endears the mercy-seat. When all is smooth and agreeable we get the Bible in the morning, and read a chapter, and perhaps, Dr. Hawker's or Mason's portion as well, and spend a few minutes in prayer; and then comes evening, and the Bible is had again, and another portion is read, and we retire for the night. But if the house be on fire, the customariness of the thing is all gone in a moment, and the form and rule are lost sight of. Yes, trial and trouble evoke prayer, intensify the earnestness of the heart therein, and endear the mercy-seat.

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

The letter which Hezekiah received from Sennacherib would have crushed his spirit, had he not been helped to take it into the presence of God and spread it before His throne. The afflictions of God's saints have sometimes been of such a character that they would have crushed them, had they not been driven by them into the house of God and before the

throne of grace. "O Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me." You will allow me to advert to myself. In my little way as a preacher of the gospel, I am sometimes so nervous, as some persons might call it, so filled with fear, and doubt, and trembling when coming to the pulpit, that I hardly know how to enter it. I pray; I mean for a moment or two before the Lord, my God, and my ejaculatory petitions are perhaps sometimes so curious as to their shape that I should not care to utter them before my fellow-men, and yet, perhaps, my brief but earnest petitions which go like arrows from the bow up to the throne of God, are much more acceptable than the prayer of a quarter of an hour, which I present in connection with the service. Yes, the throne is endeared; the heart approaches God; the soul is poured out before Him, and if in the act of prayer, or subsequently, we feel a calm and a peace, which we possessed not before, let us rise from our knees, and go about our business, feeling as David felt that the Lord has heard our voice. Oh there is something calming, tranquillizing, elevating, and dignifying, in heart-felt prayer. Let us when the storm rages get under the wings of God, and be conscious that we are covered with His shadow, and we shall not murmur nor rebel, but welcome all His sovereign will, and believe though we may be unable to see it that all is in love. It is better to be alive in the winter than to be dead in the summer. "A living dog is better than a dead lion." To walk in a rough road to heaven, is better than to walk in a smooth road to hell. To be in a raging storm, and near to God, is better than to be in a calm, and far from Him. It was well with the disciples when Jesus was on board, though He was asleep. "Master, carest Thou not that we perish?" and He said, "O ye of little faith!" Perish! with Me your Master on board! Drowned, be destroyed, when I am so near to you! "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" And He arose and rebuked the wind and storm, and immediately there was a calm." Yes, trouble, dear friends has its use in the government and kingdom of God.

Let me notice in the next place, *the holy resolve of the tried one*. "As for me, I will call upon God, and the Lord shall save me." His prayer I believe was fervent, and according to what he here says he prayed frequently, and the text indicates resoluteness in connection with his decision. When prayer is a customary matter, a sort of rule or form that we observe our words may hang like icicles on our lips; but when we are deeply conscious of our helplessness, and there is a vehement fervent desire in the heart, then our petitions are earnest indeed. God accepts not the sacrifice in which the heart is not found. And David says, I will pray frequently "evening, and morning, and at noon," perhaps in allusion to the fact that the Jews prayed as a rule three times a day,—the third hour, the sixth hour, and the ninth hour. At nine o'clock in the morning, the morning lamb was offered, various acts of worship were performed, and prayer ascended with the fragrance of the sacrifice to the God of heaven. Peter was praying at twelve o'clock, the sixth hour of the day, on the house-top, when Cornelius sent for him. And then prayer was offered again at the ninth hour, or three o'clock in the afternoon, when the evening lamb was offered. And how beautifully that type sets forth the ever-returning necessities of the children of God, and the per-

petual work and preciousness and power of the Saviour ! I need an application of atoning blood every morning ; and, if it may so be, I want an application of it every noon and every night. I am daily contracting guilt and defilement. Your preacher is no perfectionist in the flesh. He does not preach it, for he does not believe in it, and he is a stranger to the experience of it. " If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." I am a great sinner, and need a great Saviour, and try to preach the great Saviour whom I need. It is not enough for me to know, as I trust I do in some measure, that Jesus loved me, and gave Himself for me,—not enough for me to know that heaven is mine and that I shall reach it in safety,—I want to live near to Him now, and to be like Him too. I want to experience purity of heart now. Every morning I would be washed, every evening I would be cleansed. Evening, and noon, and morning, will I cry unto thee. David was no formalist. I apprehend that the words indicate the fact that he prayed without ceasing. Not that he was always on his knees ; but whenever there was a pain, a difficulty, a want he appealed to his heavenly Father. It is said, "*Pray without ceasing.*" A thought occurs to my mind : it is said that Mephibosheth ate bread *continually* at David's table. It does not mean that the man was incessantly eating, or that he never rose from the board, but that *he lived with David*, and that he always had a place at his table. Dear friends, let us seek for more of the spirit of prayer, for if one may speak for others, we are lacking in that respect. When things move smoothly and wind and tide are in our favour, our prayers ;—for we cannot live without trying to pray,—our prayers are, I think sometimes rather flat ; but when the wind and tide are contrary, and we are being carried away and cannot help ourselves, and feel that no creature can help us, then it is—" Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me." Fervency, and frequency, and resoluteness, actuated and characterized the petitions of David. There is always a way upwards, and it can never be stopped or blocked. Jesus Christ is the sinner's way to God. " No man cometh unto the Father but by Me." Our dear Redeemer has removed guilt from between God's ear and your lips, from between God's throne and your heart ; and as there is not guilt to be punished, the way between your troubled heart and God's is open. You see in the streets sometimes, " This street is blocked ;" but the way to heaven in which petitions travel is ever open and available. Hell may surround you with the worst temptations, but it cannot stop up the way of prayer. Antichrist, the man of sin, and persecution may surround and hem you in, and tell you that you shall not go here nor there ; but Antichrist cannot prevent the soul in its ascent to the high and everlasting God. " I will," said David, " cry aloud, and the Lord shall hear my voice." As the way upwards was open to that living saint, he was resolved under the circumstances to call upon his God.

In the third place, the text expresses *holy confidence*. " As for me, I will call upon God, and the Lord shall save me." He saves His people honourably ; but when they try to save themselves, they make sad confusion of it. I am now speaking of their circumstances and not of their spiritual salvation. When we save ourselves, or get saved by our fellow-men, we make bad work. It has to be undone again very frequently ;

therefore David says, "I will cry unto the Lord, and *He shall* save me," for He will do it honourably and seasonably. I should like to be saved in my own way, but I have such faith and confidence in my God, that I commit myself unto Him, and put the whole affair into His hands, and He shall do it. I will *cry*, and He shall *save*. He will do it wisely and well, and at the right time. "Save now we beseech Thee, O Lord; O Lord, we beseech Thee, send now prosperity." No, it is the will of God that the storm should rage a little longer, that new interpositions of Himself may take place, and fresh manifestations of Himself appear. I will not leave you, but uphold and defend you in the storm, and carry you through it; for my time is not yet come. At the appointed time, the vision shall come, and shall not tarry. The Lord shall save me in His own time. And then He saves completely. The salvation is complete, and is acknowledged to be so. "This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes." We all look back at times, I think, upon our faults and follies, upon many steps we have taken in haste, and upon the fact that we have often been permitted to have our own way and get into trouble. I did not intend to mention it, but I am thinking just now of the deeply painful circumstances which resulted in my coming to London. I have no doubt that I was in fault as well as my friends; perhaps we were all in fault together, and probably neither the people nor myself would act again as we acted then, were we in a similar condition. "The Lord has His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet." I think we may all believe that it was Heaven's intention, though it was not mine, that I should come to London 32 years ago, and that I should come to this place in this city, to labour in the name of the Lord. No thanks to me, and no thanks to any mere creatures that good arose out of evil. No, no, says David, Do not touch the work; I will have no saving hand in it, the complications are so numerous and great that we are all helpless. As for me I will go to the Lord and put the matter into His hand, and He shall do the work and save me. The Lord saves His people first by blood, and then He follows that salvation with all other necessary ones. He saves by His Spirit, and He saves by His providence in a wonderful manner. Whoso is wise and will observe the providential hand of God shall understand the loving-kindness of His heart. Providence, dear friends, is a series of Divine operations, and God is always saving thereby. Besides, we are saved by the intercession of Christ. He ever liveth to make intercession for all that come unto God by Him; and I believe the help we require and receive comes to us as the fruit of the Saviour's sufferings and as the result of His intercession and His reign. He shall save me.

Fourthly, look at the fact that David *made a peculiar use of the relation in which he stood to God*. "As for me, I will call upon God:" you may do what you like, or what you can. My mind is made up and my way is clear and plain before me; as for me, I will take the whole matter to my God, and commit it all to Him. So far as management is concerned it shall altogether go out of my hands, and I will leave it at the footstool of Divine mercy; there shall be no counter-plot on my part. They are plotting my destruction and there is a conspiracy to ruin me,

and I will be no party to a counter-conspiracy. I will not adopt any carnal policy, nor have recourse to any merely natural methods to save myself; I will not scheme nor plan. The Lord knows the righteousness of my motives and proceedings in this matter, and that I have not brought myself into this condition; but even if I had, I would humbly leave it with Him: but according to the cleanness of my hands He will recompense me. How often does the child of say, I know not what to do, and then goes to a fellow saint and asks him what he should do. Rather say with David, "As for me, I will call upon God." It is a blessing to be able to know what is right in trial and trouble. It is never wrong to pray. It may be useless and sometimes it is injurious to open one's mind to a fellow-creature. Take the matter at once to your God, and the Lord help you to do so, and to leave it with Him. We sometimes take our affairs into God's presence, and bring them away again. That is not committing our way unto the Lord. David said, "I will put my trust in Him and commit all my affairs into His hand." As for me? I am the Lord's servant and will serve Him and leave myself in my Master's hand. I am His redeemed one, and will leave myself at His footstool. I am His child, I cry aloud; He knows my voice, and has heard it often. The voice of His child is unlike that of an enemy. He hears my voice, and has told me to come, and I hold His promise. I am the recipient of many past favours, and have often knocked at the door, and never knocked in vain. I have frequently required help, and have had it whenever I have needed it. Adopt what policy you like, have recourse to what method you choose, I will commit my way unto the Lord, and He shall direct my steps.

Lastly, *the limitation*. I will call upon God, not upon the creature nor creature mediators, nor have recourse to the army. All my trust is stayed on God. My hope is in Him, and in Him alone, and He and He only shall save me. And was his hope realized? Was his confidence honoured? Yes. The Lord delivered him. "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." You remember the young man said to Elisha, "Alas! Master, how shall we do?" "O Lord, open his eyes," said the prophet; and then the young man saw the horses of fire and chariots of fire that surrounded them in Dothan. Look at the next verse in this Psalm, "There were many with me." There were many warriors with David, but, they could not help their royal master. The angels of God, however, were with him, ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them that shall be heirs of salvation; but greater and better than all, God was with him. "The Lord taketh my part with them that help me." The Lord add His blessing, for Christ's sake. Amen.

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CHRIST REJOICING IN SALVATION.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,
ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, 30th SEPTEMBER, 1883.

"The king shall joy in Thy strength, O Lord, and in Thy salvation how shall he rejoice!"—Psa. xxi. 1.

IN the Psalm out of which I have taken my text this morning, we have a blessed representation of Christ's resurrection and ascension to heaven, of His session at the right hand of His Father, and of the salvation that results from His reign. "The king shall joy in Thy strength, O Lord; and in Thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice!" The words might be applied in the first place to David, who may be considered as the king referred to here. David knew something of the strength and power of the Lord God, and that he as a sinful creature rested upon Him. It is also a fact that David greatly rejoiced in God's salvation: but a greater than David is here. David, therefore, may be taken in this Psalm to have been divinely inspired, and to have had his eye directed to the person, and triumphs, and reign of the Lord Jesus.

In offering a few remarks upon the text, I shall look at it in several relations, and limit my attention to the latter clause,—*"In Thy salvation how greatly shall He rejoice."* In the first place, let us consider the subject *in relation to God the Father*; *"In Thy salvation how greatly shall He, that is, the King, rejoice!"* Salvation is always ascribed to God; and when its source and spring are mentioned, it is in connection with the Father. Our salvation flows from love; it has been made eternally legal, honourable and sure by blood; and it is brought home and applied to the souls of sinners, by the power and grace of the Spirit; and, therefore, a triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are unitedly engaged in the great work of saving sinners. Christ is here spoken of as a King; and standing as it were in the presence of His Father, it is said, *"In Thy salvation how greatly shall He rejoice!"* The dear Redeemer rejoiced in the Father's resolve to save sinners. It is said in the Book of Genesis, in connection with the creation of man, *"And God said, Let us make man in our own image."* Those words seem to indicate the idea of a council, as if Father, Son, and Spirit took counsel together concerning the creation of the world, and the formation of man. And if God said, *"Let us make man;"* we may go beyond time into the council of eternity, and contemplate the eternal God as saying, *"Let us save man, with an everlasting and honourable salvation."* The dear Redeemer rejoiced in the determination of Jehovah to save millions, and to take them in safety through the ages of time into heaven, and make them for ever happy there. We do not hear much in the present day about the way of salvation, or the plan

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of God's mercy. I do not know why it is so, but I suppose the idea of the plan of salvation is unacceptable. Yet salvation was divinely planned, and graciously and wisely arranged by the eternal God; and having resolved to save, and made all arrangements for this purpose, Christ rejoiced therein. The dear Redeemer received the plan from His Father to execute and fulfil, and He rejoiced in the source of salvation, and in the methods by which God had resolved to save. Then Christ further rejoiced in the Father's appointment of Himself to the great work of redemption. He laid help upon one that was mighty, and exalted one chosen out of the people; and Christ preaching to the people in the days of His flesh, said, "I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father." Here was the Father with the plan of salvation, calling the Son, so to speak, to fulfil and carry out all the arrangements of divine mercy; and the Saviour entered into covenant with His Father with respect to this great work. The Father (and I am scriptural, in thus speaking,) swore His beloved Son into office; for "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec." Christ therefore, is our great High Priest by the Father's oath; and He is still in that office, rejoicing in His priestly work, and in and over the people for whom He appears before the throne of God. Christ having been sworn to save, rejoiced in His official position and character, and in those obligations which He had assumed by being placed in such an official relation to God and man. Now Christ is represented as greatly rejoicing in God's salvation. Having been appointed to save, He rejoiced to come in the fulness of time. "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." He delighted to do the will of His Father, and said, "Thy law is within My heart." He rejoiced to come and commence the great work; He rejoiced to go on with it from month to month, and from year to year. He rejoiced to reach the end of the law for righteousness, and He rejoiced to say, "It is finished!" to bow His head, and to give up the ghost; and meeting Mary Magdalene shortly after His resurrection, He said, "All hail!" for the glorious work was done. Hell was defeated, and the Father was glorified, and millions were saved. Yes, He rejoiced, saying, "All hail!" to Mary, who had been full of doubts and fears. And what His joy was when angels

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

we, perhaps, shall never fully know. The dear Redeemer entered heaven, rejoicing in the fact that He had accomplished the eternal salvation of countless millions of sinners. This great work He presented to the Father, who appointed Him to do it; and Christ rejoiced in the Father's acceptance of His blood and righteousness, and took His seat on His right hand, there to live and reign, until all His enemies should become His footstool. But though a King He keeps His priestly position and office, and ever liveth to make intercession for all that come unto God

by Him. Hear Him say in His prayer before He left the world, "Father, the hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee. I have glorified Thee on the earth. I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do." Justice demanded satisfaction; the price of redemption was paid into her hands, and all the attributes and perfections of Jehovah were brought together in everlasting union, harmony and prominence, in the sufferings, death, and salvation of God's dear Son. Yes, Christ rejoices greatly in salvation in relation to His Father. I believe it was this fact that rendered Christ acceptable to God as the Saviour of sinners, and the Fulfiller of the will of God. Unwillingness on the part of the Saviour would have unfitted Him for His work; any measure of reluctance on His part to fulfil His Father's will concerning salvation would have disqualified Him; but whilst the Father in love resolved to save, in equal love, the Son too was ready to save. Although He knew that His engagements entailed upon Him suffering, sorrow, humiliation, persecution, ignominy, and death, yet He rejoiced to give His name, and enter into engagements with His Father; and the covenant of peace was between them both. "In Thy salvation how greatly shall the King rejoice!"

In the second place, let us look at the subject *in relation to Christ Himself*. He is here introduced as a King. "The King shall joy in Thy strength, and in Thy salvation how greatly shall He rejoice!" Yes, our Lord is on His throne. All power in heaven and on earth having been given unto Him, and as we sang just now—

"With heaven and earth at His command,
He waits to answer prayer."

There is not a storm that rages but is controlled by our Lord, for all the elements are managed by Him. There is not a creature but what is known to the Redeemer. There is not a devil in hell, or doomed to hell, but what is chained; and every angel in heaven serves the blessed Christ of God: and therefore He has heaven and earth at His command. What a blessing it is that we are interested in the love of such a Christ as this, and in the reign of such a King as this! In the first place, He is King of all the grace of God; He is King of all the grace that dignifies and perpetuates the heaven of angels. Angels are perpetually blessed, and their dignity is unsullied and unloseable; but their happiness and honour are all owing to grace, and the grace that has made them what they are, was and is in Christ, and He is King of all. That grace that qualified the millions of saints that are in heaven for their position,—Abel, Enoch, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the thousands of Old Testament saints, united with the New Testament believers that have wended their way from this world to eternal glory, is Christ's. Great grace, and much of it, was required to qualify them for heaven. Their sins were deep, and they have lost them all. Their character was gone, and a new one was formed for them; a thousand foes and fiends beset them on every hand when they were here, but they have got safely through them all. Their doubts, fears, trials, and troubles were numerous; but not a saint was lost, and all the millions now in heaven have been saved by that grace which Jesus

reigns over. They never had a drop from any other source, or through any other medium than Christ Jesus the Lord. And then there is a measure of grace in our hearts, and we all know, if we know anything at all experimentally, that Christ is the King of grace. At times there is not a spiritual movement within; and whatever we may do, or resolve, or think, we cannot stir our own hearts. Oh, we feel more and more, the longer we live, our absolute dependence upon the presence, blessing, and power of our reigning Lord. We want Him to live and reign in us, and over all that we are happily and unhappily the subjects of. If we have a little faith, we cannot exercise it without His influence; and if we have a good hope we cannot rejoice in hope without a measure of favour from His sceptre and throne; and if we love His holy name, our love is low, and does not rise into a flame, unless we are blest by our reigning Lord; for Jesus is the King of grace. We know, too, by experience that He reigns over the Word. Sometimes promises have been unspeakably sweet, and having fallen upon our hearts they have sustained our spirits, and given us a buoyancy on the waters of trouble, which nothing else could have imparted to us. Those very promises which at one time helped us so wondrously and mercifully, at another time seem to have no influence whatever upon us. Jesus is King, and the Lord reigneth, and will reign over all grace, and over all the promises of His Word, and over all minds. He reigns over some by love, and over others by mere power or omnipotence, and hence we read of the sceptre of His grace, and of a rod of iron. But whether He rules over men by a rod of iron, or by the sceptre of grace He appears as the Universal Ruler, as Lord of all. There is not a mind but what is subject to His power, and we bless Him for having revealed that fact in the Word. Every mind is ruled over by Jesus Christ. Satan's mind is great, and its powers are wonderful, mischievous, and destructive, and it is impossible to be influenced by him without being damaged in some measure; yet the mind of every fiend is in or under the management and control of Christ Jesus the Lord. Hence the devil sometimes said to Him, when He was on the earth, "Art thou come to torment us before the time? We know Thee who Thou art; the Holy One of God." If Thou cast us out, permit us to go into the herd of swine. Hell is strong, but Heaven is stronger. It is said that Luther, who was gloriously right in most respects, expressed the idea that the devil is omnipotent, but not as God is omnipotent. That was a slip of the tongue, or of the pen; but we know what the good man meant. Satan is mighty, but not almighty. Jesus is King, and He reigneth over all. He reigns over all minds in heaven, and I had almost said, as He does not reign over them here. What must it be to be there, where minds in all their spiritual perfection are immersed for ever in the glories of King Jesus, and every thought and emotion will be spiritual, heavenly and perfect, and Christ will fill every soul for ever! It is sweet to sit at His feet here, and meditate upon Him in this poor imperfect state. My meditations of Him shall be sweet. Sometimes we have been favoured to lose ourselves whilst meditating upon the glorious person and finished work of the Redeemer. How sweet those moments are! and they are

never to be forgotten; for then the mind is marvellously purified and perfumed. Nothing so enriches the heart as to be lost in heavenly and spiritual meditation, and filled with astonishment at the greatness, grace, and glory of the Lord. This, however, is only a drop—the ocean is in heaven. Here we have a little of that infinite fulness which God has prepared for His people. “In Thy salvation how greatly shall King Jesus rejoice! The King of all grace, and of all minds. And the King of all means, and all instruments also. There is not a single means of grace but what is presided over by the Saviour. You talk about barren opportunities. Why, if Jesus vacated the throne, or withheld His influence when His people are gathered together there would be nothing but barren opportunities. A sweet fertilising, comforting, elevating opportunity is the result of communicated grace by Jesus on the throne. Every minister is His servant, and every sermon that is in any measure blest is recognised and approved by Him, who is the King of all means and instruments. And He is the King of all the glory into which His people shall enter; and whilst He guides His people through the intricacies and changes of life He is pleased with the thought that they are saved, and shall shortly arrive at their desired haven. And as His people enter heaven washed, and made whiter than snow, clothed with the garments of salvation, and covered with the robe of righteousness, “how greatly does He rejoice!” Well, then, when He left His Father’s bosom He did so joyfully. When He came into the world, it was with joy; and when He dressed Himself in our flesh, (for the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us), He put our nature on with joy; and when He took our place, and went to the end of the law, He was joyful, although He was the man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame; and when He had honoured the law, completed His work, and fulfilled His engagements, He said, “It is finished!” which was a shout of triumph and of joy, and it expressed the glorious truth of the text,—“In Thy salvation how greatly shall He rejoice!”

In the third place, let me make one or two remarks on the subject *in relation to the work itself, namely—salvation*. He rejoiced more in the salvation of sinners than in the creation of the world. Everything He created He pronounced to be very good; but our Christ rejoiced in the work of creation, only as that work was viewed in connection with our salvation. Hence, it is said, “He rejoiced in the habitable part of His earth, and His delights were with the sons of men.” It was prospective salvation in which He rejoiced; and what shall we say about that? The salvation of our God leaves no trace of sin; no mark, no stain, no fault whatever upon the saved. If you are saved no charge whatever lies against you; for “who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect?” One says, “I do not feel this?” Your feelings are one thing, and God’s salvation is another. Faith may be weak and feeble, and your light may be dim; but divine facts are always firm. You cannot be partially interested in Him; and your salvation, if you are saved, cannot possibly be incomplete or imperfect. Christ is infinitely pleased with salvation, and rejoices in

it, because sinners are not only washed, they are made whiter than snow. Not only is this and the other stain removed, the washing is, or shall be, thorough and complete, body and soul, and both shall be perfectly and eternally saved. There are two methods of washing; the surface only is sometimes washed, and sometimes the washing is through and through. As when we wash ourselves we remove stains from the surface only of our persons, but clothes are washed thoroughly. Hence David says, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow;" and "Cleanse me from my sin." God's salvation removes from the inmost recesses of the heart, from the deepest part of the mind every stain, and every trace of sin. In thy salvation how greatly does the Saviour King rejoice! "He shall present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle;" and lest some objection should arise, the Holy Spirit has been pleased to say, "or any such thing." A better salvation we could not possibly have, and a better salvation Christ could not have achieved for His people. We do not want a better Saviour, or a better salvation, or a better gospel, or a better God; and we do not want a better faith than we possess; but we do want more of it; and, therefore, we come to the King, saying, "Lord, increase our faith." We are not limited in Him, nor straitened in His salvation; but we are straitened in our own bowels. A brother said, at the prayer-meeting this morning, "Help us to be looking more to Thyself, and less to our troubles and trials, and changes:" a most important petition. O that we might be helped to keep our eye fixed upon the blessed Christ of God! It is not what I am in myself, but what I am in Christ, and what Christ is to me, and has done for me. He is either all or nothing to us; and I cannot believe that He is nothing to me. Therefore He is all. If we are in Him, we are interested in His whole Person and finished work. Christ rejoices in salvation, and will never lose that joy. We do lose the joy of salvation, but Christ will ever rejoice therein. He is on His throne: look at the third verse. "Thou preventest Him with the blessings of goodness; Thou settest a crown of pure gold on His head." Christ is crowned Lord of all; and He contemplates His people and their salvation with infinite pleasure and delight; He is pleased they are saved, and that it was His work to do it. There is no regret in the breast of our dear Redeemer; that He went so low, that He suffered so much, that He wept so bitterly, that He was tempted so fiercely, or that He was smitten so hard. He is pleased with the retrospect, and looks back upon His life of sorrow and suffering with infinite delight—

"All this says He, I bore for thee,
And then He smiles again."

It comes to this, therefore, that our Lord rejoiced in salvation, in the council chamber, and in the covenant of grace, which is a revelation of what took place before the foundation of the world. He rejoiced in it on the cross; He rejoices in it on the throne; He rejoices in it in the hearts of His people, and He will rejoice in it at the last day when all shall be completely saved.

Shall I say a word in the fourth place on the subject *in its relation to*

sinners. I have looked at it in relation to the Father, planning it; in relation to King Jesus, the Saviour, carrying out the plan of God; and in relation to the work itself. Just one word as to its relation to sinners. Our Lord rejoices in the relation in which He stands to you, my friends. Does the husband rejoice in his relation to his wife, and in her's to him? Is it not written? "As the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee." Christ having become responsible for the salvation of His beloved people, was considered the Head of the church, which by the fall was ruined. He became their Head; their Brother, and their Surety, responsible for the eternal honour and safety of millions of bankrupt sinners. The Father is represented, speaking after the manner of man, as expressing astonishment,—“Who is this that engageth his heart to approach unto Me, saith the Lord? Who is it. Of course the thought is expressed in that form to raise in our minds an idea of the amazing love of Christ in undertaking to save lost and ruined sinners. The Father says, “Who is this that engageth His heart to approach unto Me.” If He will save these sinners I must smite Him with the curse. He knew it. He must bear all their sins, or He cannot deliver them from guilt. He knows it, and He rejoices to stand there, and receive by imputation the sins of all the family of heaven; for in Thy salvation He greatly rejoices. Well, he stands closely related to sinners, and is responsible for their eternal all, and said to the disciples on the road to Emmaus, “O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things [that you have been telling me about,] and to enter into His glory?” Did not Christ approach His Father, and engage solemnly to save? Was not this Christ sworn into the priest's office, and did He not engage to offer Himself a suffering sacrifice unto God? Did He in darkness, or without knowledge, become united to His church? No, He knew all that this relationship would entail upon Him, and yet He went forward. Therefore, “Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?” And thus He rejoices greatly in the salvation of lost and ruined men. He rejoices in their persons, and their services. When you are brought down upon the knee of prayer, and shed tears of sorrow and contrition in His presence, and commit your case into His hands, and throw yourselves upon His atonement, “how greatly does He rejoice!” “He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied.”

Next, look at the subject *in relation to enemies; and then, finally, in relation to heaven.* In relation to enemies. He spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly. He has put a chain on the neck of the lion, and holds every foe by His almighty hand, and says to the strongest, “You may come thus far, but no further, and here shall your power be stayed.” “The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.” He has bruised him under His own; bruised His head, and destroyed the works of the devil. Victory will not be complete, and Christ will not be perfectly satisfied, until the monster is bruised beneath the feet of those he has tempted. My brethren, those temptations of the

devil which toss you up and down, and alarm you, are all known and controlled by your saving Lord; and the tempter, who is now too strong shall one day lie conquered beneath our feet; for the God of peace shall cast him there. Then with regard to heaven, Jesus sees His saved people brought and folded here, and how greatly does He rejoice! He sees them gradually folded in heaven, and welcomes every one with pleasure and delight. Soon He will come and raise the dead, and claim all His purchased property; then every soul shall know its own body again, and be at home therein as it never was before. And all that great business having been completed, we shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. And what then? She shall be brought unto the King in raiment of needlework; with gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought into the King's palace, and stand on His right hand, in gold of Ophir. And then He and all heaven will rejoice. Father, Son, and Holy Ghost will rejoice in salvation. Angels outside the church will rejoice in God's salvation, and as for you and me, we now sometimes sing—

“Then shall we sing more sweet, more loud;
And Christ shall be our song.”

Now saved sinners groan and sigh, and are cast down, being troubled; then sin, groans, sorrows and tears will for ever end, and we with Christ shall greatly rejoice in salvation. Are there any evidences of this on the part of Christ? Let me just mention one or two. He so greatly rejoices in salvation, and saved sinners, that He says, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” That is a proof that He loves them well, and rejoices in His love, and in them. Is there another proof? Yes, many; but I will just mention another, “Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I.” He is with them. Some may not come, and this and the other professed friend may not be there, and some may sneer at you; but whenever you are gathered together, if only two or three, I will be there; and “In all places wherein I record My name, I will come unto you, and bless you.” Are you in the water? He is with you there. In the fire? It shall not kindle upon you. In darkness? You are near to Him. “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee;” for “I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands.” He so rejoices in you and your salvation, that your names and persons are in His hands, and the walls of Zion are continually before Him. The Lord add His blessing, for Christ's sake. Amen.

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CHRIST ALL AND IN ALL.

A Sermon *

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,
ON LORD'S-DAY EVENING, 18th NOVEMBER, 1883.

"But Christ is all, and in all." Col. iii. 11.

THIS chapter opens with an important exhortation. "If ye, then, be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God." The church's union to God's beloved Son is one of the most prominent and blessed truths in the Word; because it is the ground of salvation, and the ever-flowing spring of spiritual consolation. All earthly unions are giving way, for they are formed to be dissolved; but the union between Christ and His people, is as lasting as eternity, and as important as God's infinite grace and glory can constitute it. The church is represented as having risen with Christ, their Lord and Head, who is now in heaven, having passed through death and the grave, to the right hand of God. He died as a public Person, and as the common Head of all the millions that shall live with Him in heaven for ever. They died in Him when He died, and rose in Him when He rose from the dead. He is not to be regarded as a Person separate from other beings, but, as the great Representative of the Church, and the Head of all true believers. Wherever the Church is seen, there Christ Himself is prominent; where you see the bride, there you may see the Husband also; where you see spiritual beings, there you may see the Author of all spiritual life; and where you see living Christians, there you may see Christ Himself. When, therefore, the Lord of life and glory came out of the grave; countless multitudes came out in Him, and when He went to heaven, they went also, and when He took His seat at the Father's right hand, all His beloved people were seen there in Him. If ye, then, be risen with Christ representatively; experimentally in conversion; and emblematically in baptism; seek those things which are above. Above what? Above this poor empty world; above the ceremonial dispensation; above all creature wisdom and human learning; and above all those objects and conditions which hold the attention, and absorb the affections of the ungodly. Jesus is beyond the world. Remember that you are, or should be, there with Him. He is on the other side of death. Remember that you are in Him, and should be with Him there. Remember that He is in the new creation; that in Him you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. Are we not prone to set our affections on earthly things, and to become closely wedded to objects which must pass away? Dr. Watts sings:—

* Preached with special reference to the decease of Mr. Robert Hoddy, for several years a beloved Deacon of the Church at Chadwell-street, and Editor of "*The Gospel Herald*." He departed this life, November 8th, aged 68 years.

The creatures "divide our wavering minds,
And leave but half for God."

Oh for grace so to live in Christ, that it may not be death for us to depart! May it prove a dissolution, and not a rending of us away from this empty dying state. Death is represented as a dissolution, and is it not as agreeable as anything in death can be agreeable, to be gradually dissolved; to feel the ties which now unite us to one another, to the body, and to this world, one after another gradually melt and dissolve? The wicked is driven away in his wickedness. He is torn away from the world, contrary to his hopes, desires, and feelings; he is driven out of the body, while he clings to this life, but the righteous hath hope in his death. The child of God will be dissolved when he goes, and the mysterious tie that unites his mind to matter, and his soul to the body, gradually gives way at the appointed moment. The language of our spirits is—"Let us die the death of the righteous, and let our last end be like his." Well, in this manner, the apostle offers this important exhortation to believers, reminding them of their interest in the risen Redeemer. There is, however, doctrine, experience, and practice in the chapter, especially in the verses which immediately precede our text to-night. Many persons attributed considerable importance to earthly distinctions, and the apostle deemed it necessary to say, "There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision or uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but "Christ is all, and in all."

A minister of the gospel is not his own master. I had thought of another portion of the Word for a text for this occasion; but, subsequently, our beloved Sister Huddy informed me that our dear Brother, her husband, said during the last hours of his life, and when he was conscious, that he was not far from eternity, if Mr. Hazelton should feel inclined to say anything about me, when I am gone, I hope it may be from the words "But Christ is all, and in all." How characteristic of the man! How strikingly like him! He dearly and deeply loved his Lord, and would have Him honoured and glorified. He would not for a single moment so stand before His throne, as to cast the shadow of himself upon it. He would always, so to speak, leave the way open, in order that the whole of Jesus and His cross, and His throne, might appear; for "Christ was all in all to him, as most assuredly He is now. We cannot now see, nor hear him; but we are ready to shed tears, when we think that so very recently he occupied that desk, and with so much holy earnestness and fervour gave out the hymns of praise, which we sang to the glory of our God. We shall never forget how he emphasised certain words, as he so fervently read our songs. Our feelings were sometimes deep, in relation to his own personal experience, for he was no formal clerk. His heart was often in the hymn, and the hymn was in his heart, and hence he gave it out, generally speaking, in a peculiar and spiritual manner. Well, said the good man, just before he left the body, and his wife, and us as a church, "Tell my pastor that Christ is all, and in all to me."

Now look for a few minutes at this most comprehensive text. I shall in the first place contemplate it as *a great and glorious fact*. Christ is

all, and in all." Some people quote it thus,—Christ is all and all. It does not read so. The apostle does not so put it here; he does not say, "Christ is all and all," but "Christ is all, and *in* all." Earthly distinctions count for nothing in the kingdom of God's dear Son, and in fact they count for nothing in the moral government of God. Whether it be the king on the throne, or the carpenter in the shop, or the ploughman in the field, all are sinners, and have come short of the glory of God. The man that wears a glittering crown, and sits upon the highest earthly throne, is a sinner, like the mechanic and the ploughman; for there is no difference between kings and the common people, in this respect. And these remarks will apply to the kingdom of heaven, or the kingdom of God's dear Son; all are alike there. God is no respecter of persons. The Jew is not in this kingdom because he is a Jew; and the Gentile is not excluded because he is a Gentile. The barbarian and the Scythian are as welcome there, as the most learned and refined. There is no difference between one and another, in the family of God; David on the throne, and the poorest inhabitant of Jerusalem, if a child of God, a true believer, were one in the Lord Jesus Christ; Christ is as much to the poor, as to the rich; as much to the ploughman, as to the king. David was a believer, and "Christ was all, and in all" to him, as He was to the poorest citizen of Jerusalem, that knew the Lord, and who perhaps scarcely knew how to live from day to day. Earthly distinctions obtain and prevail, and properly so, outside the kingdom of heaven, and of Jesus Christ; but within all are one in Christ Jesus the Lord. Have you not sometimes thought what a wonderful kingdom or state this is; it is a kingdom of kings. Think of that, and lose not sight of the fact, that all the subjects of grace are kings; for he hath made us kings and priests unto God. Who did that? He; even the Lord Jesus Christ, who "is all, and in all." All His subjects are princes, and priests, and brethren, and the family of the great God. There is no other kingdom like this; it stands alone, and differs in all respects from all the kingdoms of the earth; a royal kingdom, presided over by Jesus Christ who is King of kings, and Lord of lords, and by whom kings reign, and princes decree justice. My dear brethren, when grace brought you with trembling hearts and bruised consciences into the kingdom of Jesus Christ, you entered into it as princes. You do not quite believe this, that is not experimentally so. I tell you, however, the truth, whether you believe or not; you entered into the kingdom of Christ as princes, for it is a kingdom of kings and priests. They are all one in Christ, and bear His name; their life, their nature, and their state are one, and Christ is, not more to one than to another; and what He ever has been to His people, that He is to them now. There have been millions here to whom Christ was "all and in all," and there are thousands now living on earth, who experience the same great blessing. But, let us try to particularise a little.

First, *Christ is all in the whole of our salvation.* What is required in salvation? An infinitely great Saviour. Is there such a Person? Yes, one, and only one. Was and is He great enough to save all the millions written in the book before Him? Yes. Was He great and honourable enough for the Father's acceptance, as the Saviour of sinful men? Yes.

Was His character sufficiently great and glorious, to give validity and power to His solemn word? Yes; He pledged His word; gave His name; entered into covenant engagements, and bound Himself in the most solemn manner, to save all the objects of God's love, with an everlasting salvation. We want no other Saviour. The Pope, and cardinals, and priests, may remain where they are. There is no room whatever in God's salvation, for a second Saviour. Christ is all, personally and officially considered in our salvation. Then in salvation a perfect obedience is necessary. Is there such a thing in existence? Has the law been obeyed by this great Servant of the Lord? And is His obedience satisfactory? Entirely so; it covers the whole law, even all the ground. But is not the sinner to be obedient? Yes, surely he is to be obedient, and he will be so. Are not good works to be done by saved sinners? Of course they are; but keep them in their proper place, there is no room for them here; for as to merit and worth, "Christ is all, and in all. It is not His obedience and yours; not His life and yours; not His walk and yours united together; but His conversation, His life, and His obedience, that occupy the whole ground, and cover the whole of law; and more than Christ is not required for acceptance by the God of heaven. When Christ brought in His obedience, it was examined, and weighed, and measured; and the Father said, "I am well pleased with Thee, for Thy righteousness' sake, for Thou hast magnified the law, and made it honourable." In this obedient Christ, our dear Brother Hoddy rested, and on the obedience of his Lord he raised all his humble happy hopes for heaven, and wrapped in that justifying robe, he said as his poor heart was full of pain,* "Tell my pastor that 'Christ is all, and in all' to me." Then again, in, and for salvation, there must be suffering, and enough to meet all the requirements of Justice. Christ's sufferings are meritorious, and of infinite worth, for the dignity of the Sufferer is in His sufferings and His sorrows. Was He poor? His poverty was meritorious; ours is not. Was He persecuted? His sufferings as persecuted, were meritorious; ours are not; we deserve nothing for bearing persecution. Was Christ deserted by His Father? His sorrow then was meritorious. If God hides His face from us, we deserve nothing, even if we stand before Him without complaining. Christ, however, merited when He was in the dark, and deserved for us when He was persecuted. Through all the privations and poverty of His life, the dear Redeemer was infinitely worthy and meritorious. He brought all His invaluable sufferings to God, and put them into the scale of His justice, and they were declared sufficient, and well pleasing. And there is something more than an even balance, for by His sufferings Jesus deserves eternal life for His people; therefore, Christ is all, as to the suffering required. Is death necessary? There can be no salvation without it; and have we not the death of this great Being? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again. But how did He die? Voluntarily, the great God-man gave up the ghost. Did God die? We will not trouble ourselves with any needless criticisms on these points to-night, nor at any other time. He that died was Immanuel, God with us, and the majesty of Deity was inseparable from the death of our Lord. He died, not as a

* He died of disease of the heart.

mere man, but as the God-man ; and His death proved the end of all penal death and evil. And what then ? Are we to have no other person in salvation ? No ; not as to our acceptance by God. No other obedience, and no other sufferings, are required for our salvation. Are we not going to heaven in any degree, on account of our sufferings ? No, all is owing to those of incarnate God. Should we die in deep suffering and pain, we shall deserve nothing ; and God requires no merit whatever in us ; for Jesus died and obtained eternal redemption for us. " Christ is all, and in all." And then I might go to the grave, and what would that be without Him ! and I might try to go beyond the grave, for where is Jesus now ? Sitting at the right hand of God, and He is " all and in all," as seated there.

Again, look at the Holy Spirit ; for " Christ is all, and in all " the branches of His work. If I depart, I will send Him unto you, and if I do not depart, He will not come ; so that the very advent and presence of the Spirit, are owing to our Great Lord ; and therefore we may say, that the Holy Spirit works in and for Christ, in the hearts of those who are one with Him. He never works out of Jesus. There is nothing for Him to do savingly, out of Christ ; He always works in the Mediator, and for Him. He shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you, and if you and I have been taught by the Holy Ghost, we have been led to Jesus, and in proportion as we have been thus led and taught, are we prepared to say feelingly, " Christ is all, and in all," or as one is represented as having said, " I am a poor sinner, and nothing at all, and Jesus Christ is " all in all."

Then He is " all in all " the Word. For a minute, look at the types of the ceremonial dispensation ; " Christ is all, in all " them. If there is a kernel in every one of them, it is Christ ; and if there is life in them, He is that life. If there is a substantial meaning in these shadows, it is Jesus, our all. I have sometimes thought that when Abel offered the firstlings of the flock, the good man stood, as far as his body was concerned, on this side the altar, and the smoking victim, but his soul was on the other side. Abel's soul went beyond his typical sacrifice. He laid the victim on the altar ; fire gradually consumed it, and Abel's soul as a believer, went through the material signs, to the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. There was nothing in the victim to satisfy Abel, considered apart from Christ. That which satisfied the offerer was the Person signified by the victim—Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. Then look at the promises of the Gospel ; every one is full of Christ, and they are all in Him, and therefore they are sweet to the child of God. There is not an empty promise, nor one that contains anything different from the person, and work, and the grace and blessing of the Mediator. Take the promise, and if I may so speak, open it, or divide it into its component parts. Go into its interior, and enter into its very spirit, and you will find that Christ is in the whole, for He is all in all the promises of our God. In Him, they are all yea, and in Him amen, unto the glory of God by us ; also the doctrines of the gospel are the truth as it is in Jesus ; and that doctrine which you hold so tenaciously, which is not in Christ, is a false one, and the sooner you give it up the better ; for all the articles of faith, of which Jesus Christ

is not the fulness, will certainly leave you, or you must leave them. All the truths of grace are full of Christ the Lord. He is all in all the doctrines of grace; He is all in all the ordinances of God's house. When the pool is opened, and the servants of Jesus Christ follow their Lord, being baptized in the great name of God, nothing is felt, or enjoyed, and no substantial meaning can be attached to the seeming obedience of the saint, apart from Jesus Christ. He is all in believers' baptism, and He is all in the Lord's Supper. May He be all in all preacher's hearts, and all in all their sermons, especially in the day in which we live. Is He not all in this church? Oh that He may be experimentally all at all times, and in all the powers of the preacher's mind. Doctrinally, He is so, and with regard to my judgment He is so; but are there not times when I half forget this all glorious fact, that He "is all, and in all." I am never so happy as a man, as a saint, or as a minister, as when I lose the whole of my little self in the great and glorious Christ and God. You have heard our dear Brother Hoddy pray, and you know His peculiarity in that exercise. He had his own proper gift of God, and I am most sure that there were happy moments in the prayer-meeting, in his experience, when he lost himself as a petitioner in the glories of the Person, and the fulness of the dear Redeemer; then his words were peculiar, and his manner unusual, and we could not help feeling what we have since heard from good authority, even from her that knew and loved him well, that he lived very near to his Lord.

Let us in the second place *look at the subject as indicating the experience of the child of God.* "Christ is all, and in all," in the holy experience of believers. As to the experience of the saints, we may consider what Christ is in their estimation, and secondly, what He is in their realisation. What is Christ in the estimation of those who know Him? Do you say you have never received divine forgiveness? Perhaps not, my friend; you will receive it by and bye; it is ready for you. You say I have never been brought into liberty. Perhaps not; and I cannot open the door; if I could, you should remain in bondage no longer: but, you must remain in your present condition, until an infinitely greater one than a minister appears upon the scene. But though you have not received the pardon of your sins, nor been led into liberty, what is your estimation of the Saviour? What think ye of Christ? Well, if you put that question to me, I do believe with all my powers that He "is all, and in all," and that He is all I want. That is good. He is all you need, and all you desire. Why, you are where David was, when with regard to his experience on his dying bed, he said, "This is all my salvation, and all my desire, although He maketh it not to grow." If Christ is thus all in all in your estimation, you are as safe as David was, and will soon be as satisfied as he is now. But, advance a step further. What is He as to the realisation of true believers? Well, hear what the church says, "His head is as the most fine gold; His locks are bushy, and black as a raven; His countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars;" and having traced the excellencies of His person and character, from His head to His feet, embracing Him, she says, "This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O ye daughters of Jerusalem!" How many are there in the house of God to-night, that can use these words, and thus em-

brace the Saviour? "This is my Lord and my God." Do you want another Lord, or another salvation? No; "He is all, and in all" to you; all that you want, or can desire, for time, and for eternity, for life, and for death, you believe, is, and shall be found in your beloved Lord, for ever. But, let us consider the hope of the child of God. He is all in all the heavenly hopes of believers, and here are four or five points which should be mentioned. And first, there is The foundation of the believer's hope. Oh God, what is my hope? I remember the last time I visited our late Brother Milner, not long before he went to heaven; shaking hands with me, he said, "John, look to your foundation, and be sure you are right as to that." "My hope, Sir, is a happy one." Look to your foundation, my friend. You say, I do not know what I should do if I could not hope for heaven. Well, what is your hope based upon? The strength and duration of a house, you know, are to be measured by the foundation beneath it. And what is the foundation of your hope and mine? Well, let us sing, for we can,—

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

The foundation should be as large as the building, and Christ only is as extensive as the believer's hope. Build wholly on Him every year, and day, and hour of your life; for be assured that hope, however bright and brilliant it may be, that has not Christ for its foundation will crumble and die. And then, there is the object hope. Who is that? Christ is all, in this respect, not God in nature, not abstract Deity, but God in Christ. Oh, we rest and build upon Him, and all our hopes centre in His glorious Person and finished work. I might speak of the life of hope. Take Christ away and hope collapses and dies. Let Christ be connected with my hope and it will live until the moment of death, and not be destroyed nor crushed by burdens and crosses. And then, there is the fruition of hope. What will that be. I do not know and cannot tell you; for we must all die to know it. We hope day after day, and until the end, and then our hopes will be lost in all the bliss of being, and swallowed up in the full fruition and heaven of the Lord Jesus Christ. How sweet it will be when the candle of hope goes out, or when the little stream of hope loses itself in the great ocean of glory. The candle of hope go out? Yes, for hope is a kind of candle or lamp now, by which we are helped along on the road of life; but when we enter into heaven the great sun of that blessed and glorious world, that superior and mightier light will extinguish the candle, and hope will be lost for ever, in full possession of all.

In the third place, *take the text as a test*. There is nothing out of Him, all is in Him. Now, if you are a child of God, Jesus is all and in all to you; and if He is not so, allow me to say, I do not think He is at present anything to you. He is either, all or nothing. There is no room in your hope for a second Saviour nor for another salvation. "Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon the earth that I desire beside Thee." No: my character was formed by Jesus, and I can say with Toplady,—happy man, and happy woman if you can!

“Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling;
Naked, come to Thee for dress,
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;
Black, I to the fountain fly!
Wash me, Saviour, or I die:”

I want grace, I want a dress, I want to be washed, I want heavenly bread and wine; and all these are in Christ, who is all in all to me. We must, as time is going, pass over several other particulars. I thought I would have said that this glorious doctrine *simplifies divine mysteries*. How shall I illustrate this? Ye are complete in Him, or ye are made or filled full in Him. The idea is that Christ is the great sea, and all true believers as vessels are in Him and filled with Him. Thus they are complete in Him. When you draw water you raise the vessel with the water to carry it away. When the Holy Ghost conveys a sinner to Jesus Christ, He keeps him there and the saint is for ever filled with all the fulness of God, or complete in Him.

Lastly, this *indicates the blessedness of the saint in death*, especially when this sweet and heavenly fact is realized. Our dear brother was not permitted to drop many expressions during his dying hours or days. Such was the nature of his illness that he could not speak much; yet he said, “Tell him that Christ is all and in all.” A short time before he departed he said, “Christ is precious, and I am on the Rock of Ages.” But I do not think so much about the dying utterances of a saint, as about his life and conversation. It was Christ to our brother to live, and it was gain to him to die. I went to see our brother for a few minutes; he said, “Sit down, and speak to me for a few minutes, for I cannot talk. What in such a case could have been done had not the dear man’s peace with God been made. But if the body quivers, and the mind wanders, and is unable to fix itself upon anything special in a dying hour, “Christ is all and in all.” He knows the mind He has ransomed and saved. He takes possession of the soul in regeneration, and holds it fast for ever; and whatever ones dying circumstances may be, the text will apply to every true believer. And when we look down into the grave there is only one person in the universe that can reconcile us to it and that is Jesus, sometimes we think of it as a narrow, cold, dark place, but it is possible to be reconciled to that dusty bed, but this can be done by Jesus only; and soon when the heavens have passed away, and the elements have melted with fervent heat, the great white throne shall be seen and our great All in all shall appear thereon. Then will our brother rise again, and we shall rise also and meet the whole family of heaven, who will come up out of their graves, and all shall fix their immortal eyes upon their immortal Saviour, and realize the fact more fully than we can realize it here, that “Christ is all and in all.” The Lord command His blessing for Christ’s sake. Amen.

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THE FAULTLESSNESS OF CHRIST.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,
ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, 28th OCTOBER, 1883.

"And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in Him no fault at all."—John xviii. 38.

THESE words were addressed by Pilate to the Jews concerning the character and circumstances of the great Redeemer of sinners. The Lord Jesus had answered him, "Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice. Pilate saith unto Him, What is truth?" This is one of the most important questions that occur in the Word of God, or that can possibly arise in the human mind. The truth of God will engage the sanctified attention and powers of redeemed millions for ever. "What is truth?" Jesus Christ is personal truth; therefore He says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." All the truth, and grace, and purposes, and decrees of God are embodied in the glorious person of Immanuel; and the soul that embraces Him as the Saviour knows for himself the everlasting truth of God; therefore, Eternal Truth Himself stood before Pilate when the ruler said to Jesus, "What is truth?" And then there is the moral truth of God, embodied in His holy law, for God's Word is truth, and His law is a part of His Word; and it is holy, just and good. Jesus Christ is personal truth, the law of God is preceptive truth, and the gospel of God is doctrinal, sovereign, saving truth. Every gospel doctrine is truth, and the promises express God's truth in other forms. Promises are Divine obligations, or, if you will, God's engagements, by which He has bound Himself to take particular courses with regard to the welfare and salvation of His people. One promise covers all the ground: "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee;" and hence, thousands of saints have safely wended their way through this waste howling wilderness to a better world. Many things have been withheld from them, and many blessings once conferred have been withdrawn, and fiends and foes have molested and surrounded them; yet this promise of God has never failed, and He has never ceased to fulfil His Word. Divine grace in the heart of a saint is experimental truth. The principle of eternal life is rooted in them, and if we are possessors of grace, we possess God's truth. Truth is a living reality, an operating power; and thus, whilst there is truth in Christ for the Christian, there is also truth in the Christian for Christ and for the eternal God. We have truth subjectively in the believer, and objectively in the glorious Saviour. The law agrees with

the principles of truth in the Christian's heart, and they also are in perfect harmony with the doctrinal and promissory truth of God. And then the believer desires to walk according to the requirements of God's holiness. He desires to live soberly, and righteously, and godly, in this present world; and his conversation, so far as it harmonizes with the Word, is practical truth; and thus we have truth in the life of God's children. And then, further, we have the ordinances of the gospel, for God is a God of order, and there are at least three or four ordinances, two of which are baptism and the Lord's-supper. Prayer is a Divine institution, and preaching is an ordinance appointed by our God. Baptism and the Lord's-supper are symbolical truth, representing the sufferings, and blood, and death, and resurrection of the glorious Christ of God. The question, therefore, which Pilate put to Jesus was, thus considered, a very important one; for everything connected with the sufferings and death of the Saviour is important to all concerned in eternal redemption. All those circumstances are important to God, and to Satan, and to every saved sinner, and will be interesting and important to us in heaven for ever. God was manifested in the flesh; for when Judas with a band of men met the Lord Jesus in the garden, the Saviour said, "Whom seekest thou?" and they answered and said, "Jesus of Nazareth;" and the Master replied, "I am He," and having told them that He was Jesus of Nazareth, we are told, the company went back and fell to the ground. In Jesus of Nazareth, there was Divine Majesty, and although He was about to be surrounded by a multitude of enemies, His arm was long enough and strong enough to crush them all, and sweep them away had it been His will and pleasure. But He came to bleed, to die, and to give Himself up without a murmuring word. Therefore, "He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth." Pilate having had conversation with the Saviour went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, "I find in Him no fault at all." These are not the words of a good man, they are not the words of God, they are not the words of Jesus Christ, and they are not the words of the Holy Ghost; but the words of Pontius Pilate, a wicked man; nevertheless they express a great fact, and upon this glorious truth I want to make a few remarks this morning.

In the first place, let us contemplate the text, *as asserting a fact*. There was then no fault at all in the Saviour, and there is none in Him now, and there will be none in Him on the throne of Glory for ever. Let us apply this, in the first place, to *His glorious Person*, for there is no fault in Him in this respect. I do not know how the two natures of our adorable Lord are united, yet they are united, and they constitute Him one great Mediator and Saviour. Humanity is not deified by its union to God, and Deity is not humanised by its connexion with humanity. As we have just expressed ourselves in our hymn of praise, Jesus Christ is a real man, having a human soul, and human sympathy, and all that are in Him, are interested in all the love of that perfect man, and in all the love of the great and glorious God in Him; and hence they are interested in the love of this complex Person, who is without fault, and whose perfection is unalterable and eternal. Now it must not be for-

gotten for this is a very important fact, that whilst *we* were all in Adam he did not represent the glorious Son of God. Christ was not in Adam seminally nor federally, and hence He brought no corruption and no sin with Him into this world. David said of himself and the words are true of every son and daughter of Adam, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me." Christ was not born in sin; He was not shapen in iniquity, and His mother did not conceive Him in sin. That holy thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of the Highest. The birth of the Saviour was a Divine miracle, and it will be regarded as such by millions for ever.

"His life was pure without a spot,
And all His nature clean."

I need not say a word as to the faultless purity of His Divine nature; but, perhaps, too much cannot, on certain occasions, be said as to the faultlessness of His human nature. Addressing the people He was surrounded by, He said, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" He was delivered for our offences, but He knew no sin Himself. His human nature was absolutely and unchangeably perfect and pure. He was pure naturally, and without sin inherently. It is possible to put that which is impure and vile into a vessel which is pure and excellent. This was not, however, the case with the Lord Jesus Christ. His humanity was pure, and no sin was ever communicated to Him, and no fault was ever discovered in Him. His every thought was divinely accepted, His every feeling was transparent and perfect, and all His motives were approved of His Father. Satan aimed at and smote Him, and cast his abominable temptations at Him, and that for forty days and nights; but He came out of the conflict without a fault, stain, or a blot. Is there another person in the whole world that has done so? Satan tempted Abraham and Jacob, and left a mark upon them both; he tempted David, and left a mark upon his character, which now appears on his portrait as it is drawn in the Divine Word; he aimed at Peter and smote him, and left a stain upon him also; but our great and glorious Immanuel entered into the conflict and fought with all the powers of hell, and came out of the field a glorious conqueror, and God found no fault in Him, and no stain upon Him. This is the God we love, the Saviour on whom we lean, and the dear Friend whose character constitutes the foundation of our hope, and all our spiritual expectations. And then our Christ was without sin as to the objects of His life. He aimed at nothing but the honour and glory of His Father, and the salvation of His beloved people; and, blessed be His name, He has accomplished His will, fulfilled His purposes, saved countless millions, and will receive their praises and ascriptions of glory for ever and ever.

We might notice in the next place, *the official faultlessness of the Saviour*. Personally considered, He is without fault as to His nature and His character. A blot upon Him, and our salvation would have been impossible; and a stain upon His name would leave it impossible for lost and ruined sinners to rest a confident hope upon Him. But He is without fault; therefore,

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

As to His official position, consider His priestly character, for instance; and He appears through the whole of His course without fault. Aaron was the first Jewish High Priest, and he was followed by some good and great men, as he was by others whose character was bad. Aaron, the High Priest is called the saint of the Lord, but he was not without fault, neither were those that followed him; hence, they offered, first for their own sins, and then for the sins of the people. Aaron first offered for himself, for he was a sinful man; but when our great Priest appeared, He was without fault or stain, and had contracted no guilt. He came to offer a sacrifice, not for Himself, but for others, and when He presented Himself as a sacrifice to God, He was accepted on account of His worthiness and dignity. Peter, in the first chapter of his epistle, says, “Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things such as silver and gold, from your vain conversation, received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” The blood of animals shed under the Jewish dispensation was neither precious nor powerful, but the blood of Jesus Christ is both, because it is the blood of a faultless character, even of incarnate God. When that blood was shed and that sacrifice was offered to God, a cloud of fragrance entered into heaven which pleased Jehovah well, and concerning which He has said, “I smell a sweet savour of rest.” All this is the result of the faultlessness and spotlessness of the Lamb of God. The Father would not have entered into engagements with His Son, had He not had unlimited and unbounded confidence in Him; and the engagements and promises of the Son of God would not have been accepted had not His character been perfect and complete. My dear friends, hold fast the perfection of your Lord, for your perfection depends on His. His person and character are the rock upon which your salvation rests. Christ Jesus is a refuge to all that put their trust in Him. The saints in all ages have ever held Him up, and held Him fast as without fault, and on the occasion to which the text refers, a wicked man, was by the power of providence and by the omnipotence of grace, forced to say, “I find no fault in Him.” I have examined Him, I was willing to find faults, and I looked for them, and not for perfection. He conversed with, and tried and examined Him, and his testimony was that He was perfect; or “I find in Him no fault at all.”

In Christ we have a perfect substitute for sinners. Nothing shall be lost to God or man by salvation. The dear Redeemer being perfect, was able to meet the claims of Justice, and save all whom He represented. We do our best under trying, embarrassing, and afflicting circumstances; and when we have so done, we are frequently disappointed. Our best does not meet the requirements of the case. But our great and glorious Immanuel was infinitely able and willing to cover the whole ground. Here is a faultless Substitute and a faultless Sacrifice, resulting in a faultless salvation, which shall terminate in the eternal happiness and glory of millions. May we be found among them, before the throne of God in heaven.

In the second place, let us look at the subject *as expressing the experience of God's people*. Does the faultlessness of the Saviour express the experience of the church of God? Well, I think so. Take one view, or one branch of their experience, namely, sore affliction, and Divine help therein. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." Now, my dear friends, with regard to help, has He not helped us hitherto? I know many of you have been in deep trouble, and in fierce fires, and that your disappointments have been numerous and withering. Has not God withdrawn from you some of your sweetest comforts and richest joys? Have you not been bowed down by heavy crosses and terrible loads and burdens? But having obtained help of God you continue until now. It is a mercy that we cannot foresee the future; for I am sure that if some of you could have foreseen what you have passed through you, would have shrunk from it, and said it will crush and destroy us. But you gradually entered into all the appointed sorrows and afflictions, and as you were weighed and bowed down, and almost overcome, a sufficient measure of help gradually came, from day to day, and from hour to hour; and now, sitting in the house of God this morning, you are prepared to say, Though faint, we are still pursuing. Help has always reached you from Christ, who has never manifested any imperfection. The nature of the help He has afforded has always indicated the wisdom of the Helper, and the plenitude of His grace has always demonstrated the love of His heart. The help you received was not at the time, it may be, quite pleasant and agreeable to your feelings or in harmony with your wishes, but you have since lived to prove that the means with which you were divinely assisted, under the trying circumstances of life were the outcome of the arrangements of the infinite wisdom of God. Then again, with regard to the measure of help you have received. A person may come to his friend, and the help he brings may be of the right kind; but he may not bring enough. Has there been any fault in this respect, in the overruling of your affairs by the Lord? Has there ever been any fault in Jesus, as to the sufficiency of His blessing? No, He has always been near with the right kind of help, and with a sufficiency of His grace and mercy. My God shall supply all your need, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. He is God, and He can do it; He is our God, and He will do it; having connected our salvation with His own honour, He will do it, according to the riches of His glory by Christ Jesus. Then, further, as to this help Christ has never failed in relation to time, for He is a very present help in trouble. If one may speak for others, we want help and power for the future before we enter into it. This is not God's method, nor the arrangement which infinite wisdom has made. We must gradually descend into the river, and as gradually receive help from the Lord our God. He is present in every time of need. If I may so express myself, there is not a dead sheep or lamb in all the flock of Immanuel, or in the fold over which He presides. Dead saints have not been found in the road that leads to heaven. All, whose faces have ever been turned towards Zion have been protected, preserved and blessed by the dear Redeemer, and we are ready to sing now,

"His love in times past, forbids me to think,
He'll leave me at last in trouble to sink."

Thus with regard to help received from heaven, you know by experience that He is faultless. He has ever manifested His eternal pity, purity, and perfection. Then a child of God goes forward and passes *through* his trial, for it is not all unmixed trouble, affliction and sorrow here. We thank the Lord for the sacred pleasures of religion, and for the joys of the Holy Ghost. It is, however, through much tribulation, we must enter the kingdom; and I am thinking of some of my beloved friends who are present, and of others who are absent, who have passed through trials, and found themselves standing again in a large and wealthy place. They feel that they have experienced the fact expressed in the text, and that they ought to declare that Christ has dealt with them in a manner that indicates the infinite depths of His love, and the eternal perfection of His knowledge and wisdom; that, in fact, they can find no fault in Him. Some of you are not experimentally in a state of liberty—Guilt is in your conscience, you are burdened, and bowed down, and bound, and you are afraid that yours is not the spot of the children of God. Nevertheless, you live, or try to live in the holiest of all, and upon the knee of prayer, looking and longing for an application of the atonement of the Saviour. Well, my dear friend, shortly the veil shall be lifted, the fetters removed, the prison doors be opened, and you shall be brought forth into the enjoyment of that liberty wherewith Christ has made His people free. But some of you have been brought out of bondage into liberty. You have been delivered from guilt and condemnation, and are standing as justified persons before God, and what is your opinion of the Saviour? I know the experience of such persons, for I trust that I have tasted that the Lord is gracious? Do you not see a thousand glories in His person, and excellencies in His character?

"Could I command the spacious land,
And the more boundless sea;
For one blest hour at Thy right hand
I'd give them both away."

I have sometimes observed here, that these words ought to be used very thoughtfully and sincerely; for the spacious land is valuable, and so is the more boundless sea. Why, the riches of the sea and land are vast. Do you mean what you say? Have you well weighed the matter? Is it a fact, that for one blest hour at the Saviour's right hand, you would give them both away? If so, you estimate Him highly, and Jesus is precious to your souls.

In the third place, *the text is the testimony of an enemy*. Satan at the last day shall acknowledge that He is Lord of all, and without fault; for unto Him every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess. The greatest enemy of our Lord shall see at that day, if not before, that there is no fault in His character, and none in His gracious and providential government. I am thankful that the Holy Spirit has been pleased to make this declaration known, recording it in the Word. It was forced, if I

may so speak, from the enemies of Jesus, our Lord. "I find," said Pilate, "in Him no fault at all." But go to the bed-side of a dying saint, and some of you have been there, and had conversation with them a few minutes before they left this world for eternal glory. I remember a conversation I had with a very old saint, not far from here, during the last hours of her life; and she said, "You know I have had severe trials, and have passed through deep troubles; I am, however, now at this moment quite prepared to say, that I would not have anything altered with regard to the government of Jesus, if I might: all has been well and right." "He leads His people by the right way to a city of habitation. We shall find no fault in Him, as to the way. And the circumstances of life are right so far as He presides over and connects them together and makes use of them. How can it be otherwise? The evil He will overrule, and that which He hates He will restrain and check. The appointed events of time He will so connect together by His own wisdom, grace and power, that when we are at the end of the way, and review the whole, we shall be constrained to say with all the saints, there was no fault in His arrangements. The way is right, the circumstances are right, and the end, my friends, will be right. All will come right at last; nay, all is right now, for "all things work together for good to them that love God, and are the called according to His purpose." And it will be divinely right at the end; the pains will be right, if there should be dying strife and groans, as Pope speaks of death. Should we go suddenly or not, a few do so depart; it must be in some respects the most agreeable way of passing through the flood, and should we go suddenly, it will be right. Should it be now, or in a few years time, all will be right. The blow that snaps the tie, the flight of the soul to heaven, and its immersion in all the glory of God, will be right; for He does all things well. He has done so in creation, He is doing so in Providence, and He is doing so as a Saviour; and the burden of our song in heaven will be, "He has done all things well;" for we shall "find no fault in Him at all." This is the testimony—not only of enemies and of sinners saved by His grace, but the Father declares the same fact. "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye Him." And when our Lord placed His righteousness before Him, the Father said, "I am well pleased with Thee, for Thy righteousness' sake; for Thou hast magnified the law and made it honourable." Therefore, Christ was raised from the dead, and angels

"Brought His chariot from the skies,
To bear Him to His throne;
Clapped their triumphant wings and cried,
The glorious work is done!"

He was under the abominable sins of His people, and bore them all away into the land of oblivion and forgetfulness; and then He returned to His Father unstained and undamaged, there was "no fault in Him at all."

In the next place, *the general influence of this fact*, namely, that Christ is spotless and perfect. It gives a character to the whole of His work, to His precious blood, and to that righteousness which justifies the un-

godly. The righteousness of the saints is represented as fine linen, clean and white. It is a spotless robe, a robe that can never be soiled; a robe that is large enough to cover the greatest sinner, and so perfect and complete that it will please God for ever and ever. This robe so glorious is cast upon the sinner, who thus appears without spot before the throne of God. Adam was without fault in the Garden of Eden; but he was not immutable, not incapable of committing sin. Jesus was without fault, and it was simply impossible that He could commit a sin. He was unchangeable in the perfection of His character; had He not been so, Old Testament saints had not been admitted into heaven before His death. He gave His word, however, before He came into the world, for their eternal salvation and glory; and the Father having unbounded confidence in Him, admitted probably millions into heaven, before the blood was actually shed. They were accepted as clothed in that obedience which had not actually been rendered; as washed in that blood which had not actually been shed, and as saved by that salvation which was in the future. This Christ is ours, and this righteousness wrought out and brought in is ours.

“The Spirit wrought my faith and love,
And hope, and every grace;
But Jesus spent His life to work
The Robe of Righteousness.”

This righteousness is sneered at in the day in which we live, and I have heard of its having been called the “Antinomian rag.” I have no sympathy with Antinomianism, and I am thankful that my conscience, my Bible, and my God never allow me to speak of Christ’s righteousness as a rag. I am obliged to speak of my own as filthy rags, which I hope have been removed, and that I stand before God in that spotless robe of the faultless Saviour of my soul. The Father finds no fault in Him. The worth of His person and character is in His righteousness and salvation. Dear friends, are you looking to Him and leaning upon Him? The time shall come when you shall be personally perfect; for the faultlessness of Jesus casts its influence into the future. He is a faultless Head and will have a faultless Church; He is a faultless Saviour and will have faultless followers for ever. Oh, it will be blessed to be without fault! Christ is supremely blest, and infinitely happy; for there is no fault in Him, and when there is none in you and me, we, like our Lord, shall be happy. It is our faultiness, our guilt, and our sin that cause us grief and misery, and sorrow now. When all our stains are removed and gone, and we are without spot before the throne of God, and like our Lord, we shall for ever sing; for there shall be no more pain. “I find no fault in Him at all.” May the Lord command His blessing, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

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LIBERTY THROUGH THE LORD THE SPIRIT.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, 30th DECEMBER, 1883.

“Now the Lord is that Spirit : and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” 2 Cor. iii. 17.

MANY of the Jews in the days of the Lord Jesus and of His apostles, were dispersed among the nations of the Gentiles, and where a few of them resided, they as a rule built synagogues. Hence there were synagogues in Damascus, in Corinth, and in other places, and perhaps this fact accounts for the character of the chapter out of which we have taken our text. The apostle here contrasts the Jewish dispensation with the present one,—the law with the gospel, and the stones upon which the law was written, with the fleshy tables of the hearts of God's people, upon which God the Spirit writes the laws of grace, and life, and love. He contrasts Moses with the Lord Jesus Christ; and the types of the law of the former, with the superior spirituality and glory of the gospel of the latter, saying, “If that ministration was glorious, how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious?” Yea, that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth.” The former was so glorious, that when Moses descended from the mount with the tables of God in his hand, having received a charge from the mighty God of Israel, his face shone so brightly that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look upon him. He himself was unconscious of the glory which he brought down with him from God, and when he saw the people shade their eyes and look with difficulty at his face, he took a veil and covered himself; and the apostle spiritualises that circumstance, and says, “The people could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished; but, even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their hearts. That veil, however, he says, “is done away in Christ; and when it shall turn to the Lord.” And what does the apostle refer to? “When *it* shall turn to the Lord.” Does he mean the heart? Perhaps he does. Does he not rather mean the nation of the Jews; the Jews as a body, when *it* shall turn, or be turned to the Lord, “the veil shall be taken away.” “Now the Lord is that Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”

Let us make a few observations in the first place, upon *the glorious Person indicated*. “Now the Lord is that Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” Perhaps it is not wise for ministers to enter into critical matters in the pulpit, and yet I may be permitted to say that a considerable difference of opinion exists among commentators,

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and good and great men, as to the Spirit mentioned here. "The Lord is that Spirit." Many godly and gracious men, whose regenerated souls are now in heaven, believed when they were here that the Lord Jesus Christ Himself is referred to, rather than the third Person in the glorious Trinity, as if we might read it thus: "The Lord Jesus Christ Himself is that Spirit, and where He is, there is liberty." They have said, Christ must be the Person referred to, on account of what precedes this verse. Besides, Christ Himself said in the days of His flesh, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words which I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." And again we read, "The first Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening Spirit," and "If the Son shall make you free, then are ye free indeed." Putting those portions of the Word together, and comparing spiritual things with spiritual, some good men have believed that the Lord Jesus Christ is this Spirit. Well, I shall not insist upon that. Where Christ is, there, if I may so speak, we may always see the Spirit; for it is said, "God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba Father!" I shall, therefore, regard the Spirit mentioned in my text as the Holy Ghost. Where the Holy Spirit is, the third Person as He is termed in the glorious Trinity, there is spiritual liberty. Let us in the first place, consider the Holy Spirit as a *Person*. Although I do not suppose that Unitarians come to hear me, yet it may however tend to confirm us in the faith, if we tarry here a minute or two, and contemplate the Spirit of God as a Person. You know He is regarded in certain quarters as an emanation from Deity, or from Jehovah. He is regarded as an excellency, as a quality; but not as a person. Our great Redeemer, however, represented Him as a person. Take the following facts. Personal names are ascribed to Him. He is represented as performing personal operations, and personal circumstances are frequently connected with Him. First, personal names are ascribed to the eternal Spirit. Personal pronouns are employed to indicate the Holy Ghost, and hence when He is mentioned the pronouns "He" and "Him," and "Me" are used. "When *He*, the Spirit of Truth is come, He will guide you into all truth, for *He* shall not speak of Himself, but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak." Now, surely that pronoun would not have been applied so frequently to a mere emanation, or stream of power, a mere excellency, or property, or quality. Again we find the Holy Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles, speaking to the early church, separate Me Barnabas and Paul, for the work whereunto I have called them." There we have the pronouns "I" and "Me" again. The church obeyed the voice of God; Paul and Barnabas were set apart for a special work, and they laid their hands upon them and sent them away." That is all I will say on this branch of the subject, because I want to reach the privilege of liberty as early as possible.

In the next place, personal operations are ascribed to the Holy Spirit. Works are spoken of in connection with Him, which can be performed by a person only. Take for instance, and let this suffice this morning—Paul's words on the eighth chapter of his epistle to the Romans: "But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies

by His Spirit, that^{er} dwelleth in you, so that the Spirit dwells in the mortal bodies of the saints, and will at the last day have a most important part in quickening them, and by His power they will be thoroughly, perfectly, and satisfactorily conformed to the Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit now dwells within, and He quickens the saints ; and is this to be affirmed of an emanation or of a person ? Again, He beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God. Surely the testimony given as to so important a matter must be that of a person, and not of a mere name or stream of power. Yes, the eternal Spirit is a Person, and one of the three glorious persons in the essence of God. We cannot tell how these three are one, or how this one great God subsists in a trinity of persons, and I am glad we cannot, and that it will for ever remain a mystery. Then personal circumstances are ascribed to the Holy Spirit. Your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Spirit dwells in you. A savage dwells in a cave ; a peasant in a cottage ; a person in comfortable circumstances in a villa ; a nobleman in a mansion ; a king or queen in a palace ; but gods dwell in temples, and the residence of the true God has always been called a temple. The magnificent building that stood on Zion in Jerusalem, was a temple because it was God's house ; God's rest and God's residence. Houses built for men, however great and costly they may be, are not temples. Now, know ye not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost. If these observations hold true, and the Holy Ghost dwells in our bodies, and they are in consequence thereof temples, then this great Inhabitant is God.

In the next place He is represented not only as a person but as a *divine person*. He is infinitely above all the creatures God's hands have made. He is a divine Person as the Father is, and as the Son is ; and though He is generally mentioned last, and so called the third Person in the Trinity : occasionally He is mentioned first, and sometimes in the middle of the three. He is equal with the Father and the Son, in dignity, greatness, and glory, possessing all the attributes which the Father and the Son possess. He is a divine Person, and hence separate Me Paul and Barnabas. But in addition to this He is emphatically styled God. When Ananias went into the temple and laid down a certain sum of money, and declared that was all his land had fetched, Peter said, "Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie unto the Holy Ghost ;" and then a little lower down, "Thou," he said, "hast not lied unto men but unto God," therefore the person against whom Ananias and Sapphira lied was divine. In one place He is said to be the Holy Ghost, and in the next place He is represented as God Himself. "Now where this Spirit of the Lord is there is, liberty." But He occupies an *official position in the economy of mercy, or the covenant of grace*. He enters not, if I may so speak, into the position of the Father, nor into the office of the Son. These three are one as to purpose, will and power, but they occupy different departments and positions in the covenant of mercy. It was not the Spirit's work to impute sin to the Saviour, nor to mix the terrible cup which was presented to Him in Gethsemane ; "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it ?" It was not the Spirit's work to assume our nature, nor to suffer for sin, nor to make

an atonement for it ; neither was it the work of the Father to do this. This was the work of the Son, and blessed be His name, He did it, and did it like a God, and is now glorified in consequence thereof. But it is the work of the Holy Spirit to sanctify the soul, to quicken it into spiritual life, to conform the sinner to the Lord Jesus Christ ; for we are predestinated by the Father to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren ; and the Spirit conforms us to the image of Jesus. The Father predestinated the people to be like His Son. Jesus is the great model and pattern that all are to resemble, and the Person by whom sinners like you and me are brought to resemble Christ, is the Spirit of the living God. He enters the heart and quickens it, and gives a new life to the mind, hence we read of the renewing of the Holy Ghost, by which He conforms sinners in some measure, to the Son of God. Therefore the Spirit is a Person, a divine Person, and He occupies an official position in the covenant of grace.

Lastly, *His Person, presence, and operations, are essential to salvation and consolation.* The Father has loved us with an everlasting love, but that will not take us to heaven if not followed by other facts. Jesus has bought us with His blood, having given Himself for us ; but that will not take us to heaven separated from other operations. We must be interested in the Father's love and in the Son's atonement, but if nothing more be done for us, we shall never see the face of God with joy. We must be sanctified by the Holy Ghost, and be brought by Him into vital union with the Lord of life and glory. The Word of God must be engrafted in our hearts by the Holy Spirit's power, and we must in fact be really and experimentally new creatures in the Lord Jesus Christ. "Ye are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them." And then as to consolation, I know there is one person in the chapel this morning that is experimentally acquainted with this fact, that the presence of the Spirit is essential to consolation, and that is the preacher. I could as soon command the sun to shine at midnight, as create a drop of real spiritual comfort and consolation in my own heart. When I am wounded spiritually, no hand but that of the Spirit can heal me ; when I am sorrowful, as to eternal things, no power but that of the Spirit can wipe my tears away ; and when I am bowed down and distressed, I may read the Word, and do a hundred things if possible, but I cannot strengthen myself. I am as dependent for strength, and comfort, and consolation upon the Holy Spirit, as I am upon the Son for precious blood, and for an everlasting atonement for sin. Therefore the presence of the Spirit is essential to salvation and comfort.

In the second place, *the fact asserted.* "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. Where is He ? And how is it there is liberty in His presence ? There is liberty where the Spirit of the Lord is, *because He always follows the atonement.* Where the blood of Christ is, there shall and must be power. Since Christ has suffered, the Holy Ghost must appear, and the atonement must be applied to the persons for whom it was made. The blood of Christ follows the Father's love, and the Holy Spirit's power follows the Saviour's

blood. Christ's blood set us free legally; it took us out of the hands of punitive justice, and released us from the curse; and Christ having done that, said, "I will send the Spirit, and He shall take of Mine and show it unto you." Having been delivered by Christ from condemnation, the Holy Ghost comes into the place where that great work was done, and His presence indicates liberty; and hence Paul says, "He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified, whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us." Moreover, He is the Spirit of adoption; and therefore "Thou art no more a servant, but a son:" or no more a bondman; for frequently in the Word, a servant means a slave or a bondman. Thou art no more a bondman, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. "And because ye are sons"—not to make you so, but because ye are sons,—God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, "Abba Father!" and hence we have the liberty of children. The servant enters into the presence of his master, and on particular occasions, and under certain circumstances, he has a right to do so; but a servant's right to enter into the master's presence is not like the right of a son. O for the Spirit of adoption, to bear witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God! O for the sweet power of the Holy Ghost, to lead us into the holiest of all, and to help us, when on the knee of prayer, in all the holy and humble confidence of faith to address God as our God and Father. Well, He is the Spirit of adoption. But where is He? for where He is, there is liberty. To begin at the beginning, as to our text, He is in the gospel dispensation. This must not be lost sight of, for it is one of the leading facts of this chapter. He is in the gospel, which is therefore the law of liberty. There is liberty from the ceremonial law. There is now no distinction of meats and drinks, and no necessary distinction between one day and another. One man regardeth a certain day, and another regards it not. All this is immaterial. We are perfectly free in relation to times and seasons, and meats, and drinks. The Lord is that Spirit, and where He is, there is dispensational liberty. We have not now to offer lambs and goats, pigeons and turtle-doves. It is not now necessary that we should go up to Jerusalem, or to any other central place to worship God. A spirit prevails in the day in which we live; may the Lord destroy it in His time—it is doing much mischief. I mean ritualism, which is a combination of paganism, and Judaism, and a little, a very little of Christianity, just merely its name. This spirit does now prevail, but bless the God of heaven and earth, we are free, having been liberated from all that kind of bondage. To Moses we now owe nothing. Obedience to the ceremonial law is not now demanded; that yoke has been taken off the necks of all God's dear people, and the whole church of God are free, in consequence of the more copious out-pouring of the Holy Spirit, in connection with the Gospel dispensation; for where He is there is liberty." Where is He? He is among Gentile nations, and among them rather than with the Jews. God appears to have withdrawn His presence for awhile from the Jews, and to have connected it with the Gentiles. Not that there is much of the Spirit in Spain or in France, or in some of parts of Switzerland and other places. I thank God that I may believe there is a merciful measure of the Holy Spirit in this country. England

is a sinful land, and the wickedness of the nation rises up to heaven, being daring, bold, and fearful; but much of the salt of the earth, and many of the pillars of the earth are here. That which has sustained Her Majesty's throne, and given a permanence and a glory to her reign, has not been altogether the excellency of our statesmen, nor our wooden, or iron walls, as they may now be called, nor our military power; but the fact that there has been, and is much of the Holy Ghost in the land, in thousands of men and women, who, knowing the plague of their hearts, and the excellency of the Saviour, and the worth of salvation, carry the country with them into the presence of the God of heaven, when they pray. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." But to come still closer, and you say you must come closer to us than that,—He is in this dispensation, therefore we have dispensational liberty. He is among the Gentiles, therefore many poor sinners here know this liberty; but He is in the heart, and when this is the case, there is liberty. Christ is formed in you. Who formed Him there? The Holy Spirit. Then He must have been in the heart Himself. Just so. But you say, His grace is there, for He drops His blessing into the soul. But He Himself is there. Do not forget that He has not merely written His name and left the premises; He has not merely given you a little grace and left you. "Know ye not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, and that God dwelleth in you." "He who hath begun a good work in you, will perform it, unto the day of Jesus Christ." The workman is where he carries on his work; and the Holy Ghost dwells and works within. Christ formed in the heart, the hope of glory. Well, then, you say, "If that is so, I am out of the secret; I am a hypocrite. If where the Spirit of God is, there is liberty, He is not in me; I am in bondage." Do not go too fast. Where the Spirit is there is some measure, some degree of liberty. Are you still in midnight darkness? Are you still seeking death in the error of your ways? Do the world, the devil, and sin hold you fast? and are you rolling sin as a sweet morsel under your tongues? and are you found among and in sympathy with those who are saying, "Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways." "Oh no! a thousand times, no; that is not our condition; such are not our feelings." You have been set free, my friends, and are experiencing a measure of liberty. Your eyes have been opened, and you have been liberated from darkness and bondage. You have been set free from death, and the love of Jesus has set you free from the love of sin, for "where the Spirit is, there is liberty." Do not expect to leap to the top of the high mountain at once. This liberation is a progressive work. Expect not, therefore, to get into full liberty till the Spirit leads you there. Bless the Lord that you are not in slavery, and bless Him that you are not in bondage as the dead in trespasses and sins are there. "But,"—Yes, my friend, I know. You are in the wilderness, and the Spirit of God is there, and therefore liberty is there. There are three points to be noticed. Yonder is Canaan; there is Egypt; and between the two countries lies the wilderness. When Israel had left Egypt, they were free if not happy. God Himself had liberated them; they were in a desert, a waste howling wilderness; but they were not bondmen; they were not like worldly men now, who talk of freedom and liberty, but have as many masters as they

have lusts ; as many lords as there are worldly influences prevailing over them. The child of God is free, having one Master, and one only, even the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh it is better to be free in the wilderness than to be in bondage in a palace, though one wears glittering robes, possesses gold and silver, and occupies a high place. Give me freedom, give me liberty, and, if the Lord will, competency therewith, and palaces with their bondsmen and bondswomen, may go for me. Liberty in the wilderness means the presence of the Holy Ghost, and the certainty of the full enjoyment of it, in the Canaan that is to come.

Now a word in the next place *on the privilege itself*: liberty. Set free, as I have already indicated from the reigning, tyrannising and destructive power of sin, for ever free from that. Is the enmity of your heart against Christ destroyed ? "Yes." You are free. Are you in total darkness ? "No, I know and feel myself to be a sinner, and that unless I am saved by the blood and righteousness of Jesus, I never can reach heaven." You are free. The chains of ignorance that held you in darkness, have been broken. Are you prejudiced against the people of God ? "Oh bless the Lord, the only evidence I have at times is that given by John,—'We know we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.' And that is a comfort to me." Do you love sin ? "Oh !" said one, "I know not how to explain it, but I was a sinner before I was saved. and now I am saved I am still a sinner. What is the difference then, if a sinner, before calling and after it ?" The difference is this. Before we were called by grace we ran after sin ; but having been called, we now flee from it, and sin follows us. Sin used to carry us, and it conveyed us into strange conditions and places ; but now we carry sin, or a body of sin and death. Well, here is a measure of liberty, set free from ignorance, free from enmity, free from the love of sin, and from its reigning power. But here is the tug of war. "The Spirit lusteth against the flesh, and the flesh against the Spirit." We are free to fight and overcome through the blood of the Lamb, and the Word of God. Free to come to Jesus also. "Oh that is one of the easiest things in the world, sir, as almost everyone preaches, 'Come to Christ, come to Christ.' " What tantalisation is here ! A poor wretch, tied and bound, and invited to leave his position and come. Untie the cords, or remove the chain, and set him free, and then invite him, and He will come. See a poor sinner dead in sins, held fast by the devil, urged to come to Jesus. He cannot, and he will not, for he does not want Him. Cut the chains and set him free, and give him to see himself a lost, ruined sinner. Then the words are music, "Come unto Me all ye that are weary;" then being set free, he comes and falls before Him, and puts his case into His outstretched hands. The saved sinner is at liberty to follow the Lord. "These are they that follow the Lamb, whithersoever He goeth." These persons are then free to bow before the throne, and sometimes to say, "My Father, and my God." He is at liberty to enter the church, which none but saints should enter, while no saints should be outside ; and free to say, "This people shall be My people, and their God shall be My God." It comes to this, therefore ; such persons are free, not only from the reign, and love, and power of sin, they are free from the curse of the law ; from the punitive justice of the eternal God, and sometimes from the fear of death. Do you not

fear the future? If not, you have a large measure of the Spirit. Are you not afraid to die? One says "No; for where the Spirit of the Lord is, there may be liberty, from the fear of death. Grace sometimes comes into the heart so sweetly, that it carries away even that fear. Liberty to live, to live well, to live high, and to live for ever. Liberty to live near to God, to have fellowship and communion with Him, to come into His presence wherever circumstances so press, that they need His helping and sustaining hand.

In the next place, we have here, *a peculiar experience*. That experience which results from the indwelling of the Spirit of liberty must be so. Liberty in prayer, yes! and in preaching also. Brethren, pray that I may have liberty in the pulpit, and also that you may have liberty in prayer. Oh the difference between praying in the Spirit, and praying in our own strength! What bondage! what contractedness of heart! how shut up and bound we are, in the absence of the Holy Ghost! When He comes He helps our infirmities. Another circumstance is ascribed to Him: "for we know not how we should pray as we ought." He maketh intercession for the saints, according to the will of God. Go into the garden of the Gospel Eden, where our Christ is, the tree of life in the midst thereof, and the tree of knowledge too. Go into that garden, for you are at liberty to gather fruit from that tree, and to walk all over that Paradise, and perfectly free to gather all you need. "All things are yours; for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." Could unregenerated and unspiritual persons go and pluck fruit from the tree of life, it would be taking what they have no warrant to take. This is one of the fears of many of God's people. That fruit is the very blessing they want, and they pray that they may receive it. Go, friends, take it. No, we do not know that we have a right to it; we are not sure it is ours. Perhaps we are not the characters invited. Well, the Holy Spirit comes and removes all doubts and apprehensions as to that matter, and the blessing is appropriated. Then, indeed, the very best in all places and all things is claimed. The best in this world; the best in the past, and in the future; the best in ministers, and the best everywhere is yours, and you are at liberty to appropriate all, by the presence and operations of the Spirit, for "Where He is, there is liberty." Therefore, brethren, we are debtors. Some say the Holy Ghost being God is everywhere, and therefore there is liberty everywhere. That is not the way to put it. The Holy Ghost as God is omnipresent, but not as a Liberator, Sanctifier, and Comforter. He is here and there, and yonder, as a Witness and a Guide. Let us pray for more and more of His presence in us as a church, and for larger measures of His grace in our hearts, for Christ's sake. Amen.

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THE BEST WISDOM.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,
AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,
ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, 20th JANUARY, 1884.

"And unto man He said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom ; and to depart from evil is understanding." Job xxviii. 28.

"THE natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him ; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Nature can never rise above its own level, and the things of grace and eternal life and salvation are spiritual things, and as such cannot be understood or comprehended by the natural man. Hence the necessity for the work of God the Spirit. "A new heart," the Lord says, "will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you. I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh." The Lord has promised to impart grace and spiritual fear to the hearts of sinners. When therefore one has been constituted a spiritual character, "old things are passed away, and all things are become new." He is blessed with new light and life. Other objects are discovered to him by the eternal Spirit, such as the natural man never saw, and he occupies a position which is entirely spiritual. Hence the serious errors and mistakes which are made by natural persons concerning the character of God, His holy law, spiritual things, the covenant of grace, and the glorious gospel of the blessed God. There is a life in a spiritual man so mysterious that the natural man cannot comprehend him ; for all that are in Christ Jesus are new creatures. Hence in this chapter out of which the text this morning is taken, we have a threefold view of wisdom. Job was led first to speak of natural knowledge or wisdom, and, secondly, of the wisdom of God in the operations of Divine Providence, and in the text of that wisdom which is from above, and which is inseparable from salvation. In the former part of the chapter he speaks of that natural knowledge and wisdom which miners have displayed. "Surely there is a vein for the silver, and a place for gold, where they fine it ; iron is taken out of the earth, and brass is molten out of the stone." But if you will read the chapter at your leisure, you will perceive that Job here is speaking of the knowledge and wisdom displayed in going down into the bowels of the earth, and obtaining therefrom the hidden riches of nature. That wisdom, however, is not saving ; for man may know much about the surface and interior of the earth, and yet be destitute of the one thing needful ; and therefore a most important question is asked in the 12th verse : "But where shall wisdom be found, and where is the place of understanding ? The depth saith, It is not in me, and the sea saith, It is not with me." Heavenly wisdom is a boon so pre-

cious and so great, "that it cannot be gotten for gold;" for it has often turned out that the richest men have been destitute of this grace. Wisdom is not a purchaseable blessing for it cannot be obtained for gold and silver, neither is it to be acquired by human power, and it is so rich and great that it can never be merited; and therefore, "Where shall wisdom be found, and where is the place of understanding?" Job, having contemplated the depth and the sea, soars as it were into the clouds, and says, "God understandeth the way thereof, and He knoweth the place thereof. For He looketh to the ends of the earth and seeth under the whole heaven; to make the weight for the winds; and He weigheth the waters by measure." Wonderful words, and very wonderful are the facts they indicate. The clouds hanging over our heads are filled, so to speak, with thousands of tons of water, and yet they are upheld by an unseen Hand, and when it is needed they pour their contents upon the earth by the will of an unseen Being. Surely we have got at the best wisdom now and it is unnecessary to rise higher! The visible clouds and the ærial heavens where God's greatness and wisdom are so conspicuous, surely teach us all the wisdom we need, and studying God in these wondrous operations must surely be the highest wisdom! No, "Unto man he saith, Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding." The natural man, to repeat what I commenced with, knoweth not the things of the Spirit, because they are spiritually discerned. A person may soar to the clouds, and give us their dimensions and even the weight of water which they contain, and yet be ignorant of God, and have no knowledge of himself as a sinner, nor of the Way of Life, and no desire to be found therein. Therefore, He said unto man, "Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom."

"The Lord said unto man." Some have supposed that Job refers to Adam; that the Lord said unto him, when he was in a state of innocence, "The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding;" and thus gave him the law, which is holy, just and good. Is not this taking too limited a view of the verse? Should it be confined to the first man? Does he not speak thus to every man, and if to every man, then to every descendant of Adam, "Behold the fear of the Lord that is wisdom," and therefore, he that is destitute of this fear has not begun to be wise; for "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, a good understanding have all they that keep His commandments." I suppose those truths would be offensive to the minds of the learned, the philosophical and the intellectual, and hearing them from us they would contemptuously set us down as so many ignorant beings; but, Christian friends, I trust I am right in saying we know something about the importance and the nature of spiritual things. Let them sneer, condemn, and condemn and if permitted let them persecute, which may the Lord prevent, if it please Him. One thing is needful, and that through mercy we possess. Though the natural man knows us not, we know him; though he knows not the position we occupy, we know where he stands; and although he is a stranger to that experience with which we are blest, we are not altogether strangers to his spirit; for once, like him, we were dead in trespasses and sins.

Looking at our text this morning, I shall make a few observations

upon certain points which lie upon its surface; but, having on recent occasions directed your attention to the nature and operations of the fear of God, I shall not now tarry on that point. "Unto man He saith, The fear of the Lord that is wisdom." I notice that the fear of the Lord is wisdom, *because it invariably leads its possessors into a safe state.* Surely the man that knows where to go to be safe for ever, is a wise man, and not a fool. All that fear God are certainly wise unto salvation, and to be wise in this respect is to possess the richest and best wisdom under the heavens. The persons that are wise unto salvation may not know many other things; indeed, there have been thousands of God's dear people in the world wending their way to heaven, who have scarcely been able to read the letter of Divine truth. As for philosophy, they never knew the meaning of the word; as for philosophers, they never knew who or what they were; and as for science, they never understood or desired to understand it. The way of the Lord, however, is so plain, and straight, and clear, that a way-faring man, though a fool in other respects, shall not err therein. I may go to heaven without the slightest knowledge of scientific matters; but I cannot go there without the wisdom which cometh from above. Heaven is reached by many who never possessed great intellectual powers. One whose mind, indeed, actively considered is very feeble and limited in its operations, may yet be found in the way of life, and obtain heaven after all, but he can never reach those scenes of eternal bliss and glory unless he is blessed with light from the throne of God and the Lamb; therefore "Unto man He saith, The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom." It is so because it always leads its possessor into a state of safety. Now do you know what it is, my dear friends, to hide yourself in the glorious person of the Mediator? There is safety there. "A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished." You remember the time when your eyes were first opened, and you discovered yourselves to be lost and ruined sinners, and saw no signs of safety anywhere. You looked upwards, and saw nothing but the anger and curse of God; you looked downwards, and saw nothing but hell and ruin; you looked behind and saw nothing but a life of sin, which rose up in judgment against you; and before you was nothing but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation. There was no safety anywhere. At length the Son of God, the glorious Mediator between God and man, was discovered to you, and ~~and~~ you were enabled to flee for refuge to the hope set before poor sinners; and if you did not flee to your own satisfaction, yet you did flee; and if you have not yet confidently entered into that hiding-place, yet you desire to be there; and let me again assure you that you are really in God's sight where and what you desire to be. If you desire with all your soul to be found in Jesus, you are in Him. God finds you there, Satan shall find you there, Justice shall find you there, death shall find you there, and the troubles and changes of life shall find you there. Well, this is your desire, and I am now speaking to the little ones; you desire to be "found in Him, not having your own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Sink or swim, you feel you must abide here; and whether you be cursed or blessed, you must try to remain on this high

and solemn, and sacred ground. If you perish, you are resolved to perish at the feet of the dear and blest Redeemer. Well, you are a wise man or woman ; I cannot make you believe it, but the fear of God is before your eyes and in your hearts, and it has induced you to flee for refuge to the only hope set before you. You are safe from all danger. O that the Holy Ghost would apply the fact to your hearts and make it your own ! You are safe in this rock, in this Christ, and under this shadow. If you are resting here, you are safe with regard to the past. Adam's imputed guilt is gone, and you are safe with regard to that. You are safe with regard to your own sins ; they have been pardoned and forgiven. You are safe with regard to the future ; for being in Christ, saints are as secure as angels in heaven, for there are no degrees of safety in the spiritual and gracious government of our God. Safe you will be to-morrow, whether you live or die, and safe you will be next year, whether you be in England or Australia, on the earth or in heaven. Safety is of the Lord ; and you are with Him, and in Him ; for the fear of God has induced you to flee for refuge to Jesus Christ, the sinner's hope and Friend. "Unto man He saith, The fear of the Lord that is wisdom ;" for it leads its possessor to flee to the only hiding-place God has prepared for guilty, ruined sinners. Are the dangers visible, or invisible ? (and the invisible are far more numerous than those that can be seen,) it matters not whether they be visible or invisible, near or distant, great or small, physical or spiritual,—

"On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand."

And there you are safe for heaven. Oh what a precious power then, is godly fear, if it leads its possessor to flee to this great hiding-place.

Such persons are said to be wise unto salvation. One word here, before I dismiss this point. Timothy was thus addressed by Paul : "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation." This most important fact is to some extent lost sight of in the day in which we live ; that the Scriptures, the Word of God, the revelation of heaven were never intended to teach man science, or philosophy, or politics, or astronomy, or any other branch of secular knowledge. They were designed by the God who gave the Word to teach men spiritual and eternal matters. The Holy Ghost comes not to teach men science, nor to instruct them in natural things, but to lead the mind into the things that relate to the kingdom of God, of Christ, and of heaven, things which cannot be learned at school, or acquired by nature's powers, and which are in all respects the simple and pure gift of God, the free outflow of His loving heart to His dear people. If you do not know even the meaning of the word science, yet you know Christ. If you do not know what philosophy is, yet you know the Lord, which is better ; for you are wise unto salvation. As to politics, you may hardly know whether you are a Conservative or a Liberal, or anything else ; but you are wise unto salvation. As to what party might be best in power, probably you do not know, and do not trouble yourself concerning the question ; but you love the House of God, you hold converse with the God of heaven, Christ and you are one, and you shall one day see His face,

“And never, never sin,
And from the rivers of His grace,
Drink endless pleasures in.”

Oh you are wiser than the most intellectual natural man that ever lived. You might have all the knowledge of Newton, and all the poetry of Milton, and all the powers of the great and learned,—and let me speak it with reverence and solemnity,—be lost at last. But you have the fear of God in your heart, you have been made wise unto salvation; for you know yourselves as guilty sinners, lost and ruined, and you know you are interested in the Saviour; and this is the wisdom which cometh down from above, even the fear of the Lord. Now these wise persons commit their all into the hands of Christ, and Paul was wise in this respect, and and some of my hearers possess a measure of the same wisdom. “I know,” said that great man, “whom I have believed, and that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day.” And what had Paul committed unto Him, but his everlasting all? He felt that he could not keep, save, exalt, protect or preserve himself, and that was a feeling which arose from that heavenly wisdom, which sprang from the fear of God in his heart. He feared God, and that fact made him wise, and his wisdom induced him to gather together all that was dear to himself, both mortal and immortal, his body and soul, for life and for death, and he went to Jesus and committed all into His hands. If you and I have been led to commit our immortal souls into the hands of this risen and reigning Saviour, we are as safe as Paul was, and may say with him, “I know whom I have believed;” not “*in* whom;” but “*I know whom* I have believed;” and I am calm and serene because His hands are strong to keep what I have put into them, His character is untarnished and untarnishable, and because He was never known to fail. I have such a knowledge of that dear Friend unto whom I have committed my all, that

“My steady soul shall fear no more
Than solid rocks when billows roar.”

Oh am I safe in Jesus? Is it a fact that I am in this great hiding-place, under the shadow of this blessed Rock? Yes, the fear of God has made me wise to run away from myself, to leave the world behind, and to commit my all to the great and glorious Son of God. To creep beneath the wings of Jehovah, is the part of wisdom. “He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.” “Under His wings shalt thou trust.” I do not mind whether take you “wings” there to indicate those of the cherubim on the mercy-seat, or the wings of a fowl. We are not hiding under the wings of an army, and not under the wings of the cherubim merely; but under the perfections, and purposes, and providence of the Lord our God.

“Just as a hen protects her brood
From birds of prey, which seek their blood,
Under her feathers, so the Lord
Makes His own arm His people’s guard.”

London people, or perhaps, many of them, are not well acquainted with the habits of fowls; but if a kite or a hawk appears over the brood

the hen calls in a very peculiar manner, and the young ones at once run towards her. She sees the danger, and calls them, and they run and creep beneath her wings, and are all concealed there. Our God sees our danger, and speaks to us in a peculiar manner in His invitations and His promises; and having implanted godly fear in our hearts, and so caused us to hate sin, and to distrust ourselves; when He calls, we run and creep beneath the wings of His power, providence, and grace. The fear of the Lord leads us to Him, and the wisdom that springs out of that fear leads us to creep beneath His shadow. This proceeding on the part of the brood is not forced, but quite natural; and it is not forced work on the part of the sinner that he flies to God for refuge.

“ 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,
That were to die—delightful thought!
As sinner never died.”

Therefore, O God, I am come to put my trust under the shadow of Thy wings. “The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.” Now such persons can never be lost; and the principle of godly fear in the heart can never be destroyed. “I will put my fear into their hearts, and they shall not depart from Me;” and my fear will bring them from the world, and from sin, and from themselves into My presence, and induce them to hide under My shadow, and they shall there abide. I remember when I was sixteen years of age, and joined the church, a number of persons who were employed on the same premises, partly owing perhaps to the fact that I was a mere boy, sneered very much, especially when it became known that I had been baptized. I had many doubts and fears respecting the future, and I think I did most earnestly and fervently pray that God would keep me, and never permit me to bring a blot or reproach upon His holy cause.

“ I have been upheld till now,
Who could hold me up but Thou ?”

The fear of the Lord never leaves its possessor to trust in himself; but it induces him to come out of self, and enter into this place of safety. This is all I have time to say on this point. The fear of the Lord is wisdom, because it leads into the place of divine safety.

In the second place, it is wisdom *because it leads its possessor into peace*—not only into safety, but into peace. Is it a blessing to know God? That person, whoever he may be, and whatever he may know, is a stranger to safety and peace, who is ignorant of Him. “There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.” Let me be in the dark concerning God, and I am not safe or tranquil, or secure; but if I know God, and the relation in which I stand to Him—“Ah! that is it, Sir!” Yes, I know: but let us go on gradually; if I know Him, and the relation in which I stand to Him, and that the great God of heaven is my God, my Father, and my Friend, then I am wise unto salvation; and possessing such a knowledge

I have a good hope within, and a peace, such as the world can neither give nor take away. The fear of God in operation, and pervading the whole mind destroys all tormenting fear. At times we have many fears which are not godly, but this fear in vigorous operation overcomes them all. The fear of man brings a snare, but the fear of God never does. I venture to say there is no one in the house of God who better understands this than the preacher. I have been sorely tried by the fear of man hundreds of times, and well do I know that it is a snare ; but if the fear of God prevails in my mind, and holds all my faculties and powers, then I do not mind who may be present to listen to me; places, persons, circumstances and scenes, all fade into comparative insignificance before the fear and love of God. In this respect, therefore, the fear of God is wisdom. Then there is the future ; and one says, " I have a large family and small means, and I am deeply tried about the future." May the Lord increase this grace in your heart, and in mine too. I am not one to flog you because you disturb yourselves as to the future. Many do so sometimes. May the Lord give us more grace, and increase His own fear in our hearts; for so shall we be enabled to leave the future where it is, even in His hands, and have no carking care whatever about it. The fear of the Lord brings its possessor to rest in God as to the morrow, and He that rests in God is wise. Then there is the fear of death, for, in some respects, it is an enemy. Perhaps it is not sinful to shrink from death, for God has created the love of life in us, or implanted that sentiment in our very nature, and, therefore, its existence cannot be wrong. " But Sir, there is something that triumphs over death." Just so, but there is only one thing that can enable us to do this, and that is the fear of God. Let me know that my sins are pardoned, that my soul is one with Jesus, that I am in Him ; let me read my title clear to mansions in the skies, and let me be filled with a sense of the greatness of God's love to my soul, and I am not afraid to die ; the fear of death is then carried away, and I have confidence in relation to death and to eternity. Yes, this fear is wisdom, because it destroys all other fears in its possessors' hearts.

Now from this it appears that the fear of God is quite consistent with courage. We fear God without being afraid of Him, and those who have had most of this fear in their hearts have been the most courageous characters. " So did not I," and Nehemiah is referring to a certain course of conduct which had been taken by Jews, and speaking of himself, he says,— " So did not I, because of the fear of the Lord." I also should have done as they did, but for the fear of God." What was it that kept Joseph ? " How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God." Was it not the part of wisdom in Joseph to act as he did? and it was godly fear that shaped his conduct on that occasion. To depart from evil, that is understanding. But there are degrees of godly fear, and I have often thought of Obadiah. Mysterious are the operations of Divine Providence, and the reign of grace. Obadiah was governor of Ahab's house. Perhaps a worse man than Ahab, or a better man than Obadiah never lived ; for of Obadiah, it is said that he feared the Lord greatly. I wonder why Ahab had such a man in his house, and why he so exalted him as to make him governor of his household. The wicked sometimes see something in the just that is commendable, and this may have led Ahab to confide and

trust in him. Obadiah feared the Lord greatly, and that fear induced him to conduct himself wisely in that wicked court. And then it is said again in Nehemiah, concerning Hananiah, ruler of the palace, that he "feared the Lord above many." Thus we have Joseph fearing the Lord, and fleeing from evil, and Nehemiah, stern, and courageous, and bold, saying, "So did not I, because of the fear of the Lord; and I shook my lap, and said, So God shake out every man from His house;" and Obadiah, who feared the Lord greatly, and Hananiah, who feared the Lord above many. To fear the Lord that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding. Dear friends, there is peace here, because godly fear leads the soul to rest where God Himself rests and is pleased. To rest where God's perfections are all in harmony, where all is tranquillity, even in the atonement of Jesus Christ. Godly fear brings its possessor to the atonement, there God is found, and He and sinners are sweetly reconciled. Thus the fear of the Lord, said God to man, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.

My time is gone, or I had some other points to mention; for instance, I intended to look at the subject in connection with the circumstances of our life, and with the world, and with the future. It is a good thing to be well prepared for the future; and he who well provides and prepares for it (and I speak of natural things now), is sometimes said to be a wise man. Well, you may apply this to the things of God. Lay up for yourselves a good foundation against the time to come. The future with regard to all its circumstances,—are you prepared for that? Yes, I fear God, and He will provide. I am satisfied, and I leave myself, and my affairs in His hands. He has provided, and He will provide. Then there is death. "Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel." They that are prepared for this are wise. Are you washed in the Saviour's blood, and clothed in His righteousness? Are you filled with His grace, and led by His Spirit? If you are thus prepared to meet God, you are wise; to meet Him in death; to meet Him in heaven; to meet Him on the judgment day. Prepared to hear the last trumpet sound; prepared to rise from the grave; prepared to fix your eyes upon your descending Lord; prepared to be caught up to meet Him in the air, and prepared to be for ever with the Lord. To man He said, "The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil,—the evil of error, the evil of sin, the evil of the world, and the evil world itself, and the evil one,—is understanding." Some people are for going as near to the danger as possible. God says it is understanding to depart from it. Yonder is an Atheist, and he is very clever, if you can keep out of his way do so, for the serpent is more subtle than any other beast of the field. If you feel your feebleness and inability to cope with the evil, depart from it, for to do so is understanding. The Lord add His blessing, for Christ's sake. Amen.

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THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,
AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,
ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, 4th MARCH, 1884.

"For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." 1 Cor. iv. 20.

As the everlasting love of God is expressed in effectual calling, it is said, "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." God had His eye upon Saul of Tarsus before he was called by grace. He was preserved in Christ Jesus before His soul was born again. His name was in heaven and his person was beloved by God in Christ, and therefore, notwithstanding his pharisaism and cruel and bloodthirsty persecution of the church of God, he was followed from place to place by a special providence and in due time conquered by irresistible grace. "Other sheep," said the Saviour, "I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring; and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd." Saul was not in the fold when the great Shepherd of Israel uttered these words. He was then a very young man, but he was a pharisee of the strictest sect, notwithstanding his secret and unknown interest in the everlasting love of God. The time of love, however, came; and when the period had arrived, it broke forth, and the long concealed grace and mercy of God arrested him. His heart was then broken, his conscience was stung, his soul was filled with godly sorrow and repentance; and as God had said, "I will turn to the people a pure language," his language was changed and he was heard saying, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Taken into a street in the city of Damascus, Ananias was sent to him. That sheep, however, Ananias, objected at first, to the visit, fearing that he was still a wolf. "Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to Thy saints at Jerusalem, and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call upon Thy name." "Go thy way," said the Shepherd; "for he is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel." And not only so "I will show him how great things he must suffer for My name's sake." That prediction was soon fulfilled. Saul received Divine assurance of forgiveness; His spirit was led into the sweet enjoyment of gospel liberty; He received spiritual and official gifts from his Master for his work, and commenced preaching the glorious gospel of the grace of God; and from the very first of his official career he suffered in the Saviour's cause. Having himself been a bitter persecutor, he met with persecution and fiery trials all the days of his life; some of his sufferings being described in the chapter out of which I have taken my text. It is very mysterious that the prime ministers, if I may so speak, of the church of Jesus Christ should have suffered as they did, yet so it was; and the Apostle in the 9th verse says, "I think that God hath set forth us the Apostles last, as

it were appointed to death ; for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men," in allusion, perhaps to the cruel and bloody entertainments which were provided for the people in the city of Rome. Their theatres were filled on various occasions with thousands of spectators whose object was to see their fellow men destroyed by one another, or by wild beasts, and the most celebrated of all the sufferers were the last that were taken into the arena, and the eyes of all were fixed upon them ; and the Apostle says, " I think He (that is God) had set forth us the Apostles last, as it were appointed to death, a spectacle unto the world, to angels, and to men." The world sat round about as it were and watched their movements and sorrows, and angels good and bad watched their engagements and sufferings. " We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ ; we are weak, but ye are strong ; ye are honourable, but we are despised : " and then follow statements which are truly wonderful. " Even unto this present hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted and have no certain dwelling-place. Where are the ministers of the gospel of the present day that can truthfully use this language ? The apostles hungered, wanted bread ; thirsted, wanted water ; were naked, badly clothed, and had no home. No man knows either love or hatred by all that is before him. A proud blasphemer, one that curses the name of his Maker, and hates the hand that supplies his wants from day to day, is sometimes very rich, whilst a dear saint of the Most High who lives near to God and has much to do with Him, is pinched with poverty or like Paul is almost forced to say, I hunger and thirst, am badly clothed and almost homeless. Whilst the Apostle was an object of Divine love, and could say, " Christ loved me, and gave Himself for me," yet he went through scenes of privation, persecution and temptation day by day. This object of Divine love, living in fellowship and communion with God, was yet naked, homeless, and without the ordinary comforts of life. The Lord Jesus Christ, however, never left him : Paul was never forsaken, but was sustained in his work ; and, the love of Christ constraining him he was determined in preaching the gospel " to know nothing among men save Christ and Him crucified." But the apostle was not only hated by Satan and the world, and his own nation the Jews, he was despised by a number of the members of the church at Corinth. " Now some," he says " are puffed up, as though I would not come to you ; but I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power, for the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power."

Now, let us give our attention to this portion of the Word, and make a few remarks on *the kingdom of God indicated in the text*. By this kingdom I understand the dominion of reigning, saving, sovereign and eternal grace and mercy. The dominion of grace under the gospel dispensation, and not as it appeared under the ceremonial dispensation, though that also was the kingdom of God. The phrase " the kingdom of God," in the New Testament, often relates to the Gospel ; so that here we understand the rule, the empire of grace in the church of the living God, and its reign in the hearts and consciences of saved sinners. Now, this kingdom is not in word only, whether it be considered in connection with the gospel dispensation or

the church of Jesus Christ, or as seated in the hearts of regenerated persons; the gospel of God comes not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance. This kingdom is to be contrasted with other kingdoms. Pilate had strange feelings when, looking at the suffering Man who stood before him, he said, "Art thou a king, then? And Jesus said unto him, My kingdom is not of this world; for if it were, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom," not from hence; or I have a kingdom, but it is spiritual. The kingdom of God is to be contrasted with the kingdoms of the world, with the legal dispensation, and with the various systems of error which were then in existence and are in existence now, and which perhaps, will continue to exist until the end of time. But this Divine kingdom is to be contrasted with another kingdom which is not often referred to, I mean antichrist—the man of sin—or mystical Babylon. As Egypt and Babylon, both of which were the oppressors of the people of God, were destroyed, so the time is coming when Rome or Antichrist shall cease to exist, being cast as a mill-stone into the sea, and be found no more at all. That kingdom is now in existence, and it consists in words and forms and ceremonies, and the power connected with it is political, human, and carnal, and the power of error; and therefore, the whole of it is delusive and dangerous, and presents a striking contrast to the kingdom of God. The grace of God is not popery, for that has nothing to do in fact with grace in the heart, seeing the kingdom of God is not in word but in saving power. That is a part of the kingdom of Satan, and round about are the kingdoms of the world; but in the midst of these kingdoms God has set up a kingdom, which is inhabited by the saints of the Most High, where they shall live, and flourish, and thrive, until the end of time; and when all is perfected and completed, then Christ will deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority, and power. All other rule is to terminate, righteous and unrighteous; for there is such a thing as righteous reigning and ruling on earth. Our Queen is our rightful sovereign, and, permit me so to express myself, the men in authority over us are in their proper places, but all authority, power and dominion shall be put down, and one kingdom, one King, and one throne only shall appear, and stand for ever, and be surrounded by the subjects of God's grace. That King, that kingdom, that throne, and the millions that are loved with an everlasting love, and are bought with the precious blood of Jesus, and constituted the temples of God the Holy Ghost, are God's, "who shall be all in all."

What is the origin of the kingdom of God? Why, God Himself is its Author: it originated in the mind and bosom of Deity. The whole of it was foreknown and foreordained, all its subjects were perfectly and universally known by its great Proprietor and Ruler. This kingdom is gradually and progressively coming into actual existence, as it was originally conceived in the mighty mind of the great God. All the thoughts of His mind and the love of His heart are being really and truly actualised as time progresses, as generations rise and depart, as devils tempt, and as angels watch over the people of God; and as Jesus upon His throne, works and applies His word here, there, and yonder. His eternal thought comes up

into fulfilment gradually and progressively as time advances. This is the origin of the kingdom. Then for the establishment of it in the world. It arises out of love, and it is founded on the blood of the covenant, even the precious blood of Jesus Christ. He came to lay its foundation, yea, He is the foundation itself. It is a mediatorial kingdom, being based on the mediation of Christ, which is inseparable from it; for to separate mediation from this kingdom would be to remove its foundation. The whole would collapse, fall and disappear, if Christ could be removed from it; for the kingdom of God is based upon His dear Son. "What shall one then, answer the messengers or ambassadors of the nation?" said the children of Israel, when they come and see us in such confusion and surrounded by hosts of soldiers, and having thousands of beings hostile to us, and being hated by all the world? Why, tell them that "the Lord hath founded Zion," notwithstanding the troubles that surround her, "and the poor of His people shall betake themselves unto it." In the infinite mind of God, the grand plan of the kingdom was formed, and the dear Redeemer putting away sin, and harmonising the perfections of God, the kingdom was established. And where is its seat? Vitally, it is in the heart, locally it is in the world. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." And we have it here in this little island home of ours among the nations of the Gentiles. But the kingdom of God is within you. It is not only near to us, visible to us, it is in contact with, yea, in vital connection with us. If there is nothing of grace in us here, we are not subjects of the Lord Jesus Christ, for the kingdom of God is in the heart.

What is the extent of this kingdom? I do not know. We are told, however, that when God's operations are completed, a number shall appear before His throne which no man can number. It appears to me that notwithstanding the restricted and limited views which some people seem to take, God's kingdom will be the largest, as it will be the best, the richest, and the noblest and the most glorious of all kingdoms. The kingdom of God will be the greatest of kingdoms, for in all things Christ shall have the pre-eminence. I will not speculate as to whether there will be more sheep on the right hand than goats on the left, nor as to the number of the subjects of this kingdom:

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

And then with regard to its duration. How long will it stand? Well, it will stand till all other kingdoms disappear; it will stand till the end of time; it will stand when the heavens are opened to receive the millions of God's people, and it will endure in heaven as long as God Himself endures, for Christ will be a King and will have subjects for ever. He will sway His sceptre and wear His crown for ever and He will for ever have happy worshippers before His throne. The kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and the dominion of grace shall never, never end.

"Grace, till the tribes redeemed by blood,
Are brought to know themselves and God,
Her empire shall maintain,

To call when He appoints the day,
And from the mighty take the prey,
Shall grace triumphant reign."

"The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power." I might just say here, that I believe this kingdom is an aggressive one. Infinite benevolence is associated with it ; but whilst it is here, it is in a militant condition. It is by means of His kingdom on the earth that God is spreading abroad the knowledge of Himself. Some of you are aware that I am officially connected with a little Society, called the Strict Baptist Mission, which has stations in India and Ceylon, in which the ordinances of God's house are observed, and the truth of Jesus Christ is preached ; and when I think that Christians are disseminating the word and endeavouring to spread abroad a knowledge of the plan of salvation and of the Saviour's name and that God is blessing these efforts, I see an illustration of this fact, that the kingdom of God is aggressive. The Word of God is in this kingdom, and His grace is seated there for it is the creation of His grace and the exponent of His eternal truth. The grace that has made us what we are should evermore appear in our character, our course, and our conversation ; for in bringing the kingdom of God into the world, and giving it a visible existence here, grace has appeared to all men, as to its power and effects. If you want proofs of the grace of God, look at God's kingdom in this hostile world. If you want proofs of its sovereignty, look at a saint going home to heaven, against wind and tide, being carried along by an unseen influence which enables him to persevere in a course of holiness against himself, and the world, and the devil. The perseverance of a saint proclaims the sovereignty of grace and the nature of true religion.

Let me now notice a few things in connection with *the power of the kingdom*. First the Author of this power. The Apostle puts it negatively and positively. It is not in word, but in power. Not in the word or words of any creature, angels, great men, ministers of the gospel, nor the Apostle Paul himself ; for he says "I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase." If the Apostle Paul could do nothing more than sow the seed, and could not cause it to grow, what should be said of myself and other ordinary ministers of the Gospel ? Not in word ; and yet the Apostle's words, were righteous, scriptural, and forcible ; they fell from sanctified lips, and expressed the faith and feelings of a sanctified heart ; but the kingdom of God is not in word, but in the power of God. Look at creature power. We have political, civil, and intellectual power ; but these powers can never vitally christianize an immortal mind. We have many Christians who are made so by words, or by a few drops of water sprinkled upon the faces of little helpless and unconscious babes, which are said to constitute them Christians ! That, however, is not how God makes Christians, not how grace gets her subjects ; for the kingdom of God is neither in word, nor in human or any creature power. The power of eloquence is great, and an eloquent preacher brings together hundreds, perhaps thousands of hearers ; and religion is so superficial in these days, that the thousands who surround him, are in the opinion of the public, the sons and daughters of God. May it not be said (and I

am not bitter) that in a very great measure the faith of many such persons "stands in the wisdom of men, and not in the power of God?" Let the eloquence of the preacher leave him, or let the eloquent preacher leave the congregation, and it will as a rule melt away as snow melts before the sun. Salvation by grace is not in word but in power, and its author is God Himself. And He continues to work without weariness. Under shepherds are weary, tired and get worn out, and all human power becomes exhausted; but God goes on working without weariness, for He "fainteth not, neither is weary; there is no searching of His understanding." The mother says, especially if she has twins and brings them up herself, "I am faint," and well she may, having two strong children sucking her breasts from day to day. She is faint and weary. God's breasts of consolation, however, are sucked by millions of His people, but "He fainteth not neither is weary." His breasts are always full, His arm is always strong, His fullness is always the same, and He fainteth not. "I will work, and who shall let it?" What a blessing it is to be interested in a God whose arm never aches, whose eye is never dim, whose supplies can never fail, whose love can never change, whose ear can never become heavy, and whose watchfulness is incessant, divine, and perfect like Himself! The kingdom of God is in Divine power. It is a new creating power. It was a marvellous act by which matter was brought into existence, and various shapes and forms were given to it, and which vitalized the creatures made. God completed His work in six days, and reviewing the whole He was satisfied and pleased, for it was good. Now, there is another act of power in progress by which the new creation of God is gradually coming into existence. God brought the old creation into existence in six days, and He is now proceeding with His new creating work, and will not finish it until the last day, when the bodies of His people shall be raised and reunited to their spirits, and the heavens shall be filled with the subjects of His grace. Was the whole creation satisfactorily completed when it was finished? He will complete His new creation, and be infinitely pleased and delighted then with His work.

"When God makes up His last account,
Of natives in His holy mount;
'Twill be an honour to appear
As one new-born and nourished there."

May you and I be found in the kingdom of God as the subjects of His grace.

Thirdly, *the nature of this power*. If God is its Author, it is Divine, you say. Well, just one or two thoughts here. If God is the source of this power, it is sovereign; or if you like it in another form, it is Divine power sovereignly displayed, as to places and persons. There are dark corners in the world, and even in this land of ours, notwithstanding that it is called a Christian country. I have some villages in my thoughts now, in which there are churches and preachers, and large incomes, where the parishioners are without knowledge, and I grieve over it. Many years ago I laboured not far from the places I am now alluding to, and the people were, and still are, as to divine and eternal things, almost as ignorant as Hottentots, not knowing their right hand from their left, as

to the character and government of God. God is a Sovereign, and does not always send a flood of gospel light all over the world. How is it that when one stands up in His name to preach the Gospel, God does not call every hearer under the word? I do not know. He puts His fear into this heart, and that, and the other, and He giveth no account of any of His matters. And then you sometimes come to the house of God dejected and depressed, and go away in the same state; and another time you come depressed and faint, and cast down, and you get a blessing. How is it you are not always blessed, and always fare and feel alike? Oh the kingdom of God is not in word, but in the power of God, which He displays as He pleases. If God will help me, I can preach a little; but I have no power to apply the Word; for if I had, I love the Word and your souls so well, that I would always lay the promises on your hearts, and give you the grace of the Word. I would always sweep away all your doubts and fears, and break your unbelief, and give you faith; but power belongeth unto God, and His kingdom is not in word, but in power, which is sovereign in its operations. And then is it not irresistible power? It is said that we resist the grace and Spirit of God. Well then, if we admit the word "resist," let us follow it by another—"frustrate;" if we resist, can we frustrate the will, and defeat the purposes of God? You walk in the field, or in the road, and a hundred ants crawl upon your boot, all possessing stings. You take your handkerchief, and wipe the little resisting things away, and do not feel their resistance. The sinner resists God's grace, and the poor lost rebel resists His power. And does God stop because He is resisted? Does power divine hesitate or falter, because the rebel means, if possible, to continue in rebellion? God says, "I will work;" and He takes the heart, and turns it, I had almost said, inside out; and, according to the good pleasure of His will, He discovers the guilty sinner to himself, who then says, "God, be merciful to me a sinner." The kingdom is in divine, sovereign, irresistible power. I should like, however, to say, since we are living in stirring times, that this power is silent in its operations. You know what I mean. People in the present day appear to me to have an idea that there is no religion without noise and show; hence we have pipes, and fiddles, and drums, and banners, and I don't know what, as if true religion and the kingdom of grace consisted in noise, and pomp, and show. But "the kingdom of God cometh not with observation." Paul was in the city of Corinth; and God said, "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace; and no man shall set upon thee, to hurt thee; for I have much people in this city." Ordinary observers would not have thought that God had much people there; but Paul preached, and God applied the Word that was spoken, without the use of banners and musical instruments. God does not require them; they are altogether foreign to the simplicity of the Gospel, and the salvation of heaven; for the kingdom of God cometh not with observation, but with a power which nobody sees, for its operations are silent and internal. The power is represented as being the power of life. You cast a grain of wheat into the ground, and if the vital principle be good and perfect, the influences of nature being favourable, it will take root downwards, and spring upwards, and though the first little blade be so tender that you could

scarcely take it between your finger and thumb without injuring it, yet notwithstanding its softness and tenderness it will force its way through the hard soil towards the sun, which influences it, though a weight of soil lies upon it, for there is wonderful power in life. It is neither a mechanical power nor a dead weight, but a vital power which grows. The power of the Spirit is compared to fire, which warms, consumes, and melts; to wind, which is sovereign and irresistible, and to oil, which dropped upon the soul silently permeates the mind, and sanctifies its recipient.

The operation of this power. Take this one thought. It is a transforming power; it changes the sinner towards God, but not God towards the sinner. Repentance is a change, but not a change in God towards the penitent. This power of God changes the sinner towards God, towards the Bible, towards the church, towards the world, towards sin, towards the devil, towards the saints, and towards heaven. It transforms him in all these respects. It finds him hating God; it leaves him loving Him, or desiring to do so. It finds him at a distance from God; it brings him near. It finds him neglecting the Bible, it leaves him a prayerful Bible student; it finds him sneering at the saints, and persecuting them, it leaves him singing—

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

It finds him loving sin, it leaves him hating it, and loving holiness. Yes, the power of God, in which this kingdom stands is a transforming power. And then as to one's experience of this power, how blessed it is to receive pardon from God, and to be led into liberty by God the Spirit! to receive an application of atoning blood, and of the promises. Have you not sometimes been in the house of God, overflowing with holy feeling, your eyes and your hearts, and your mouths being filled, when the last hymn was sung? Oh there is a secret joy connected with God's reign of grace in the heart, a secret power which cannot be resisted, which melts the soul, fills the eye, makes the man stronger than his enemies, and carries him out of and beyond himself. Yes—

“The hill of Zion yields
A thousand sacred sweets,
Before we reach the heavenly fields,
Or walk the golden streets.”

The kingdom of God is in power, and not in word. The medium through which this power is communicated is the Word of God. You know efficiency is never owing to the adaptability or excellence of the instrument. The pen on your desk may be a perfect one, but it requires a hand to use it, and the writing then will not be good, notwithstanding the excellence of the pen, unless the agent be a good writer. Efficiency is always owing to the agent, and not to the instrument. Bad work may be done with a good instrument, and good work may be done with an indifferent one; but when the instrument and the agent are both perfect, the work will surely be satisfactory. The instrument is the Gospel, the Agent is the God of the Gospel, and when God uses His own Word by His own hand a wondrous change is effected, a change that is worthy of Himself, and over which angels rejoice and sing. “The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.” The Lord add His blessing, for Christ's sake. Amen.

THE LORD'S FREE MAN.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL.

"For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's free man: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant." 1 Cor. vii. 22.

OUR Lord is seated on the right hand of the Majesty on High, all power in heaven and earth having been given unto Him. He said, however, to His disciples before He ascended to heaven, "I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever;" and "He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak:" and "He shall receive of mine and show it unto you." There can be no doubt that at least some of these promises were intended to apply to the whole church of God on the earth; but they were specially given to the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ in connection with their official work. It is a fact that the Holy Spirit received the things of Jesus and revealed them to Peter, Paul, John, James, and others, for purposes which related to their own personal religion; and it is equally true that He revealed them to those men for their official work as preachers of the gospel and Apostles of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit filled them with Divine light, and armed them as it were with Divine and official authority; and therefore we find the Apostle saying in this chapter, "And so I ordain in all the churches." Now, it was not for an ordinary minister of the gospel to express himself in this manner, neither can under-shepherds in the present day so speak to the churches. The Holy Spirit had been poured out in an extraordinary measure upon those men, and they stood as it were at the head of the new dispensation, and Christ gave His laws to His Church through these official servants. They were, therefore, blessed in an extraordinary degree with gifts for their work, with clear and comprehensive light as to the will of God and Christ concerning themselves and the Christian church; and consequently they were not presumptuous nor did they take too high a position when they said, "And these things we ordain in all the churches."

In the chapter, out of which we have taken our text this morning, the religion of heaven and of the Lord Jesus is carried by the Apostle into several connections. In the first place he glances at marriage, and shows the importance of that state, and he intimates that it might be the pleasure of God to call a husband, but not a wife; or to call a wife, but not the husband: and having introduced such a circumstance, he proceeds to give advice in connection therewith. If, he says, the unbelieving wife chooses to live with her husband, let him not put her away; and if the unbelieving husband chooses to remain with the believing wife, let it be so, let her not leave him: for let the husband know that he is sanctified by the believing wife, else were their children "unclean," or illegitimate; for this is what the word unclean means here. In the next place, the Apostle introduces the religion of heaven as in the Jewish church or

among Jewish believers. "If," he says, "God has called any of you that were circumcised, let him not in consequence thereof become uncircumcised; or if God calls Gentiles or uncircumcised sinners, let them not become circumcised. God is pleased to call some masters, who employ their fellow-men, and let them never forget that One is their Master even Christ in heaven. At other times the Lord calls a servant; and when this takes place, let him remember that being in the Lord, though a servant, he is the Lord's freeman, and likewise also he that is called being free is Christ's servant. Art thou a servant, a bondservant? for this is the meaning of the Apostle here; let us not forget that the Apostle did not limit the force of his observations to hired-servants. There were in those countries in the Apostle's days, many persons called by grace who were bond-servants. Therefore, if thou art called being a servant, care not for it; but if thou mayest be free, use it rather: "for he that is called being a servant, is the Lord's free man; likewise also, he that is called being free, is Christ's servant."

I shall endeavour to make some remarks on a few prominent points which appear to me to lie upon the surface of the subject; and it may be interesting, instructive, and helpful, if we are aided by the Holy Spirit to contemplate them for a few minutes; and in the first place, I shall offer a few observations upon *the person or character indicated here*: "He that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's free man." We have to contemplate a sinner that grace has redeemed and called to the Lord, in Him, and for Him. Now let it be observed that life precedes liberty, that souls must be quickened before they are free. Persons who are ignorant of the religion of heaven, place liberty first. They place joy, happiness, and pleasure before union to Christ. They do not seem to know anything about being wounded, or being in bondage. To the application of the law of God to the conscience they are strangers. They are called upon by somebody or other to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and at once they give their hearts to God, and leap into happiness and pleasure. This is not God's method of saving sinners; His people are saved by grace, which convinces of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. The soul can never realize liberty unless it has previously experienced bondage. A child of God knows what it is to be healed, because he knows what it is to be wounded; and he appreciates holy pleasure and heavenly joy, because he knows what it is to be in sorrow, misery, and woe. Well, God communicates spiritual life before He leads the soul into the enjoyment of gospel liberty, "for he that is called in the Lord being a servant is the Lord's free man." Death is not liberty, and dead souls are not free. Minds uninfluenced by the grace of God are in a state of bondage and alienation from God. Yes a mysterious principle which I cannot describe, the principle of eternal life is communicated to the heart, and bondage is experienced, and liberty is prayed for. If, my dear friends, there is a measure of life in your heart, and some holy feeling in your breast, God has given you a precious treasure, and there is more of God and of grace before you to be possessed and enjoyed. No living soul shall ever die in bondage, however much of it he may experience in life, inasmuch as he having been called by grace is the Lord's free man, and shall neither die, nor be buried, nor rise in bondage at the last day. The sons of God are free-born characters. The

Apostle Paul when in difficulties and persecution on one occasion was questioned concerning his freedom of the city of Rome. He asked his enemies whether it was lawful for them to scourge him, since he was a citizen of Rome. Not knowing he was a Roman, they were afraid ; because very great privileges were inseparably connected with that honour. The chief captain said, "Tell me, art thou a Roman?" and he said, "Yes." "With a great price," said the soldier, "obtained I this freedom." And Paul said, "But I was free-born." And the child of God is a free-born citizen of the New Jerusalem, of Zion and of heaven, and may say, My conversation [or citizenship] is in heaven, from whence also I look for the Saviour. His name is enrolled in heaven. His property (and he will be very rich for ever and ever,) is in heaven, and his best relations are there. The home that God has prepared for him is ready there, and he possesses a title to eternal glory which is inalienable, and can never be lost or destroyed. A son of God is a citizen, therefore, of the New Jerusalem. The old Jerusalem is in bondage with her children. The angel said to John, "Come hither, and I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife;" and John saw a glorious city descending from God out of heaven, having twelve foundations, and twelve gates, and so on; and that city was the New Jerusalem, the bride, the Lamb's wife. Oh, my dear friends, what a privilege it is to be connected with this new and glorious state of things,—to be inseparably united by the gracious God to that marvellous production of His goodness, love, and grace. I do not know, and I cannot explain the mystery, that God has a city which is altogether divine, stainless and sinless; and He Himself lives in it. He preserves it, and will bless it for ever, and everyone that is called by grace is a free-born citizen thereof. Jerusalem which is above, is free, which is the mother of us all; "for he that is called in the Lord, though he be a bondman, is the Lord's free man. A new life is communicated to the heart, and then God calls the person that receives it. I will not trouble you with any critical remarks this morning, and yet it may be well for my young friends to try to distinguish between regeneration or the new birth, and calling. God calls His people with an effectual calling. He calls them to holiness and to Himself; but, accurately speaking, He does not call the dead. He first gives the hearing ear, and then He calls the soul. In point of fact, the new birth first takes place, and then God calls the individual. Now, the Apostle says, "He that is called in the Lord," or by Him, is free. This is an internal call. Those who go and hear the gospel preached hear God's plan of salvation set forth, but there is an internal call. God circumcises the ears, and the heart, and then He calls the soul to Himself. Just a word here. When the quickened soul is thus called, the call stops him; he can go no farther towards hell, and cannot take another step downwards. The call of God is effectual. It arrests the mind, and turns it to God; hence, there are three points to be observed: in regeneration a new life is given; then God calls the regenerated soul; and thirdly, conversion takes place, for the soul is turned. And what then? Why, then the individual is face to face with the God that called him, and he sees his sins and guilt in the light of His countenance, and trembles at the sight before the God of the Word; and this takes place in a living soul, and then, for the first time, he drops upon the knee of humble, fervent, heartfelt prayer saying, "God, be merciful

to me a sinner." The sinner remains before God, and may be in a state of bondage for a considerable time ; but let me say for your encouragement here, that if you have reached the point which I have been indicating,—if you have been quickened, arrested, called and turned towards God, and have fallen in prayer before Him, you are not in slavery. You are no longer a slave, but a son ; you are no longer on the devil's territory, but in Emmanuel's land, which is a land of freedom and liberty. It is said concerning our own country, that everybody who touches our shores is free ; and this will always apply to the land of Immanuel. Every sinner who is before God conscious of his sin and guilt, and abhors himself in consequence thereof, is divinely free ; that is, he is not a slave,—not a slave of sin, nor of Satan, nor of the world. For a time he may be bound ; but he is not in slavery, but the Lord's free man, on Immanuel's ground, and the perfection of freedom is before him, and shall sooner or later be enjoyed. Well, he remains in the presence of his calling God ; and gradually—perhaps suddenly—for God is a sovereign in this matter, he is brought near to the Lord, and the burden of guilt is taken from his conscience, the bonds that bind him are broken and cast away, and God assures him that He is His covenant God and gracious Father ; and thus he realizes the fact that he is the Lord's free man. A beautiful illustration of all this we have in the raising of Lazarus. Life precedes liberty, and liberty follows life. The great Liberator said over the grave, "Lazarus, come forth !" and he that was dead came forth bound. There was life in him, but he was bound, and liberty was to follow. He rose from the grave bound with his grave-clothes ; and he that had given him life said, "Loose him, and let him go. And if He that gave life to Lazarus has given life to you, and called you by His grace, you are the Lord's free man. "I am thine," God will some day say, if you have not already heard the words "Loose him, and let him go." Justice, hold him no longer, for he is Mine. I have made him so, loose him ! Law, terrify him no longer, for I have wrought out a righteousness for him ; for he is a believer, and is free. And by and bye it will be, Loose him, Death ! and let him go. Shall there be bonds or fetters when we die ? Certainly not ; for he that is called, though he be a bondman in civil and social life, yet he is the Lord's free man. Thus life precedes liberty.

We have been dwelling on the person ; and now secondly, *the state indicated*. "He that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's free man. He is spiritually free. Liberty in many respects is better than plenty. A slave may live in a house that is sumptuously furnished, and sit at a table abundantly spread. "I have," says one, "seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth." I would rather be a prince walking, than I would be a slave riding. David knew what wealth was, what a palace was, what royal greatness, honour and glory were, he did not speak from ignorance, as some persons sneer at that which they never possessed, and know nothing about. David knew what it was to be great, and to occupy a palace ; yet he says, "I would rather be a door-keeper in the house of God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness." Yes, freedom is a boon, an unspeakable treasure. All nations do not possess or enjoy it, and there was a time when this island home of ours—favoured, blessed, enriched and honoured as we now are—did not enjoy

liberty. It was not filled with slaves ; but the people were in bondage, and the bondage was bitter, heavy and unrighteous, and civil and religious bondage, always is unrighteous and unholy. But there were powers then which kings could not bind, and operations which bitter and persecuting judges could not affect or hinder, not even a Jeffreys. The called sinner's conscience, the washed affections of his mind, and the understanding of his spiritually enlightened soul could not be controlled by tyrants. Oh, when God gives freedom, the soul is free indeed; as it is written, " If the Son shall make you free, then are ye free indeed." But let us look at this freedom. What is the child of God free from ? In the first place, he is free from sin. Do not misunderstand me, I do not think any Christian men and women will say they are without sin in the flesh. The saint of God is free from sin as to its guilt, its reigning and its destroying power. He is free from the love of it, and free from its penal consequences ; so that if you have been called by grace, although you may not at the present moment have realized your interest in the liberating work of Jesus, yet, should you die to-night, your liberated spirit would go unbound into the boundless happiness which God has prepared for His called people. Your salvation does not depend upon your experience ; your experience arises out of your salvation. Daylight is very desirable, and the shining of the Sun of Righteousness is a great blessing ; but many of God's dear children live in the twilight, and perhaps they die therein. You know, my friends, that the reign of sin is at an end in you, you do not love it ; it cannot bind you to follow or to yield to its influences in all respects. You carry it to your Lord in prayer, saying, " Lord, deliver me from it, and give me to loathe it more and more." You hate it, you would be free from it if you could. And does such a power reign over you, if this is your experience and feeling ? Do you not rather reign over, or overcome sin ? He has made us kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth. Well, the reigning and damning power of sin is gone ; not its power to molest and to defile, but its power to destroy, to curse, and to hold the affections of the heart,—this power is for ever gone. You are the Lord's free man. There is not a man upon the face of the earth that can give himself this liberty, or lead himself into this freedom. Do not be offended. I know that such an observation would offend thousands in fashionable congregations. All men and women are by nature sinful slaves. Do you say, What hard things he preaches ? He that sinneth is the servant of sin. His servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness. The willing servant of sin cannot be otherwise than a slave. I am certain I do not misrepresent human nature, nor my fellow-men. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty ; and the implication that it carries with it is this, that in the absence of the Spirit of the Lord there is bondage and nothing else. The Lord's free man.

In the next place the child of God is free as to the ceremonial and moral law. He is free from the bondage of the covenant of works and free from the servitude to the ceremonial law. Christ has made His people free as to the ceremonial law. We are no longer bound to observe days, and years, and months, and seasons ; and no longer bound as to meats and drinks. When Jesus Christ instituted the Lord's-supper

having kept the Passover for the last time, the Jewish economy, the ceremonial law then ceased. "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom." Well, that state of things is finished and gone. I am not now bound to bring a lamb; for as a liberated sinner I bring with gratitude the name of that dear Lamb to whose death and sufferings I owe my freedom, and I am not now bound to go to Jerusalem to worship, for that would be a heavy yoke. Christ has made us free from burdensome ceremonies, and we are the Lord's freemen. But he is free as to the moral law. Its curse is for ever gone, and the child of God is for ever free therefrom. My beloved friends, Christ has been made a curse for us, therefore God not only *will not*, He *cannot* curse you. You are His freemen, made as free from curse as Christ Himself is free from it. He that is in the Lord and is called in Him, is the Lord's free man. The devil may curse you, and his curse may be a fiery one, and it may fall upon you; and the Pope, or Popery, may curse you, and this has sometimes proved a withering affair. Men and nations have quailed and trembled before and beneath it; but the curse of Popery can never send a soul it curses into hell. There is only one curse that is hot enough to wither, and heavy enough to sink, and you are free from that,—free from sin, free from the curse of the law, and all the penal consequences of sin. God has a rod for His children, but not a sword. He has a fire for His gold; but that fire is not in hell, but in Zion and in Jerusalem. God is angry with the wicked every day, and can and does express His displeasure with His dear people very frequently; but the penal consequences of sin are for ever gone, and they are free from them. You may sin a hell into your hearts and into your consciences, but Christ has closed the gates of hell against all that He has made free. You are the Lord's free man. And what, my dear friends, about death? We shall soon be dying. Time swiftly flies away. There may not be many steps between us and that solemn point, whence we shall for ever leave the world. My dear young friends, mine is a peculiar experience which you know but little about: the longer I live, the more solemn, wonderful, and mysterious death appears to me to be; and the longer I live the more solemn and wonderful even life appears to be, and oftentimes the question silently arises within, "Shall I overcome at last? Shall I be as willing to die when the time comes, as I am now willing to live?" O God! I am willing to live. "Skin for skin; all that a man hath will he give for his life." Life is dear and precious to us. God has given us the love of life; therefore, it is not a sinful passion, though it is sinful to love it immoderately. Shall we be willing to die? or will death appear with a sting? No, the Christian favoured with the presence of his Lord, and enjoying this heavenly liberty, will not, I believe, (for we must believe dying lips and dying words,) be afraid; but, enjoying this liberty, he will be as willing to die as he was willing to live. "Even so, come Lord Jesus, come quickly." Free from sin, free from the curse, free from the penal consequences of evil, and free from the sting of death,—the child of God lives free, dies free, and is buried free. We speak of the remains as free, and he will rise free at the last day. There are two bed-fellows—looking at the grave as a bed,—one is sin, and the other grace. If we die in our sins, we shall be buried in them;

and sin is a terrible bedfellow and in the morning of the resurrection, sin will rise with us. We shall carry our character into the grave with us, our interest in God or otherwise. Grace is a bed-fellow, and the sleeping dust of God's people is free even in the grave, and shall be raised in freedom and liberty at the last day.

Then, as to the greatness of this freedom, what shall I say? The child of God is free to enter the Holiest of all, whenever he wants a blessing. He is free to go quite up to the throne of his Heavenly Father, and open his lips in prayer before Him, at midnight or at noon, whenever he is pinched, whenever Satan tempts, whenever there is a wound, whenever there is a want, whenever he hungers or thirsts, whenever there is an influence Divine prompting him; he has unlimited liberty and freedom in this respect. Whenever he needs help, he may drop upon his knees, before the infinite Majesty of heaven; for he is the Lord's free man. Man may keep him out of this and that and the other position; but no man, and no devil, can keep the Lord's free people out of the holiest of all. The mind will rise, spiritual thoughts will ascend; for they have wings that devils cannot clip, and they mount on high, and enter into the holiest of all, and fall devoutly into the glory and majesty of God. They are free in relation to ordinances. Is it baptism? God's free men and women are at liberty to observe it. They are not baptised that they might become free; but having been made so, they follow their Liberator. Is it the Lord's supper? (Sir, the sacraments are administered to make us free.) No, the sacraments—if you will have that name, I don't care for it,—the sacraments are to be administered only to the Lord's free people. There must be life and a measure of liberty, or one is not entitled either to be baptized in the name of Jesus or to sit at the Master's table. Join the church, come all ye that fear God; I have a right to invite you, for the Lord has made me what I am, and made me in some respects like you. You and I are one, come and hear, I will declare what He has done for my soul. And further with respect to the extent of this liberty. All the powers of the mind are free. The understanding is enlightened, and is no longer the devil's slave in darkness. Satan keeps the shutters up before the window, as we have it elsewhere in this Epistle. "The prince of this world hath blinded" their understanding that they should not see. Satan keeps the light out. But grace divine comes and takes the shutters down, draws back the curtains, and lets in the living light of eternal truth and eternal day. And what discoveries are then made, and revelations then take place! No longer enslaved is the understanding. Men talk about free will. If the will is free, it is made so by grace,—free to love God, free to serve Him, and free to mount on high; according as it is written, "They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength," and mount up with wings as eagles. There it goes. How free is that eagle! It soars, and the whole heavens are its range, and it is at liberty to soar as high as its powers will carry it; so it is sometimes with the living child of God. The affections soar higher and higher, until the world appears a little thing, despicable and hollow. O beloved friends, nothing but a sense of this holy freedom can cause us to have proper views and apprehensions of things generally. I had some feeling when you sang that verse some time ago, and wondered whether everyone's thoughts corresponded with its character.

“ Could I command the spacious land,
And the more boundless sea,
For one blest hour ”

And I always think in this way, “ The spacious land,” all mine,—wonderful property you know. “ And the more boundless sea,” and both mine ! Now, what follows, could I command them both,

“ For one blest hour at Thy right hand,
I’d give them both away.”

Well, if you and I can adopt those words and use that language in all sincerity before our God, He has made us divinely free. The faculties and powers of the soul are free.

Lastly, *the Liberator Himself*—the great owner and proprietor of this character, the Lord’s free man. He has bought this people, not that they might be His slaves, but His redeemed servants. Brought them into liberty, redeemed them unto Himself, and called them into freedom ; and sometimes they are enabled to say, “ We will walk at liberty.” The Lord is their Proprietor, and they are free to serve Him, and not free from service like a wild creature in the wilderness ; and which is the better state of the two, freedom in the wilderness, or loving service at home ? The wild creature of the wilderness would not be in its element in the home and the position of the other. God’s people are not free from service, and they do not want to be free therefrom. The willing slaves of sin and Satan are free from God’s service and from righteousness, but the Lord’s people are free to serve Him, and their experience is that in doing so, is perfect freedom. It is sweet to preach when God is with the preacher, and sweet to sit in His house, and sing His praises and hear His word when He is with His people. Oh it is said those people that go to chapel are moping and melancholy characters ! They sit from time to time, and from hour to hour in a state of bondage. So the world judges ; but they do not understand it, for God has set His people free. Their liberty is spiritual and divine, and they experience more pleasure in the ways of God than sinners can possibly feel under the reign of the devil and sin.

I intended to say a word or two upon the privileges. The time is coming when our freedom will be perfect as to our enjoyment of it. I have sometimes thought that we are something like fish in a pail ; but by and bye we shall be like fish in the ocean or like a bird in a cage, which lives in the air and is tenderly cared for. By and bye God will take us out of the cage, and raise us out of the vessel, and put us into the Paradise of His eternal glory, where our liberty and freedom will be unbounded and unlimited in all respects for ever and ever. The Lord add His blessing, for Christ’s sake. Amen.

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“THE AMEN.”

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,
AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL.

“*These things saith the Amen.*”—Rev. iii. 14.

THE apostle John was very greatly favoured in the Isle of Patmos. Persecution had sent him into a dreary place; but no power on earth, and no malice in hell can exclude Jesus Christ from His beloved church and people. The Spirit of God was in the heart of Jonah when he was at the bottom of the sea in the fish's belly, and therefore he prayed to the Lord his God when he was there; and since no person can pray acceptably without the Spirit, and Jonah's prayer when he was in the fish's belly was accepted by God, the Spirit of the living God was with Jonah then. John was banished to the Isle of Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus, and Satan thereby intended to close his mouth, and to render it impossible for him to preach the gospel of the grace of God. The Lord, however, had a very important work for John to do in that solitude; and since nothing can exclude Christ from Christians, or God from His dear people, the Lord was pleased to go in a special way to that island, and remain with His servant there. We are told by John that he “was in the Spirit on the Lord's-day;” and hence it appears that he observed the Lord's day in that place, and that Jesus Christ was with him there; and so also was the Holy Spirit, for he was in the Spirit on that day. Christ and the Holy Ghost are inseparable, and are with the Father One; inasmuch as John was in the Spirit, Christ Himself was very near to him: and hearing a voice, and turning himself, he saw one like unto the Son of Man. Jesus Christ appeared to his servant John in His priestly office, and wearing His priestly robes, and also as walking among the seven churches, represented by the seven golden candlesticks. “In the midst of the seven churches was one like unto the Son of Man,” even Jesus Christ Himself,—the great High Priest of our profession—attending to the seven-branched lamp, which John saw. A message was delivered by the Lord to His servant, to each of the seven Asiatic churches. Christ was the Speaker on this occasion, and the message in every instance came from the Great Head of the church.

In the preceding verses we have a representation of the church in Philadelphia; and it appears the Master had no fault to find with the church in that place, and therefore He says, “I know thy works. Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it; for

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thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My word, and hast not denied My name." It is a very great blessing that Jesus Christ can be with His churches on the earth, and a great favour that He has bound Himself to be with them whilst they are here. "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Christian churches are sure to become weak and feeble, and to decay, without the presence of Jesus; for nothing that we have ever yet heard of can possibly be a sufficient substitute for the presence of the Lamb of God. There may be talent and great intellectual power in the pulpit, and the preacher may be a very eloquent man; the congregation may be very numerous and important, socially considered; yet if Jesus Christ is not in the church and congregation, nothing solidly or substantially good will be done; for nothing that is earthly can possibly form a substitute for the presence and grace of the Saviour. May it be our mercy and privilege to know much of our Lord; to be greatly favoured with His presence and His blessing; then, though the congregation be not very large, and the affairs of the church move on quietly and steadily, the prosperity will be deep and solid, with Jesus Christ in our midst, and His blessing falling upon us. In this manner the Lord delivered messages to the seven churches, and the words of my text this morning were addressed to the last church, viz., to that of Laodicea. "And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God."

I want to limit my thoughts and my remarks this morning to this title of our Lord:—"These things saith the Amen." Let me in the first place make a few remarks upon *the name itself*. It is a very striking title, and is worth meditating upon, as indeed everything is that belongs to our Lord. This, however, is a very striking and peculiar expression: "These things saith the Amen." Let us observe in the first place, that this great Amen is a glorious person; for He that spake to John stood before him, His eyes were as a flame of fire, and His hair was white like wool, and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace, while He delivered these messages to him; and therefore He was a person. The personal Amen of our salvation; the personal Verily, and the personal Verity of all that is eternally great and good, and not merely a verbal Amen. We use the word Amen at the close of our petitions, and sometimes at the end of our songs of praise. When we do so, our Amen is a verbal one, and it is sometimes a spiritual and experimental one; but here we have the great personal Amen of the Lord our God. Jesus is the only personal Amen in the universe, or the only person in the universe who can constitute everything certain, and divinely sure, and who can verify to the creatures of God all the promises and the declarations of His love. Angels regard our Lord as their great Amen, and all God's glorified people also look upon Him as the Amen of their heaven. The name itself is never applied to any other being, although the word is used by all in heaven, and by thousands and millions here on the earth. But why is this word or this title one of the names of our great Lord, but to indicate in the first place His fulness? It hath pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell in Him, and hence He assumes and has re-

ceived in fact the name of the great Amen. But how does it appear that He is the great Amen on account of the fulness that is in Him? Let us look at the Lord's Prayer. That consists of several very important petitions, and it closes with "Amen," which you may take and connect with every part and every petition of the prayer. "Our Father which art in heaven," and Christ follows as the Amen; "Hallowed be Thy Name,"—Amen, for Christ follows that petition; "Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done,"—connecting Christ, the Amen, with every petition in the prayer. Do this, and you will see that in that Amen you have the fulness and perfection of the whole prayer itself. The Amen embodies all its petitions, and all the blessings wanted by the petitioner. "Give us this day our daily bread," and Christ responds, "So be it;" for our daily bread is through Him. "Forgive us our sins," and Christ responds to that petition, "So be it;" for the pardon prayed for is in the glorious person of our great Amen. "These things saith the Amen." Now as all petitions are offered up in the name and person of the Saviour, so all the blessings of divine love are to be found in Him. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus." Do you want adoption? It is in Him in all its fulness, for God could not have adopted you in any other connection. Do you want pardon? It is in Christ in all its fulness, suitability, and perfection. Do you want justification? It is in Christ, for God justifies the sinner for the sake of His dear Son. And do you want that grace which is necessary to enable saints to persevere in a course of holiness? "He keepeth the feet of His saints;" He loveth judgment; He hateth to put away, and all persevering grace is in this great Amen. Are you looking forward to the time when you will close your eyes in death, and open them in an unknown world, and enter into a state of which at present you can form only a most inadequate idea? Jesus possesses the glory of heaven, and the bliss and blessedness which shall be experienced by His people for ever, are treasured up in the glorious person of our Lord. "Therefore these things saith the personal Amen of our God," who possesses all that fulness which is necessary to save. It is all in Him; the great total and sum of all is in the person of the great Son of God. Jesus embodies all that is found in the gospel. The promises and truths of the Bible are Jesus Christ, if I may so put it, they are Jesus Christ, distributed, scattered abroad on the pages of revelation; and Jesus Christ is the Bible totalised, or, He is the great sum of all the glorious gospel of the blessed God. We have the promises in the Word for our comfort and consolation, but they are all Yea and Amen in Christ Jesus, unto the glory of God by us. So that Jesus is here spoken of, or rather speaks of Himself, as the Amen, to indicate all the fulness of salvation, and also its divine certainty. Do not forget that; for nothing is more certain than the salvation of sinners; and nothing, my dear friends, is more certain than your personal safety, if you are deeply and spiritually concerned about your souls. I would comfort the little ones, if I could and might. If you are deeply concerned about your souls, feeling you are guilty sinners, and talk about it, not in public, but in private, before the God of heaven and earth, and frequent your closets, dealing with

God concerning this matter, your salvation is absolutely certain, and God's great Amen is inseparably connected with it. "Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation." "These things saith the Amen."

Having made these few remarks on the title itself, let me in the second place try to show that *Christ is God's great Amen*, or the great Verily of God the Father. Look at Christ in connection with all the purposes of God. We do not know them all, for all are not made known, and probably there are more concealed than revealed; for all the mysteries of divine salvation and eternal life do not appear upon the surface. There are depths which have never yet been explored, and divine mysteries which have never yet been named or discovered, though sufficient have been revealed for all saving purposes. Secret things belong to the Lord, whilst things which are revealed belong to us, and to our children. Many Divine decrees are revealed, and Christ is God's "So be it" to every one of them; and many great purposes recorded in the word of Divine Truth, and Christ is God's, "So let it be" to them all. They are all Yea, for they are all in Christ; and the greatness of His Person, and the solemnity of His engagements, constitute the fulfilment of them an absolute certainty. Hence I repeat the text again. "All the promises of God in Him are Yea, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God by us." Not only the purposes of God, but His great promises also. They are numerous, exceeding great and precious; and probably millions of saints have been cheered and helped by them. This is to me a mystery; a mystery which indicates the divinity of the promises of God, that they are as precious as ever. Thousands and millions have drawn comfort and consolation from them, but they are as full as ever; and those which were applied to you years ago, and which then sustained and supported your spirits, come occasionally to your minds even now with as much freshness as in days gone by. They do not become flat; they never grow stale; they will never be obsolete, and fresh promises will never be required; and this is all owing to the fact that divinity is in them. They are God's promises, and He is in them; and if promises so enriching, so sanctifying, and so helpful, were not certain—and I hope I am right—we might almost be sorry that God ever gave them. Promises so great, so suitable, and so necessary, and yet none of them certain! Why, this would fill us with sorrow, and their very greatness and excellence would tend to depress and distress us. They are just what we want, and they contain or express all we require; but we do not know whether they will be fulfilled or not! Now Paul comes in here, saying, "All the promises of God in Him are Yea, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God by us." Separate this great Amen from God's promises, and there is not another being in the world, or in the universe, that can make them good, and fulfil them. Place Gabriel's name, and his person, and his power, against the promises and you cannot then be satisfied that they will be fulfilled; and even the Father apart from the Son, cannot fulfil them, since it requires a complex person, or the presence and the operations of the great Son of God, to make them good, and all that is essential to their fulfilment we have in Jesus Christ. God's Amen is inseparably connected with every promise God has given. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but God's Word

shall never pass away. "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee." Amen is my prayer and yours. Amen is God's So be it, or His method of constituting His promises divinely firm, and absolutely certain and sure. The great Promiser has by connecting His promises with Christ, said, "So be it ; So let it be ; It shall be so for ever and ever." I am not surprised that on that interesting occasion when Solomon was made king of Israel, his good old father David said, "Set him on my own mule, and bring him down to Gihon, and anoint him king over Israel; for he shall be king in my stead : and Benaiah said, "Amen ; the Lord God of my lord the king say so too." Very wonderful are those words—"Amen, and the Lord God of my lord the king say so too." See 1st chapter of the 1st Book of Kings. It matters not where we may place our Amen, nor how frequently we may say it, if the Lord our God does not say so too ; but the great God of heaven has placed His own great Amen against every promise of His mouth; and therefore, "heaven and earth shall pass away" before one jot or tittle of God's word can fail. And then with regard my Christian friends, to the desires and hopes of God's people. What is prayer, but an expression of desire and want. If in prayer we express no desire, no hope, no want, our acts, or apparent acts of worship are not spiritual, nor are they prayer at all. We go and express our heartfelt desires before God, and God places His So be it against them. We go and tell Him our wants, and intreat Him to supply them. And oh how sweet the fact that the God of heaven on His throne says, "So let it be;" and then the blessing comes. David says, "I love the Lord, because He hath heard my voice and my supplication; because He hath inclined His ear unto me, therefore will I call upon Him as long as I live." Well, then, are the purposes of God fixed ? Yes, they are in Christ, God's great Amen. Are the promises of God sure ? Yes ; they are in Christ, God's great Amen. Will the desires of God's people be fulfilled ? Yes ; "He will fulfil the desire of them that fear Him," by His own Amen, His well-beloved Son. That trembling hope of yours, which you sometimes fear is not a good one, but which has been created in your hearts by God the eternal Spirit, is a divine hope, and it is worth more than a world, for it is what a world and worlds could not have produced. And what is the object of that hope ? Well, the object of your hope is manifold, since it is divine, and God the Holy Ghost has produced it in your hearts. Jesus is, if I may so speak, the great Amen of that hope, and as surely as He is exalted at the Father's right hand, so surely shall that hope be realised, for Christ is God's "So be it." Therefore, concerning all spiritual blessings, and especially that great blessing, salvation. It is said, "Israel SHALL be saved in the Lord, with an everlasting salvation."

Now, let us notice in the third place, that *Christ is His own Amen*. "These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness." Look at this, in the first place, in connection with the covenant of grace and peace, between the Father and the Son, or as we have, it "which was between them both." Men want us to believe, and their number is very great, that God has entered into a covenant with poor lost and ruined men, and that He has taken their pledges and promises and resolutions, and

that their salvation depends in a great measure upon their fulfilment of the resolutions they have formed. My dear friends, the covenant of peace and grace was between the Father and the Son, not to the exclusion of the Eternal Spirit, and our great and glorious Redeemer entered into certain covenant engagements with His Father. The Father is represented as proposing the conditions of salvation ; for here, be it observed, I have no objection to the word "condition" in connection with salvation. Salvation was conditional in the experience of our Lord, but it is not conditional as to the true experience of poor sinners. It was conditional to the Saviour, for the Father stipulated that His moral government should be sustained, and Christ responded "Amen, I will sustain it ; that His holy law should be magnified, and Christ assented to and accepted that ; that Divine Justice should be satisfied, and Christ assented to and accepted that ; that guilt should be expiated, and sin be put away for ever, and Christ assented to and accepted that : and thus He gave His pledge to His Father when the great conditions of salvation were proposed, and as He has fulfilled those conditions he is the final Amen, and His own solemn Verily. Salvation to you and me now is a divine and an absolute certainty. He is His own Amen, and ours also. Then contemplate Him, in the next place, in the Garden of Gethsemane. I love to view him there, especially when I am in a heavenly and spiritual frame of mind. I love to see the reality of His humanity, and the perfection of His Person and character there. "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me." Then hear Him respond to His heavenly Father's determination, "Nevertheless not My will, but Thine be done." So be it. I will do Thy will on the earth and also in heaven. Amen. Hear the word of our Lord, "Thy will be done, Amen, and He took the cup from His heavenly Father and emptied it. He drained it of all its dregs, and left not one behind, and thus responded to His Father's call and fulfilled His own covenant engagements, "Nevertheless, not my will but Thine be done." Hear Him, further, on the cross having put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself and fulfilled all His engagements so far. "These things saith the Amen," "'It is finished,' and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost." This great Amen left His Father's bosom with "Verily, verily, I say it shall be done." In the garden He said, "Thy will be done, Amen." And on the cross He finished transgression and saved sinners, and said, "It is finished, and bowed His head and gave up the ghost."

And has He ceased to wear that name? No, He wears it now. In the first chapter of this book, which I read at the commencement of the service, He appeared to John and He said, "I am the first and the last. I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen ; and have the keys of hell and of death," Now He is in heaven, He rejoices in the great fact that this is His name and His character on His Father's throne. No promise is applied without Him, and no blessing falls from heaven upon poor sinners without the concurrence and power of our great and glorious Lord ; and when the Spirit works in the heart, Jesus Christ accepts the desires and hopes which the Holy Ghost produces, and responds to them for His own sake and for the sake of His Father.

Then in the next place, as time is going, *He is the Amen of His people.* The Amen of God, His own Amen, and the Amen of all saved sinners. "There is none other name under heaven, given among men whereby we must be saved;" and it is impossible to enter into the Holiest of all by any other name; and the sinner that is rightly taught wants no other person, no other Saviour, and no other name.

"Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling;
Naked, come to Thee for dress,
Helpless, look to Thee for grace;
Black, I to the Fountain fly!
Wash me, Saviour, or I die!"

Christ begins religion in the hearts of His people with "Verily, verily, I say unto you," which is another form of Amen, and He consummates it in their experience and life here with His own Amen. "These things saith the Amen." Well, you thus plead the name of Jesus; and you connect His Person as well as you can with your imperfect prayers and praises. Oh! how sweet it is when we can believably and with spiritual feeling hang our petitions on that great Name. The Lord said concerning a certain type of the Saviour, "I will fasten Him as a nail in a sure place, and they shall hang upon Him all the glory of His Father's house." Our Lord is the nail, the mediatorial nail fastened in a sure place, and all the glory of His Father's house hangs upon Him. You have some holy wants, and you hang them there. You have some prayerful desires, and you hang them there. You have a poor, broken heart, a troubled mind, and distressed conscience, and as well as you can you hang them all on that strong nail; for they shall hang upon Him all the glory of His Father's house. He is God's Amen, God's "So be it" to us, and He is our Amen before God. Heavenly Father, so let it be, for the sake of Thy dear Son.

In the next place, He is *the Amen of all heaven.* Some words used by the saints can never be used by God's angels. This name of our dear Lord, however is sweet to every angel in heaven, for He is the Amen of every one. He gave them their being, and their bliss, and perpetuates them both. He is the great Amen to their immortality, and to the everlasting duration of their bliss and blessedness. All saved sinners above find Jesus Christ to be the source of their pleasure, and the spring and cause of their perpetual joys before the throne. Their fixedness of thought, their stability, their serenity, their eternal pleasures arise out of their experimental connection with this great Verily of our God, or God's great Amen. He makes all certain there, and all certain here, and all certain in the experience of His dear people. But the time is coming when He will appear as the Judge of the quick and the dead; and when as a Judge He will sit on the throne, and try assembled worlds, and what a loud and solemn Amen will fall from the glorified lips of ransomed millions when the final sentence is passed. "Come, ye blessed of my Father," oh! then, it will be sweet to respond "Amen." But are you going through? I must: "Depart, ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. The Lord said to Moses, Pronounce the curses as well.

as the blessings, and all the people shall answer and say, Amen. When the Judge shall pass sentence of death and punishment upon a guilty world, all shall acquiesce in the equity and righteousness of the proceeding and respond, "Amen." "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" I cannot sing now about the eternal destruction and torments of the wicked, but would rather praise God for having taken me in and saved me from sin; and yet I would quietly and silently contemplate the condition of the wicked. But at the last day there shall be a universal response to all the proceedings of the Judge, for the equity of His decisions shall be apparent to all.

One thought more, and then I will close. Our Lord is *the Amen of all the Holy Scriptures*. He is their Alpha and Omega,—the Verily with which they commence, and the Amen with which they conclude. I have already mentioned the promises. He is the Amen of all the doctrines, and of all the precepts. I tell you, my dear brother and sister, if you can take this great personal Amen of God as your own, place Him at the end of every precept of God's law, you will be wondrously happy. The ten words of God, or the whole law, if you can take God's Amen and place Him at the end of every one of them, no curse shall ever fall on you; for Christ has magnified that law, and made it honourable. "These things saith God's Amen" in relation to God's holy law. He assented to its excellence, and divinity, and glory, and fulfilled it and made it honourable. He is the Amen of the Gospel, of the law, of all the types and shadows, and of the ordinances of God's house. "Do this in remembrance of Me." These things saith that great Being, who is the sum and substance, the beginning and the end of all the Scriptures of God. And is it not our prayer, Our Father which art in heaven, for Christ's sake, pardon my sins, and give me my daily bread, and lead me not into temptation, but deliver me from evil. I offer Thy Son's great name, who is the Amen, as my reason for presenting these petitions, and as the only ground on which I hope they will be heard and answered. On what I have said may the Lord command His blessing, for Christ's sake. Amen.

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THINGS REMOVED, AND THINGS REMAINING.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JUNE 15th, 1884.

"And this word, yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain."—Heb. xii. 27.

THE inspired apostle's object in writing this Epistle to the church of God, was to prove and illustrate the great fact that the Lord Jesus Christ is "all and in all," and therefore the epistle is a most comprehensive one. It commences with a very grand and important representation of the person, character, and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in introducing the divine Saviour of sinners, and dwelling upon His personal and official excellencies and glories, the writer of this letter was led by the Spirit to compare, or rather to contrast, Him with a considerable number of other beings and characters. In the first place, Christ is compared with angels; and the apostle says in the first chapter, "Unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten thee?" And again, "To which of the angels said He at any time, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?" Though the angels of God are great in number and in strength,—for He maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire,—yet they are unspeakably and evidently inferior to our great and glorious Lord. They are all the production of His power; they are all His spiritual servants; they go and come at His bidding, and He sends them to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation. And then, in the next place, the Epistle contrasts the great Emmanuel with the first man, and this fact you will read at your leisure in the second chapter of the letter. The first man, Adam, was great; his character was formed by God, and the garden in which His Creator placed him was a marvellous position; but our Christ is infinitely greater than Adam, and the heaven which he occupies, and is filling, is infinitely better than the Eden which was lost. Moses was a very important personage in the estimation of the Jewish nation, and he was indeed a very extraordinary character, for he was faithful in all God's house. He was the meekest of men, and lived near to God; but Moses had no glory, so to speak, as compared with the superior excellence of his great Lord and Master. Joshua was a most prominent person. After the death of Moses he took a very high position in relation to the children of Israel, and led them through Jordan, and gave them, through God, the land of promised rest; but our Christ is infinitely greater than Moses, and far surpasses Joshua. Christ is infinitely greater than the first Jewish priest who was consecrated by

God's command, viz., Aaron, who is introduced by Paul. Aaron's character is drawn, his official work is described, and he is represented indeed as the "saint of the Lord." It was, however God's intention to remove those priests, and His purpose that the Levitical priesthood should cease to exist; and therefore Melchisedec, a very remarkable person an character is introduced, who was "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life, but being made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest continually." He was without father and mother, and without beginning of days, and end of life, as to his office. Under the Jewish dispensation, the sons of Levi could not commence their official life before they were thirty years of age, and therefore they were not without beginning of days officially considered, and when they had reached the age of fifty years, they were removed from their office and work; but Melchisedec was without beginning of official days and end of life, and our great Lord abides a Priest continually, after the order of Melchisedec. Well, in this manner the apostle compares Christ with other great personages who had appeared upon the scene, until by way of closing the letter, he says, "See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh; for if they escaped not who refused Him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven." Doubtless you remember that this Epistle opens in this way:—"God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son;" and here it is said, "See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh; for if they escaped not who refused Him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven: whose voice—when He gave the law, and there were thunders and lightnings—whose voice then shook the earth; but now He hath promised, saying, "Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven;" and this prediction you will read at your leisure in the prophecies of Haggai. "And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain."

Now let us for a few minutes confine our attention to the text, and notice a few points which it includes. In the first place, I should like to call your attention to *some of the many terminable things which have appeared in the world, and will again appear*. We read of things that are shaken—"that are shaken because they are made, and of those things being removed." Now there are many important things that are terminable, and not perpetual things, that were brought into existence by God, for a certain purpose, and remained in operation for years or ages, or centuries, and then were removed. Let me notice in the first place, that this wide view of terminable things may include the original state of things in the garden of Eden, in connection with the first man. I know there is a great deal that is deep and mysterious, in connection with the innocency of Adam; his representative character, his awful fall, and of all his posterity in him; but it is very evident, looking at what really occurred, that that was a terminable state of things; and it was so because it was conditional. The condition on which it rested was the obedience of the first man, who was the natural and federal head, not of

the church, but of the world. All the holy interests, all the happiness, all the welfare, and all the brightness of an everlasting future for the world was based upon the obedience of a creature, upon the perpetual and perfect obedience of a man. Adam was a good man, not in the sense in which God's people now are said to be good people, for I do not think he was a spiritual man, though he was an innocent, a righteous, an upright creature. He was a good man, a great man, a perfect man, a man who possessed powers which qualified him for his position, and to obey his Maker in that state, and to retain his standing; but he was a creature, a fallible being. There was something, however, in another being, the old serpent, that was strong against original rectitude, and Adam yielded to temptation, and ceased to obey, and that economy ceased at once to exist; and Adam and all the millions of his posterity became a mass of moral wrong and ruins. That state of things, though it was of God, was terminable, and not absolutely perpetual. It was not based upon any eternal decree, that it should remain; it was not based upon the person, engagements, and character of the Son of God; that economy rested as to its duration upon the perfect and perpetual obedience of an uncertain, a fallible man, and the world fell, and now by nature we are all the fallen sons and daughters of Adam. But there are other things—that we shall reach presently,—which cannot be shaken, and which shall remain for ever. I will here take leave to say, that some persons have said in relation to the fall of man, that it was a Divine failure! I cannot tell you how deeply I loathe all expressions of that description. A Divine failure! I can understand human failures, creature failures; but I cannot understand a Divine failure. Christ was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; therefore the God of heaven had made provision for the fall, and for the ruin and destruction which followed upon the transgression of Adam. In God's eternal purpose and decree, there were the Lamb, the sacrifice, and the blood, before the guilt was contracted, before the sin was committed, before the world fell. All had been prepared and anticipated by God; and hence Christ is said to be the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. It *was* a failure. That state of things did shake, give way, and was removed. Yes; it was a failure; but it was *human*, and not Divine; it was Adam's failure, and not the failure of God. Blessed for ever be the name of God, that human failure, terrible as it was, did not imperil or even affect the higher and nobler covenant of grace, which God had made with His dear Son.

Secondly, this will include the Jewish dispensation; and indeed, I believe this is the primary idea, the leading thought or fact of the writer. The apostle says, "This word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made." What does he mean? "As of things that are made." The tabernacle was one of the things that were made,—made by Moses, made according to Divine order, and according to the pattern shown by God to Moses in the mount, but it was made by man, and not "the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man." The tabernacle and the temple were both of them made by human hands; both of them shook; both of them were removed, and another substantial and permanent temple

has taken their places. The veil of the temple was made by Divine direction, and according to Divine instruction ; but human hands made it. The ark was made of shittim wood, and the mercy-seat upon it of pure gold, and all its contents also were made. The golden vessel that was in it, Aaron's rod that budded the tables of stone, were all deposited therein by human hands. And where is that mercy-seat? Removed. The temple and the literal holiest of all in which it was placed were shaken, for all were made by human hands ; all were material things, and all that was material was removed for the purpose of making room for that which is spiritual, heavenly, divine, and eternal. I might have said a word or two about the patriarchal dispensation, for that came in between the Adamic state of things in the garden of Eden, and the Jewish dispensation, of which we have been speaking. Immediately after the fall, God's method of dispensing the covenant of grace was peculiar. The patriarchs occupied an interesting position. Before the birth of Moses, and the formation of God's national church in the wilderness, each family was a kind of little church in itself, and the officiating priest in every house was the father of the family ; and hence the dispensation is designated patriarchal. Noah officiated in his house and family as the priest of the Lord. Abraham the patriarch also in his family, was the Lord's priest, and Jacob never called in any person to lead the worship of God in his house ; for he himself served as the priest in his own family ; thus each family was regarded as a congregation of worshippers. Adam's state is gone ; the patriarchal state made way for the Jewish economy, and the Jewish dispensation has been shaken and removed, to make way for that kingdom which cannot be moved,—the glorious gospel dispensation.

Now to introduce one or two little matters into the text, which perhaps, do not properly or strictly speaking, belong to it. I will just say that all human organisations shall be shaken and removed ; even those which are good and necessary, and the influence of which upon the world, and upon individuals, is exceedingly beneficial. Do you not read that the time is coming when He shall put down all rule,—*all*, that is a large word, at least, it is a very comprehensive one in its meaning. When He shall have put down all rule, and all authority, and power. Nations great, and most compact, "have been shaken and removed." The Roman empire was once the mistress of the world, and was proud of her own lustre, brightness, and glory. What has become of it? There are nations in existence in the present day, which are compact, and some of them occupy, morally considered, comparatively high positions ; but all the nations of the earth by and by shall be shaken, and all human arrangements and organisations shall melt away, and one reigning Monarch only shall appear ; one great throne only shall be seen standing in the universe, and one Lord only shall meet the eyes of the countless millions of God's creatures, and that will be the Lord of life and glory. But another terminable matter, and I will pass on, and that is the heaven and the earth which now are. I am not going to speculate in this question. There is a great deal in the Bible that I do not understand, and I go to my God and fall upon my knees and say, "Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law." Some people

tell us that the heavens over our heads will be purified and retained, and that the earth, our world, will be purified by the fire that shall burn it, and that God will retain it in the universe. It may be so, or it may not be so; I will not take upon myself to say how it will be, for I do not know. Looking into the word of God, I read that "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth and all things that are therein shall be burned up;" but if it should be otherwise, and if God has been pleased to conceal His intentions in relation to those matters from us all, a knowledge of it, if we could attain to it, would not be profitable to us. At all events, the world shall end,—God has shaken it, and are there not shocks occurring now? I don't mean earthquakes merely: are there not political and ecclesiastical, and military, and national shocks occurring to the earth, to the world in which we live? Are there not convulsions now occurring? God is shaking the nations, and I do not think the time is very distant when another state of things or aspect of affairs will appear. I do not know: but I am not looking for the coming of Jesus Christ to-morrow morning; I am not so enthusiastic as that. I think a great work remains to be done before Christ appears the second time. People talk about the Papacy—that is to come down; it is one of those things that our God will shake and remove—the beast, even antichrist. People talk about the Papacy, as if that were the only hostile power and system. But what about Mahometanism? That system of religion is as opposed to Christianity as the other; and they are all to be swept away, for they are all made and originated by the devil and men; and they shall all sink, and Christ and His church in purity and perfection shall reign for ever and ever.

Now let me notice in the second place, *the things which cannot be shaken*. I have tried to offer a few remarks on matters in the government of God which are terminable, but there are "things which cannot be shaken," and shall remain. What are they? Well, they are too numerous to be mentioned by me at this time, and therefore I will just refer to one or two of them. In the first place, the eternal priesthood of our dear Lord is included. Where is Aaron? He is dead, and his soul is in heaven. And where is the tribe of Levi? The Jews do not know themselves. The tribe of Levi has disappeared, and the Levitical priesthood has been done away, and now we have a Great High Priest, one only, an immortal one; a brother who is made a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec. Aaron was not sworn into office, but the Lord sware and will not repent, (concerning Christ.) Thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec. The Priesthood of our Lord covers the whole ground, while Aaron's covered none of it; at all events, all that was seen upon the ground was a shadow of good things to come; and shadows cannot save souls nor satisfy minds. That which saves souls must be substantial; and that which satisfies the craving of the sinner's heart must be, not a shadow, but a divine reality and a glorious substance. Well, here we have what we want, and what God requires. Here we have an eternal Priest, an eternal Altar, an eternal Sacrifice, and an everlasting salvation. Christ can never be shaken out of His Priesthood; He will never vacate His seat; never take the mitre

or the priestly crown from His head. He abideth a Priest continually; wherefore He is able to save, which Aaron was not able to do,—He is able to save unto the uttermost of extent, to the uttermost of degree, to the uttermost of sin, of the devil, of time, of unworthiness; able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. There is something solid, lasting and everlasting here—the Priesthood of your Lord. Creep beneath His shadow; hide believingly, dear friends, under His atonement, and you shall remain in perfection as long as the perfection of that atonement remains.

Secondly, the gospel, which is an epitome of the covenant of grace. Therefore let us blend or unite them together—the glorious gospel of the blessed God, and the covenant of His grace. The covenant of grace is the original, and the gospel is a Divine copy of that original. The covenant of works—has that been shaken? Well, it was transgressed, and out of that arrangement another dispensation of things proceeded, for it became a fiery law for sinners. But of the covenant of grace, hear what David says: “Although my house be not so with God, [Absalom is dead, and others of my children have given me more pain than tongue can tell; and as for the religion of heaven, I do not see much of it in my family; but although my house is not so with God,] yet He hath made with me an everlasting covenant.” A what? “An everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure. This is all my salvation, and all my desire, although He maketh it not to grow.” Oh my dear brethren, human systems must fall, and are falling; and some systems which were divine as to their appointment, have given way, and are still giving way; but here is an arrangement of things which is as lasting as eternity, because it is based upon Divine principles, which are inseparable from the being and glory of our God. “I will give unto them the sure mercies of David;” not uncertain ones, but the sure mercies of the true and everlasting David. Do you think, then, that the doctrines of the gospel will never be shaken? Never! not so as to be removed. There are many powers attempting to shake them, but the gospel is the everlasting Gospel. What is election, but eternal election? What is redemption, but eternal redemption? What is justification, but irreversible eternal justification? What is the life of God in the souls of sinners but eternal eternal life? “I give unto My sheep eternal life; and they shall never perish.” What are the promises of God, but all yea and amen? They cannot be shaken, since they are not based upon human conditions, but are “Yea and Amen in Christ Jesus, to the glory of God by us.” The former dispensation has disappeared, and ceased to exist. And now we have another kingdom which cannot be removed, in which Christ is the everlasting Priest, and the covenant of grace appears in all its solidity and permanence for ever and ever.

The church of God is another great object that cannot be shaken, but must remain the church of the living God for ever. Peter, you say that I am the Christ, the Son of the living God. I will tell you what you are: I say unto thee that thou art Peter; and upon this Rock (which thou hast mentioned) upon this Rock, (pointing at Himself,) the Son of the living God, will I build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. We have received a kingdom that cannot be moved, and

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

Now just think of some of the various representations of Zion which occur in the Word. “Thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down: not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. But there the glorious Lord shall be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams;” or in place of them, because the heathen nations round about Canaan sneered at Israel, because they had no noble river flowing in their land. Moab could speak of theirs, and Babylon of theirs, and Egypt of theirs, and so on; but Israel had no great river. Jordan was comparatively small, and the brook Kishon was contemned. In relation to that fact God empowered them to say, “But there the glorious Lord will be unto us in place of broad rivers and streams.” Better have the Maker of rivers, and want a river, than have the broadest and deepest rivers, and want the God that made them. There the glorious Lord will be unto us in place of broad rivers and streams, and so peculiar is it, no galley with oars shall go therein, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby. The Thames, upon which millions of pounds’ worth of merchandise, and provision are constantly floated into London, is open to the sea, and the sea is open to other nations, the navies of which might, and would if God did not prevent, also come into London. The river of this great city of Zion is God Himself, not a material river. Well, some of the things that cannot be shaken are the Priesthood of Christ, the covenant of grace, the gospel of God’s dear Son, and the church of the living God. But I want for a few minutes to refer to another matter. “Thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation.” This we have just now passed over. Certain persons “shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever.” The church of the living God abideth for ever. Now then, are you enemies to God and to His people? If so, “walk about Zion, and go round about her.” If you think she is an insignificant object, and that her foundations are rotten, or are not good, and that she is exposed to destruction, “walk about Zion, and go round her; tell the towers thereof, mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generations following: for this God is our God for ever and ever: He will be our Guide even unto death.” “The word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made; that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.”

Two points more, and I will pass on. The finished work of our Lord is another of the things that cannot be shaken.

“’Tis finished! said His dying breath,
 And shook the gates of hell.”

His finished work cannot be shaken; it will stand, last, endure for ever. And another point is the Spirit’s work in the hearts of the saints of God. That is another thing that shall remain as long as the Spirit remains in the heart. But may He not leave the saints? We do not read so in the Word, nor anything like it. I believe that the work of the

Holy Spirit is as permanent as the work of Jesus Christ, as perpetual and long-enduring as the work of the great Son of God, and that it is one of the things which cannot be shaken, but shall remain. Well, here it comes to this: Here is the sinner saved, and the Holy Ghost in his heart. The Holy Spirit leads that sinner by the gospel, which is eternal truth, to embrace the Priest and the priesthood of the Saviour, and to cast Himself upon His finished work for eternal salvation and life; and neither that person nor the foundation on which He is resting can ever be shaken to pieces. These are some of the things which cannot be shaken.

Thirdly, let me *try to assign some reasons for all this*; that is, for the perpetuity of this new kingdom. I have already quoted the Lord's words to Peter. Take that text again as one of the reasons for the perpetuity of this Gospel kingdom. "Upon this rock will I build my church." The sand—Oh no; God or Christ does not build a city that is to endure for ever upon the sand. Wood—that would decay. Bricks, concrete, bricks—they are creature or human foundations; for bricks are made by man: but Rock is made by God. Man can take a piece of clay and make it into a brick; but he cannot of clay or anything else make a rock. Rock is God's production. There is none like our God and He in Christ is the rock of His own city, the foundation of Zion. Upon this Rock will I build My church. Then God's reasons for doing all this are abiding reasons: they remain for ever; He never changes them. If God's reasons for having originated a church, and for building it should not abide, or if He should change His mind, or alter His will, then the church would shake and tumble down; but if His reasons for becoming our God are enduring, then He will be our God for ever and ever. "I," saith the Lord, "will be a wall of fire round about her." That must be a daring enemy that ventures to go through a wall of fire. "I will be a wall of fire round about her, [without an opening,] and the glory in the midst of her." Christ is the Head of the church and the root of grace, and whilst the Head lives, and there is life in the root, and union between Christ and His people endures, the church of God cannot be shaken, but must remain.

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THE SAINT'S REST,—PREPARED, PROMISED, AND GIVEN.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JUNE 1st, 1884.

“And He saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on My right hand, and on My left, is not Mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of My Father.”—Matt. xx. 23.

ALTHOUGH the disciples were near to the Master when He was here in the flesh, many of their views and thoughts concerning Him were exceedingly carnal. They regarded Him not only as the promised Messiah, but as a temporal Prince; for He was in point of fact, the Son of David. They were looking that He should become the King of the Jews, assume the reins of government, and literally ascend His father David's throne. Therefore they said, “Wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom unto Israel?” This was the case on this interesting occasion, when the mother of Zebedee's children brought her two sons to Jesus and said to Him, “Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on Thy right hand, and the other on the left, in Thy kingdom.” The feelings of the mother ran in the general course, concerning the temporal reign of the Lord Jesus Christ. Her thoughts on this particular occasion had respect to Christ's ministers of state, and therefore being actuated in some measure by sentiments of ambition and pride, she desired to speak in time, especially as Jesus had manifested a peculiar partiality for James and John. “Grant that these my two sons may sit on Thy right hand, and on the left in Thy kingdom.” And Jesus said, “Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with? And they said, We are able.” The Master said, “Ye shall indeed drink of My cup, and be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with.” You are My followers, and members of My mystical body; you are My servants, and sons of God, and you must be conformed to Me in suffering as well as in spirituality and holiness, and therefore you shall drink of My cup and be baptised with My baptism. I have to drink of the cup of persecution, and to be baptised with the baptism of suffering and sorrow, and in the world ye shall have tribulation; nevertheless “to sit on My right hand, and on My left, is not Mine,” as Man, as Mediator, apart from My Father, to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of Him.

Let us look at the latter part of the verse: “To sit on My right hand and on My left, is not Mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared.” In the first place, let us direct our attention to

the interesting and glorious privilege indicated here, viz., that of sitting on the right hand, and on the left of the Lord Jesus Christ in His kingdom. I shall make no critical observations on the right and the left hands of the Lord Jesus: therefore we notice, first, that we have here the idea of eternal nearness to our Lord. If we in His kingdom sit on His right hand, and on His left, as it were, we shall be for ever near to Him, and nearer to Him than we can possibly be here. I do hope that most of my hearers this morning know what it is occasionally to be near to the Lord, and to hold sweet fellowship with God, in and through Him. You know what it is to enter into your closets, to leave the world outside, to rise above the influence of your circumstances, and to have communion with the dear Redeemer. How sweet are the moments when all one's thoughts are absorbed in the Saviour, and one's heart is lost as it were, in the grace of Immanuel. "That is fanaticism, sir." No; it is a part of the occasional experience of the beloved people of God; and if on earth, by faith, it is so sweet to sit at Jesus' feet, what must it be to "sit on His right hand, and on His left," in the eternal felicity of heaven, where we shall be near Him as we cannot be near to Him here! We shall be personally near to Him; our minds will be near to His; our bodies will be near to His, and we shall be for ever within sight of the beloved Son of God. We shall see Him for ever; for nothing will ever arise in that blessed world to divert our attention from the glorious Immanuel. Certain persons are near to Her Majesty the Queen; but the great majority of her subjects are at a great distance from her. The persons nearest to her are the Royal Family. Then many persons in official positions, as statesmen and others, are near to her, and various servants are in the royal palace, while outside is the nation itself. But all the people of God will be for ever near to the Redeemer. One will not be farther from Him than another. You are ready to say, "You cannot explain that mystery." I am glad I cannot. Our bodies and our souls will be universally spiritual; and what it is to be absolutely free from corruption, and from the flesh and blood which cannot enter into the kingdom of God, I do not yet know; but if we are saints, our bodies shall be made like unto the glorious body of the Redeemer; and then with millions of other happy saints, we shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. We shall enter heaven and see Christ as He is, and be like Him for ever. Here we meet together in God's house, and catch a glimpse of heaven, and of the Saviour, and then He disappears again, or at all events, we cease to see Him; and hence the complaint:—

"I count it long since I received
A visit from the Lord."

But having entered heaven, and taken our seats in the presence of the Redeemer, we shall rest for ever. There we shall for ever view His face, meditate upon His grace, contemplate His charms, and so to speak, for ever lose ourselves in His boundless and mysterious grandeur and glory. And is it not a position of honour, to sit on the right hand and on the left of Jesus for ever? No trace of sin and guilt will appear, and no taint of iniquity. All shall be pure as the Son of God, and holy and transparent as Immanuel Himself; and no spot or blemish will ever

appear upon them. What must it be to be free from sin, absolutely free from all marks of transgression and iniquity ! Here we pray, and sometimes send all our thoughts for a few moments up to heaven, and then Satan comes and diverts our minds, interferes with our communion with God, and interrupts our joy. But then there will be no corruption in the soul, no depravity in our nature, and no remains of sin left ; and therefore there will be eternal honour as well as eternal nearness to the Saviour. A spot in heaven would unparadise the place. A blot upon the character, or upon the person of one of God's dear people, would leave peace and joy impossible. It is the determination of God so to wash every saint in the blood of the Lamb, as to remove every stain, and so to work by His Spirit in every heart, as to make every saint all-glorious within. There we shall be as if the fall had never taken place, and we had never sinned. Yet we shall never forget the fall, nor our sinnership, our vileness, our uncleanness, our character as fallen creatures, and hence the song will be "Unto Him that hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in His blood."

But, in the next place, so to sit in heaven with our Lord indicates eternal rest. There God's people rest from their labours, in the place which has been prepared for them. Here we are weary ; for we are journeying towards home and eternity, and we are oftentimes, if one may speak for others, cast down and distressed, because we cannot see our signs, and wonder whether our religion be genuine or not. I shall not preach so as to encourage doubts and fears ; and yet I would never discourage those who have them, for I have no whip for fearing and doubting ones. I know you would not fear or doubt if you could help it : but this is the experience of many of the people of God. Oh ! it is hard to be godly ; for it is to be in the field of conflict, and to be engaged in battle from day to day. There is always something to fight against, and always something to oppose ; but the time is coming when all that shall cease. The journey of life will be ended, the work done, the weariness past and gone, and the ransomed spirit shall glide confidently and righteously out of the body into a better world, and into the presence of the Redeemer. Some have said that they should be satisfied if they might only step over the threshold of glory and stand at a distance from the Master, and see His face in that position. You would not be satisfied in such a position, if there be such a place in heaven ; and Christ would not be satisfied to see you there : for all are loved with all the love of God ; and therefore, having passed over the threshold of glory you will go at once to your seats, for they have been prepared for you ; for "It shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of My Father." You shall go to your seats, and God shall place upon you the crowns of eternal righteousness, and you will rest in the presence of your best Beloved for ever. "It shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of My Father." Rest. What a sweet word ! Rest. What a gracious blessing it is to come into the house of God and rest in His presence for half-an-hour ; to leave the world on a Thursday, or some other evening, and enter into God's courts, to shake off the dust of business, and to cease to hear the noise and strife of life, to sit at God's feet, to receive a shower of Divine blessing, and to be fertilized by God Himself ! How sweet it is by faith to enter into rest

in this world of turmoil and trouble ! What must it be to be in heaven, and to rest from our labours in the presence of our best Beloved ! This "shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of My Father." A last idea here will be that of permanence. "To sit on My right hand and on My left." The posture is an everlasting one ; for the soul in the presence of Jesus is eternally there. "They shall go no more out for ever." Shut in by God in the best world in the universe, and seated before Him, there to remain for ever. No Sabbath evenings, and no Monday mornings there. Monday morning now comes, when we go into the cold, dusty, bustling world, where our minds become withered and our spirituality is weakened ; hence we want reviving in our bondage, and renewing by the Holy Spirit again and again. But there congregations never break up, and the Sabbath has no end. Weariness and drowsiness will never be felt, but

"There we shall sit and sing away,
A long and everlasting day."

A cup of sweets without a bitter, a day that will last for ever, a Sun that will always shine, and rivers of pleasure that will ever flow, even the rivers of God's pleasure of which we shall drink for ever. Joy so great, and yet without an end. Peace so deep, and yet never to be disturbed. Tranquillity and serenity so pure, heavenly, and Divine, and nothing in all that vast world prepared by God to interrupt, or ruffle, or disturb it.

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

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

All this is a *Divine gift*. "It shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of My Father." Talk about earning glory ! about deserving it ! about meriting it ! about working for God, and bringing Him under something like obligations to the creature ! Let such words never fall from our lips, and such thoughts never enter our minds. There is no proportion between the heaven of glory, and the services, the sufferings, and the sorrows of God's people here. No, it is all a gift. A kingdom given ; not to be divided among many, but a kingdom given to each and everyone. Everyone shall be a king, and every seat shall be a throne, and every inheritance shall be a kingdom, and all shall be given by God Himself. But how given ? Oh, so lovingly ! You know there is much in the manner in which a gift is bestowed upon a receiver. You may meet a poor, needy being, and throw a shilling or even half a crown into his lap, or his hand, in a manner which almost prevents him thanking you ; or you may give him a sixpence, or even a less sum than that, with a smile upon your countenance, and a tone of tenderness in your voice which will almost break his heart. How will God give you a crown, and a throne, and a kingdom ? With all His heart, with an eternal smile upon His countenance. He is resolved to do you good, according to His resources and ability ; in fact, to do for you all that it is possible for a God to do for creatures such as we. "It shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of My Father." But where is all this to be enjoyed and experienced ? Not here, but there ; not in this world, but in that

which is to come. Some persons, and I think their minds must be very dry, are almost always speculating as to the future of this world, as to what God intends to do with it. I am sure I do not wish to be wise above what is written, and am perfectly satisfied to keep within the covers of this book. I am told that heaven has been prepared by God for sinners saved by grace ; and therefore, I am expecting to go to heaven, so far as I can believe that I am a child of God. I do not think our Lord will come down and pitch His tabernacle in the land of Canaan, and call His people together in the city of Jerusalem, which would not hold a millionth part of them; neither do I believe He will come down and convert the world into an Eden. As for the millennium, (and I do not wish to needlessly offend,) that Christ will come and live and reign a thousand years on the earth, I do not know whether it will be so, or not ; I can only say as the good Suffolk minister said, " If He should come and dwell with us a thousand years, we shall all be glad to see Him." Should He come and dwell with us here, we shall be delighted to sit on His right hand and on His left. I am not looking for that, however, neither can I speculate in those matters. He is gone to heaven, to prepare a place for His people, and has said, " If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again." And so far only am I expecting to see Him again in this world. " I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also." Well, it will be in heaven and not here, in that kingdom which God has prepared.

Let us now notice in the third place *the preparation indicated*. I have been trying to set forth the privilege and the gift, but we have also the preparation indicated. " It shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of My Father." And when was it prepared ? Very early, even before the foundation of the world. " Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." It appears, then, that heaven was the first world God made ; for He had built heaven, that great and glorious place, and brought that marvellous kingdom and inheritance of saints into existence before the foundation of the world. And therefore Christ is represented as " the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." And how was it prepared ? According to the resources of our heavenly Father. The man who is about to become a husband provides, or it is presumed that he provides, as good a home for his wife and for himself with her, as he can, and that his home bears some proportion to his ability and resources. The father is supposed to do the very best he can for his son and for his children ; and you may apply this to your Father in heaven. The preparation of heaven by God for you, bears a perfect proportion to the resources and ability of your God ; and I sometimes look at the world we live in, and through which we are passing, and say, if God has made a world so good, so great, and so excellent as this for men as creatures, and if He continues so to fill it with His goodness for men, though they are sinners, what must that world be which He has prepared for His dear people ! All His resources are infinite and were unitedly and inseparably engaged in preparing heaven for you and me. We shall find in heaven that which will meet every want, that which will drown every desire, that which will realize every hope, and that which will leave prayer, petition, and expectation impossible. " It shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of My Father."

Well, my friends this place has been prepared for us, and promised to us, and opened for us, and our faces have been turned towards this inheritance and we are journeying to the place of which God has said, I will give it to thee. I think it was last Lord's-day, in the hall yonder, that I referred to the fact that probably I had, since I had been in London, buried almost as many persons as were then present before me, and I do not think I exaggerated. I have buried a great many saints during the thirty-three years or thereabouts that I have ministered to the people here. They are gone not from my thoughts or yours, not from our affections, not from our feelings, not from our gratitude. We see them now, and our fancy or imagination tries to paint them, if I may so speak, as they now appear in heaven. They are there in the place appointed or prepared for them; for the place is prepared for the people, and the people are prepared for the place.

Look in the fourth place at *the promise*. We have looked at the privilege of living near to Christ for ever. We have turned our attention to the gift and the Divine preparation of the place, and now for the promise. *It shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of My Father.*" God's promises are sweet, they melt the saints to tears. Promises that relate to our pilgrimage, and to our passing through the water and the fire, are very sweet and precious: but what about this promise? "*It shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of My Father.*" Then heaven is sure, and eternal glory is absolutely certain; the perseverance of the saints of God is certain, and it ought to be regarded as a fact beyond dispute. "I am God, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." God has given a promise, which is a representation and expression of His purpose, and He will never alter His mind, and here we have the testimony of Him who is the Amen, the faithful and true Witness. It shall be given to them. Look at this promise, first in relation to the Father Himself; He has prepared the place, and given a promise: and can the place be unoccupied? There are the seats and thrones, and shall they too be vacant? Was there not a fixedness of purpose in the mind of God, when He prepared the seats and the place for His dear people? Did He not resolve so to arrange all matters of providence and grace that every saint should arrive in heaven and be seated in His presence? My beloved friends, the promise considered in relation to the Father must be fulfilled. Again, look at it in relation to the Lord Jesus Christ. He has emphatically said, "*It shall be given.*" "*Not Mine to give:*" He does not mean that He has not power to give it, for He will be engaged in giving the seats to His beloved people; but it will be in harmony with His Father, and with the Holy Spirit,—not Mine officially to give. "*It shall be given for whom it is prepared of My Father.*" I do not know that I need to stay here to allude to Arianism and Socinianism. Some of you know that Socinians take this portion of the Word of God to prove what they assert as a fact, that Jesus Christ is not God, since he says here that it is not His to give places at His right hand and His left; but that it is given of the Father. Yet Christ never contradicted Himself. "*I give unto My sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of My hand. All power in heaven and in earth is given unto Me.*" Jesus Christ is equal with the Father. He was here

speaking of Himself as man and Mediator, and as filling an important office in connection with the salvation of His people. It was My Father's office and work to prepare the place, My office and work to redeem the people from all evil, and the office and work of the Holy Spirit to prepare them for the place, and "it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared." Look at the subject or the promise in relation to the Holy Spirit. "He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God." And what does the Apostle refer to? "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God;" and He that hath wrought us for that building, "a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens," is God. The house is ready and the seats are ready, but at present they are vacant. A work is going on in our souls which we did not commence, which hell has opposed ever since it was commenced, and the influence of which often draws us in an attempt to call in prayer upon God. This work within sometimes brings tears into our eyes as well as cares into our hearts. And what of all this? The place there is prepared, and the people here are being prepared for the place, and over the people in whom the work is going on we read this promise: "It shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of My Father." Look at the promise in relation to the people themselves, and then finally, in relation to our enemies. Hell opposes. It shall be given notwithstanding. I have a deep sense of my vileness and unworthiness.

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

Yet it shall be given. But you do not know my unbelief, how deep my fears are, how high my doubts are; and if you could see what goes on within, you would not have a word of encouragement for me." But it shall be given. The home is a gift, and the gift is absolutely certain; for "it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared." Many have entered the heavens of glory since they were first opened, and God opened them for the sake of His beloved Son, immediately after the fall, when He gave the first promise. The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head. Abel, the martyr, was the first saint that breathed out his soul into the hands of his covenant God, and entered heaven, and took his seat; and he was followed by Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who are seated with their Lord; and millions, perhaps, have entered since,

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

I shall not be thirty-three years longer preaching the gospel, for only the fag end of my life remains. My hair is grey, and years are increasing upon me, and infirmities also. Now is my salvation nearer than when I first believed. Oh may it be mine to die in the everlasting arms of God, and in possession of that sweet and simple faith which God has promised His people shall then be blessed with. Then in the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, but shall peacefully and calmly slide out of this poor, vile body into the presence of the Lord. Instead of the fathers shall come up the children; and they in their turn shall become fathers and pass away into the eternal glory of God. The stream of saints is always coming and going. "It shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of My Father."

Lastly, *the people themselves*, "*for whom it is prepared of My Father.*" What shall we say about the people? Two things are upon my mind, or I have only time to mention two. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Now, if you want evidences, there are two. Poor in spirit. Are you rich? are you full? are you great? are you satisfied? Are you not rather poor in spirit? not poor in circumstances; not poor-spirited, but poor in spirit. Well, what follows? "Theirs is the kingdom of heaven." You may be too rich, but you cannot be too poor; too fat, but you cannot be too lean; too strong, but you cannot be too weak. Oh for more grace to reduce us to nothing, in order that we may be found among the poor in spirit, for whom the Father has prepared the kingdom of heaven. And then the pure in heart. "Blessed are the pure in heart." Their hearts are not absolutely, universally pure, yet they are pure in heart so far as their desires go. You would from this moment, if it might be so, be pure and spotless, and white, like your Lord. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." And what operations are now going on in relation to this promise? The Holy Ghost is at work, and I trust He will descend and work in this renovated place of worship. A good many souls have been saved in this sanctuary, and many saved souls have been helped and blessed here. Let us pray for a large out-pouring of the Spirit, that the Word may be applied to sinners as well as to saints. The operations of Providence are going on for the purpose of fulfilling the promises. Christ is interceding in heaven, and His intercession keeps pilgrims on their feet, and sojourners travelling forward towards their eternal rest and home. The ordinances of God's house, the means of grace, the ministry of the word, and the attendance of angels, are fulfilling the word. "It shall be given to them for whom it is prepared." Then for the consummation when all the work is done, and all the people are at home, or ready to be taken home, and all the family are prepared for glory. Oh! what a scene it will be for assembled worlds, for fearing, trembling devils, and for millions of ungodly sinners, to see all the family of God free from fear, and doubt, and stain, all following their great delivering Saviour to their respective places, and all seated round about the throne of God and the Lamb, to drink in eternal pleasures from the Son of God in the world prepared for them.

"When God makes up His last account,
Of natives in His holy mount,
'Twill be an honour to appear
As one new-born and nourished there."

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

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ALL POWER IN THE HANDS OF CHRIST.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL,

ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, JULY 27th, 1884.

"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto Me, in heaven and in earth."—Matt. xxviii. 18.

THE resurrection glories of Christ are matters of the deepest interest to every true believer; for His work on earth was confirmed and ratified by His resurrection. It was not possible that the Lord of life and glory should be holden of death. Our Lord had a right to rise from the dead; for He had fulfilled every engagement into which He had entered with His Father: therefore an angel was sent, who rolled back the stone from the door of the sepulchre, and sat upon it. "His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow; and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men." The angel, however, spake to the women who went to the sepulchre, saying, "Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified." From what is here said, it appears that God's angels have some knowledge of His people while they are on the earth. Are we seekers of the crucified One, and followers of Him that rose from the dead? Then, although we may shed many tears, and our doubts and fears may be numerous, there is nothing whatever for us to fear; for Jesus Christ has said, "Because I live, ye shall live also." The angel proceeded to give the women information concerning the Lord: "He is not here; He is risen as He said. Come see the place where the Lord lay." He then said, Go quickly, and tell His disciples that He goeth before them into Galilee, and they shall see Him there. "Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw Him, they worshipped Him: but some doubted." They worshipped Him, and gave Him divine honours; for He was and is, and will for ever be Jehovah. "And Jesus came, and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto Me, in heaven and in earth."

Now let us make a few remarks on this precious portion of the word. I do not know what we should do without these, and similar words, which occur in the glorious Gospel of God. "All power is given unto Me, in heaven and in earth." We sometimes contemplate His strong arm, and try to meditate upon what is said concerning principalities and powers, and spiritual wickednesses in high places. I would explain those terms to you if I could. Something terrible must be indicated by principalities and powers, and they must be great? But our Lord is Lord of all, and has said, "All power is given unto Me, in heaven and in earth." We look

at Rome, and many years ago the Papacy was fearfully and terribly strong, and for aught I know Antichrist is strong even at the present day; but our Lord is higher, even infinitely above all the powers of Antichrist, and infinitely superior to all the powers of darkness; whether darkness be considered as ignorance, or as error, or as persecution, or as malice, our Lord is above all. Let us creep beneath the shadow of His throne, and rejoice that His head is crowned with many crowns, that the sceptre of His kingdom is a right sceptre, and that

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

Let us look in the first place at *the nature* of the authority or power which the Saviour says is given to Him in heaven, and in the earth. Our Lord is the everlasting God, and possessed all power as Jehovah, irrespective of His mediatorial work; and therefore when it is said, “All power in heaven and in earth, is given unto Me,” He speaks of Himself in His mediatorial character and capacity; and this is the view we shall try to take of the subject for a few minutes this morning. Peter tells us that He is gone into heaven. It was not expedient, not necessary, not possible, that He should remain here. “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.” And it was necessary that He should go away; for as the high priest could not accomplish the whole of his priestly work without going into the holiest of all; so neither could the Lord Jesus Christ perfectly and completely save His people without going into heaven. Our Lord is therefore gone as our great High Priest into the holiest of all, where He appears in the presence of God for us. It is a mercy to have a Friend at Court, especially when there is a considerable difference between the Court and oneself; then to have a near and dear friend, or a loving brother at Court, is a very great thing; and your Brother,—and I do not speak thoughtlessly, but utter it advisedly—your Brother is in heaven. The man by your side, who is the son of your mother and your father, is not more really and truly your brother than is the Lord of life and glory in heaven. Jesus is your Brother, and the best in the universe, the “Brother born for adversity,” who has engaged to see all His brethren through all trouble, and who is “highly exalted a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and remission of sin.” He came from heaven as the great Prophet of the Church, with a message from the Father, and during the thirty three-years of His sojourn here, He delivered that message; and returned to heaven. He is gone also as the great High Priest of His people, and had a right to enter into heaven. All power and authority have been committed unto Him. You must always go beyond the idea, when contemplating the intercession of the Saviour, that your Lord in heaven is a suppliant. We are suppliants before the mercy-seat. Upon our knees we humbly pray for undeserved mercy, for we are miserable sinners without it. Christ our Lord has received all official power, and does not kneel when He intercedes; nor does He appear before the mercy-seat, as such, when He pleads with God for men. He is

not a petitioner but a demandant; for He has acquired and received authority to enter heaven as our Priest, and stand before God's glory throne, and thus to address the great Majesty of heaven, "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory." Bless His name, He is perfectly at rest in heaven, but He is not yet quite satisfied. If He were, He would sit down and cease to pray for our arrival. But He is looking for us, and will not look in vain. He is demanding our life and safety, and they are guaranteed; and bye and bye these immortal spirits, now inhabiting these poor decaying bodies, will, I hope and trust, find their way into the glory of the dear Immanuel. But we shall owe it all to the fact that He ever liveth, else we should die, to make intercession for all that come unto God by Him. All hail Peter, James, and John! All power in heaven is given unto Me and I am going thither as your Priest, and shall take your names upon My breastplate; and I will plead for you until you are with Me where I am. Our Lord will not be perfectly satisfied till all His people are with Him in glory. You know that at family gatherings on annual occasions, if one or two be absent through distance, or death, notwithstanding a measure of pleasure and satisfaction, there will be some bitter thoughts and feelings springing up in the mind concerning the absent ones, there will be a void experienced while the empty seat appears, and all will wish the absent ones were present. Jesus loves all His brethren, even the small and tried and trembling ones, who are hunted by Satan, and whom the world tries to hold fast. Their Brother in heaven has His eye on them, and pleads for them before the throne; and He would be unsatisfied and unperfect if a little one were finally missing. Well, He is gone as our Prophet and our Priest.

He has entered heaven as a Conqueror. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates! and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in." Accompanied by His own angels, He went to heaven. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors." Who is this King of glory? This question was asked for the sake of the reply which was given. The Lord of Hosts, strong and mighty; the Lord mighty in battle. He has been in the field and engaged with the foe. He has met devils and death, and all that oppose salvation, all have been laid low; and He has returned from Edom with dyed garments from Bozrah. There is not another foe to meet, nor another blow to strike at this time; and therefore He comes to be crowned as a Conqueror. "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in." And the Saviour anticipating that came near to them having a precious secret to communicate, and said, "All power in heaven and in earth is given unto Me."

Then take our Lord in His kingly power, He entered heaven as King of kings and Lord of lords, and the only ruler of princes. See Daniel vii. They brought Him near before the Ancient of days. Who brought Him? I take it that the angels of God brought Him. And what then? How did He appear before the Ancient of days? With an unstained character, and the fulfilled law in His heart and in His hand.

The tables of the covenant, if I may so speak. He took to heaven, as they had never been taken there before, all beautiful, and honoured, and adorned with His obedience. The moral law of God, framed and set in the perfect obedience of our great law-fulfiller. And there was given unto Him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, all of which are everlasting and His own; and His Father seated Him on the throne, not as a mercy, but as a right. He had earned, and merited, and deserved that position, His Father crowned Him as a Prophet, as a Priest, as a King, and as a Conqueror. He is crowned as a Husband. "Go forth, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, and behold King Solomon, with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the days of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart." Crowned as the great God-man, and crowned as the Mediator. On His head are and ever shall be many crowns. And then He is crowned with all the hallelujahs, and the grateful praises of the millions that shall be with Him for ever. We sometimes sing with a little feeling, "Crown Him! Crown Him! Crowns become the Victor's brow." We shall crown Him when we are in heaven with our praises, which will be better than they are now; for we shall then praise Him according to the wonderful power we shall then possess.

This authority of our Lord is legislative. All power to make laws; for His church is His, and no other being has any authority to legislate for the church of God. There may be comparatively immaterial and indifferent matters springing up here and there, about which there may be different opinions; but as to the great laws of Zion, they were all framed by, and emanated from, the great King of saints. See that there be no change made, for none is wanted. Our King is on the throne, and is jealous of His honour. You do not think of attempting to alter in any way the laws of this realm; and if you did, and attempted to force an alteration, you know what the consequence would be. My dear friends, we have another realm here, another King, and another kingdom; and if human laws be sacred, and are to be left untouched by the subjects, how sacred, how high, and how solemn are the laws of King Jesus, unto whom all power in heaven and on earth is given. Then, again, He has executive power: "I will work, and who shall let it?" He has an inalienable right to demand the believing obedience of all that know, and fear, and love His name. "If ye love Me, keep My commandments," is not an invitation; nor is it a word left to the mere will or whim of professors. If you love Me, you are Mine, and I demand your obedience; therefore keep my commandments. He sits upon the throne, executing His Father's purposes, and fulfilling the hopes of His people. The executive and the legislative are in His hands. Again, He is fulfilling all the decrees of God; for the Father put the book of His decrees into the hands of the Lamb that was slain, and He is progressively and gradually fulfilling all the deep designs of His Father. I am going, said the Lord, where I shall take the Father's decrees, and make His counsels known, and execute them all. Some people are uncommonly wise as to the Book of Revelation, while I confess I am very ignorant as to that mysterious portion of the word. There are a few texts here and there which are of a plain gospel character, and

which I think I have some little knowledge of ; but with regard to its unfulfilled portions I am altogether in the dark, and I am one of the men that will not prophesy unless I know. If I know that a thing is absolutely certain, I will preach it; but time is the great revealer of the purposes of God, and Jesus Christ is gradually fulfilling them. All power is given unto Him, to fulfil your hopes and mine. Well, my friends, it comes to this,—if we were out at sea and were overtaken by a storm, we should ask the question, Who is at the helm ? Is he a man of knowledge, of experience, and of power, and may he be trusted ? If we were assured that the most proper person in the world was at the helm, perhaps our fears would considerably abate, and our minds become comparatively calm. And with regard to the ship of the church on the stormy ocean of time, if the question arises, Who is at the helm ? Jesus comes and says, Be of good cheer; all power in heaven and in earth is given unto Me. I am at the helm ; I am guiding the ship, and not only so, I can and will do what other pilots cannot. I will in due time calm the storm, and say, “Peace be still,” I have all power, not only to sit at the helm and steer the ship, but over every wave and billow, and storm and tempest. It is important to know that the supreme power is the best, because in many cases the best is not in power. I mean the best amongst men is not always the highest. But here the best is supreme, or the highest. It would be a sad day for England, and especially for London, as it would be and has been for Paris, if the scum rose to the top, and the vile and hateful powers in existence, and which are comparatively restrained, predominated. But that can never be in Christ’s government; for His power is supreme, and will always be highest and at the top. The scum shall always be under His feet, or under His management and control. He hath put all things under His feet : all things except the church, and God has put that into His bosom. The church is in His arms, and all hostile powers are under His feet.

Let us notice secondly, *the extent of this power*. “All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.” In heaven. Over all the grace of God ; over all its forms, and all its rivers and streams. There is the grace of redemption, and adoption, and regeneration, and pardon, and justification, and those streams of gracious comfort and consolation which are flowing every day, and which make glad the city of our God. The perseverance of the saints in a course of holiness, and many other streams and forms of grace, which I have neither time nor ability to mention. Our Lord commands them all. You cannot command a drop of grace ; and angels, however high they sit and strong they be, can never impart a grain of grace. They are ministering spirits sent forth to minister for us, but they minister for us in providential, rather than in spiritual matters. The communication of grace to the heart is the work of the Spirit through Jesus Christ. You and I have sometimes been almost as hard as a stone, and as cold as ice, and we have been painfully conscious of the existence of such a state of things, but we have at the same time felt how weak and how helpless we were. Oh ! I would be warm-hearted always, if I might. I would always be soft, and tender, and

sensitive in my conscience, if I could. A lesson has to be learned here—All power over grace is in the hands of Jesus Christ. We are beggars; He is the great and glorious Giver. All grace is given by Jesus. And then there is glory, even the glory of heaven: but as Paul has it, “Of that we cannot speak now particularly:” all its splendour, all its clear, pure, mysterious, perfect, divine light,—a ray of which would dazzle and confound us now and here; that dazzling splendour and that amazing glory which God has prepared on high, is under the hands of our Lord. And then there is the place itself—heaven. He has opened it; He keeps it open; He has made a way to it; He has taken possession of it, so that the mansions we are to occupy He holds for us. The thrones we are to sit upon are ready; the crowns we shall wear He will put upon our heads; for the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give them to us at that day. The robes of glory in which we shall be dressed for ever are all at His disposal. All power in heaven and in earth is His. This God is your God; this Jesus is your Jesus. Hang upon His name; rest upon His blood; cling to His faithfulness; for a few more tears, a few more stumbling steps, a few more hills to climb, and a few more difficulties to get through, and we shall be at home, and enter the house not made with hands. How do you know? Your Brother holds it for you. You shall sit upon the throne, for it is ready; and He will put the crown upon your head, with all the joy of His heart, and you shall enter into bliss and glory. All power in heaven is His. But this will include the angels of God as well as His grace and glory. They are all His, and hence in the Book of the Revelation it is said, “He sent His angel;” and Daniel says, “The Lord hath sent His angel.” They are the creatures of Christ; His subjects and His servants. He employs them as He pleases, and everyone rejoices to obey Him, and awaits His nod, and flies at His command. He does not send angels into this world to obtain information, but to execute His will, and fulfil His purposes; and hence on the ladder Jacob saw the angels of God descending from the Lord to execute His will, and having done so they ascended to Him for fresh orders.

Then all power in the earth. Take this in relation to the gospel. Look at the following verse:—“The world is Mine, and I have all power in it. Go into it,—I authorise and empower you,—and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Go to Rome, for Rome is Mine, though in a state of Paganism. They are My creatures there, and I have a right to send you to them. Go to Thessalonica, and Philippi, and Corinth, and Colosse, and Ephesus: they are all idolatrous cities, and will hate you, and also the truth you will take to them, but they are My places, and I have a right to do what I please in them. Go thither and preach the glorious gospel of My grace, and tell the world what I have done; for all power on earth is Mine.” He sends the gospel where He pleases; and, bless His name, it pleased Him to send it to this island of the sea. May the candlestick stand and burn here with a living light till the end of time. Woe betide us if the candlestick should be removed out of its place. This will apply to churches: He plants them, and He lives in them, or

they are in a poor condition ; they are hollow organisations without His presence. Yes, He plants churches, and He perpetuates them. Sometimes He permits them as churches to decay, and occasionally, to cease to exist ; but not His one great church, for that will ever remain : but visible organisations sometimes disappear. " He giveth no account of any of His matters," and has a right to do as He pleases ; for all power is His. Then there is Divine providence. Is He in providence ? Is He not ? Yes, His kingdom ruleth over all—the sun which rules the day, the moon and stars which rule the night, every grain of sand, and every blade of grass are subject to His power. Are you not taking Him down too low ? Is not this degrading the Saviour ? It would not be degrading to earthly Majesty were we in a position to say that it understood and ruled every grain of sand. Glorious Majesty appears in that which is minute. " The very hairs of your heads are all numbered," and " the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord." Yes, He presides over the daylight, and days, and over the darkness and night ; over every wind that blows, and every wave that rolls ; over daisies in the field, and insects that are otherwise unknown. His kingdom ruleth over all. All the business of the universe passes through His head and hands. The government is upon His shoulders. Oh what a Christ you have ! This great fact simplifies our duty, our privilege, and our faith. Then there is the human will, and the human conscience, and the hearts of sinners. He has all power over them. There is nothing perhaps more fickle than the human will, and yet He restrains and directs its operations, even in the wicked. I infer this from the Word of God. Three times a year all the males of the nation of Israel had to appear before the Lord in Jerusalem, and it is a very serious thing for all the male population of a whole country to leave their homes for weeks, especially when such a country is surrounded by enemies bitter and powerful, and ready to destroy them. The Edomites, Moabites, Philistines, and other nations surrounded the land of Canaan, and were ready to swallow it up, yet three times a year, for a considerable time all the males were absent, and only women and children were left at home. How were they preserved ? Listen. " They shall not desire thy land." While you are at Jerusalem serving Me, I will serve you, and when the whole country except Jerusalem is empty of males, then I will take away from all your enemies all desire after your land." The human will is unmanageable by the creature, but your Lord knows it well, and when He pleases He can so influence it as to remove improper desires at once. Well, all the will is His, and subject to His power, and so also is the conscience. Bless His name, He purges it from dead works, and helps us to serve the living and true God. My conscience is the servant of my Lord, and no creature has a right to come in between my Lord and my conscience." Oh that sinner will not open his heart. Suppose God should take it without asking him a question about it, for that is how God deals with His people. Why, He stands at the door and knocks. Yes, of every one that is chastened and corrected ; " for as many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." " Behold, I stand at the door and knock. The doors He knocks at are persons whom He loves, and He

knocks by rebuking, and chastening, and as He blesses the affliction, the door is opened, and He comes in and sups with them, and they sup with Him. I do not accept the idea that Christ stands at the door of every-body and knocks for admission! It is not like having all power in heaven and in earth. He comes and opens the heart, as He did Lydia's, or smites the soul down as He did Saul of Tarsus, and asks no question whatever about it. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature;" for all power in heaven and earth is Mine.

Thirdly, all power is *given* unto Him; He merits and deserves it, and it is given unto Him only. Oh it is a mercy that neither Satan nor sin reigns, and it is a blessing that ministers hold not the reins. I do not know that I have any desire, even the remotest, to lord it over God's heritage; but it is well for this church, and for all others also that pastors do not reign. We are said to rule, yet we do not rule by force. If we rule at all, it is in connection with the pulpit. To rule and reign is given unto Christ, and to Him only. Deacons and ministers are subject to Him, and all are under Him, while the reins are in His hands, and His only. In the busiest part of the day, drive down that dangerous thoroughfare, Cheapside. Your child beside you is vain enough to suppose he could drive as well as you, and he wants the reins and whip, but you know better than to put them into his hand. Do you not sometimes think you could manage matters a little better than they are managed? Jesus however, holds the power, and is conducting you through difficulties and dangers, and if you had the management of your own affairs you would upset the whole, and destroy yourselves. Well, our Lord says, "All power is Mine," and He is accountable to His Father only; and when He shall have led His church through all the scenes and circumstances of time, "then cometh the end, when He shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father, having put down all rule, and all authority and power." I had a little more to say, but our time is gone, and therefore I must close. I wanted to say how He exercises this power; why He was pleased to reveal the fact, and then to draw a few inferences from the subject. The Lord command His blessing, for Christ's sake. Amen.

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THE DIVINE REFUGE AND CONSOLATION.

A Sermon

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL.

"That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us."—Heb. vi. 18.

MANKIND might be divided into three classes in relation to the government of God. First, there are those that are dead in trespasses and sins, persons who are enemies to God by wicked works, who are far from Him, and love the distance well. They hate religion, and are altogether opposed to the Gospel; they loathe the glorious truths which are connected with salvation; and the language of their spirits is, "Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways." There is also a second class, and the persons who compose it are described in the verses which precede our text this morning. In the 4th verse of the chapter Paul says, "It is impossible that those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again to repentance," and it is remarkable that in the 9th verse he says, "But, beloved, we are persuaded *better* things of you, and things that accompany salvation." It appears, therefore, that the things which the Apostle had previously mentioned, although good, were not the *best* things. They were good in themselves, and good as far as they went, but they did not go far enough; and therefore they were not saving things. However good they were, they were not things that necessarily accompanied salvation; and therefore he says, "We are persuaded *better* things of you." You have been enlightened with the light of life, but they did not receive life with light. You have not only tasted heavenly things, but digested what you received; whereas, they simply tasted the good word of God, which was not mixed with faith in their souls. You have, however, believingly tasted the good word of God, and been made partakers of the heavenly gift and calling, which are without repentance. Many persons in the early history of the church received extraordinary gifts in connection with the ministry of the Spirit. Judas and Simon Magnus were gifted men, and a considerable number of other persons received the heavenly gift, tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come. These things, however, were not necessarily connected with salvation, and therefore, the Apostle says, "You have *better* things than they had, and things which accompany salvation," and of this we are persuaded, though we thus speak. In the 7th and 8th verses of the chapter we have some very important

facts stated. "The earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs, meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God." Here we have a figurative representation of gracious character, and of God's spiritual blessings upon His regenerated people, and also of the results of the spiritual favours of Heaven. The Apostle then, referring to the characters he had previously described, says, "But that which beareth thorns and briers," and not herbs "is rejected and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned." Well, in this manner the Apostle set forth the second class of characters to which I have referred. And then, there is in the third place, another class namely, the saints of the Most High, persons who experimentally know the plague of their own hearts, and also somewhat of God's plan of salvation and method of mercy. Sinners, who under a sense of guilt have fallen before God, and implored Him to have mercy upon them, and who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before them, and for whom the text says, God has provided a strong consolation.

Looking for a few minutes at this very comprehensive portion of the Word, let us direct our attention to five or six points. In the first place, we have *God's plan of mercy*, or *His method of saving sinners*, the glorious refuge and hope mentioned in the text. We who "have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us." God has provided a refuge for guilty sinners, a hope has been set before them in the gospel dispensation, and also in the glorious gospel of God. Who is this hope? and what, and where, and who is this refuge? Although the text is so great and grand, there is a glorious simplicity about it, and I have no hesitation in speaking on this point. Jesus is the refuge to which poor sinners flee, and Christ and His work are the hope set before them in the gospel. If you and I, then, have fled for refuge to Jesus,—if we have laid hold upon Him as our only hope,—all that is elsewhere said in the text is addressed to us. If we are in Christ, we have two immutable things smiling upon us, and out of which we are receiving strong consolation. Let us tarry here a minute, and look at this subject in connection with the cities of refuge; for it is my belief that the Apostle had them in his mind and before his eye when he penned this portion of the Word of God. You are readers of the Bible of course, and you know that in the land of Canaan six cities of refuge were appointed by God, three on the western side, and three on the eastern side of Jordan, and that the manslayer, that is the person who had killed a fellow-creature unintentionally, was permitted and commanded to flee for refuge to one of those cities. The wilful murderer was to find no refuge there, only the homicide, or as he is called in Leviticus and elsewhere, the manslayer. Having unintentionally killed a fellow-creature, he was to make as much haste as possible to one of these cities of refuge; and, I beg attention to this, having reached the place and entered it, he found neither death nor punishment therein, and nothing to fear; and there was no person in the city who could possibly expel him therefrom. Now take these facts in connection with the refuge into which you have fled, the Lord Jesus Christ. Danger and death pursued the manslayer outside the city; but when the refuge was entered, he felt that his life was safe. So if we are in Christ we have eternal life, and can never die. But the manslayer was to remain in the city until the death of the High Priest, and we shall remain in this refuge

and in God's salvation as long as Jesus lives. The Saviour lives, not merely as God, or as man, or as a complex Person, but He lives officially as a Priest, and the Lord has sworn and will not repent, "Thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec." You can almost realize the feelings of the poor manslayer with the avenger of blood behind him, after he had passed over the threshold of the gate of the city. If he was only just inside, only a step over the threshold, he was safe, and he might turn round and look at the avenger with his sword, and his frown, and hear what he had to say; for there was a sacred barrier between him and his pursuer, who dared not to enter the city and strike the blow. I say you can realise in some measure the feelings of the manslayer on that occasion, and some of you have realized the blessedness of being found in Christ. You remember the time when you were fleeing for refuge, and feared, oh how deeply! that Divine justice and wrath would overtake you before you found salvation and God in Christ. You continued, however, to flee as the Holy Ghost helped and led you day after day, or week after week, or it may be, year after year; at length you laid hold on the hope that was set before you, and Christ was reached and entered; and you said, "He loved me, and gave Himself for me." You realized the marvellous sacredness of your position, and knew what it was as a saved sinner to express yourself most confidently concerning your life. I have eternal life through Jesus Christ, my Lord.

Again, in the city of refuge no punishment could take place. The manslayer had no fine inflicted upon him, and no sort of punishment met him there; he was to be treated, not as a criminal, but as an Israelite that was guiltless. He was not to be looked down upon or regarded as an inferior person, or a doubtful character. The citizens were to respect him, and as far as possible to love him. And there is no penal evil in the Lord Jesus Christ. God may frown, or seem to frown upon you; His frowns are only the tokens of His fatherly displeasure, and not indications of judicial wrath. God says, "Fury is not in Me," though He can show His displeasure; and penal evil can never fall upon one that is in His appointed refuge. Anything like a curse from God can never descend upon the man who has fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before him. And then, again, the manslayer was free from fear. This, I think, is one of the most blessed conditions we can be in out of heaven. To be free from fear, and to have no doubt in our minds respecting our state and standing in the sight of God is truly blessed. The possibility of this position has been questioned, and not a few professors of religion have said that the child of God can never reach so high a point as this. Well, I do not mean to say, that the sun shines night and day, or on all one's way from regeneration to glorification, for it does not so shine upon me. We are tossed with tempests and not comforted, and have our doubts and fears; but there are and have been moments in the experience and history of many of the children of God, when they were positively free from them. Well, the manslayer in the city had no fear of the avenger of blood. He might have an unhealthy body, his head might ache, his eyes might be dim, and his ears heavy, and he might be imperfect as to the form of his body and the powers of his mind, but he had no fear of death, on account of what had taken place, as to the individual he had innocently slain. And we sometimes sing,

“If Thou hast my discharge procured,
And freely in my room endured
The whole of wrath divine;
Payment God cannot twice demand,
First at my bleeding Surety's hand,
And then again at mine.”

Are there not times when you can say as much as this for yourselves? Oh how strong is this Refuge, and how happy is this refugee, when by faith he recognises the fact that he is in Christ, and that Christ is in his heart.

Then, again, there could be no expulsion of this person from the city of refuge. No one could legally drag or drive him out, and whatever might happen in the city he was entitled to be there. He was there by divine command and authority, and according to divine law, and by divine help, and there he had a right to remain as long as the high priest lived. And who can pluck you out of the Shepherd's hand, or out of that of your Father? and what foe can reach you in Jesus Christ, and drag you out of that glorious refuge?

“Once in Christ, in Christ for ever,
This the Gospel scheme declares.”

No, there is no expulsion, and no destruction to those who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before them. Let me say one thing more. There was no safety, or comfort, or assurance for the manslayer out of these cities. Try to think over the matter. It occurs to me that sometimes the manslayer would for a time resolve to hide himself at home, and not go out of his own house, nor be seen in the road. But if the avenger of blood knew where he was, he had a right to slay him, although he was in his own house. There was no safety out of the cities of refuge. I can fancy that when a man had unwittingly, as the Bible expresses it, killed a fellow creature, he might turn aside into some wood, or creep into some cave, and conceal himself; but he was not safe: for if the avenger of blood found him, he had a right to slay him, whatever the cave might be, and wherever it might be situated. There was no safety out of the appointed refuge. And in applying this to God's people how strange was your experience when you first realised the fact that you were as a sinner in danger, and that justice was pursuing you, and that eternal death might overtake you! What strange courses you pursued, and what strange directions you took! You tried this, and that, and the other work, and this resolution and the other. You had done much that was very awful as it appeared to you, and you felt you must undo it all, or that, at all events, it must be undone somehow, and you began to try to save yourselves. But justice still frowned upon you, and

‘The more you strove against its power
You sinned and stumbled but the more,
Till late you heard your Saviour say,
‘Come hither, soul, I am the Way.’”

And then you fled with—

“Lo! glad I come, and Thou, blest Lamb,
Shalt take me to Thee as I am:
Nothing but sin I Thee can give,
Nothing but love shall I receive.”

You tried to wash yourself, but you were blacker than ever. You tried to justify yourself, but you sank lower into condemnation than

ever; you tried to improve yourself, but you became viler than ever: therefore you came to Jesus, a mass of guilt and sin, saying—

“Nothing but sin I Thee can give;
Nothing but love shall I receive.”

One thought more before I dismiss this part of the subject. All the roads leading to the cities were to be good, and always kept in repair, whatever condition other roads in the land might be in. The stones were to be gathered out of them, and all hillocks were to be removed. Beautiful thought! looking at it in connection with Isaiah's language: “Gather out the stones;” and the Lord will make the crooked straight, and the rough places plain. He will level the mountains, and exalt the valleys; and the road between the sinner that deserves to die, and the city of heavenly refuge is divinely open and plain. Then in the next place, if a stream ran between him and the city, a bridge was to be built over it, and various other facilities were appointed by God, for the safety and salvation of the manslayer. If two or three ways met, a post was to be erected, having an arm with the word “Refuge” upon it, pointing the manslayer to the place of safety. A good road, stones gathered out, hillocks removed, streams bridged over, and a sign-post erected wherever information was necessary to direct the fleeing manslayer. Here is work for ministers of the Gospel,—work for me, and for my brethren. All this is figurative, nevertheless it does represent the work of God's ministers of truth. Yonder is the city of refuge, and here is a poor wretch, a guilty sinner that wants salvation, and longs for it, and He is fleeing for refuge to the hope set before him. If a stone is in his way, it is mine to run before him if I can, and remove it. If a hill is in the way, he may stop or stumble at it; his unworthiness, or a heavy sense of guilt induces a fear that he may never be accepted. Gather out the stones, level hills, and make a highway for our God, and for His people also. Let us act as directors to enquiring souls, and point to Christ's redeeming blood, and say, Behold the way to God! This is God's plan of mercy, and His method of saving sinners.

In the second place, a word or two on *the refugees themselves, or sinners saved by grace*. That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, *we*, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us, might have a strong consolation.” Now I should say that persons fleeing for refuge have, like the manslayer, a very deep sense of danger. To preach in these days on this theme is an important work. Things are running wild in religion, and the great matters which are said to belong to the Gospel are running to seed. It is nothing but “Believe, and be saved.” “Well, sir, that is Bible phraseology, is it not?” Yes, it is; but Bible phraseology is seriously misunderstood. What is believing? what is to be believed? how are people brought to believe? and what is the experience inseparable from believing unto salvation? Believe and be saved is the rule. I will not set up a standard of experience, and yet I do acknowledge that I like to hear of an experimental religion which has a beginning, or something like it, as Bunyan puts it, in his “Pilgrim's Progress.” There is the city of destruction, and here is Christian reading the Word, and realising the fact that he is a lost sinner. A burden which he never had or felt before, immediately grows on his back, and all

this is through God's Word. He feels he is a sinner, and begins to run, or flee : " We who have fled for refuge." I can say for myself that my religion was not born with me, but that it had a beginning. I do not wish to compare my experience with that of others, but there was a time when I hated God and eternal things, though I do not mean to say that that is absolutely and glaringly the case in every respect with all the people of God; but there were circumstances in my training and relationship which rendered my conversion a little more conspicuous than that of other people. It was not my mercy to have what are commonly called religious parents, although I may hope that they had some good thing in them before they left us. I had not a religious training, nor was it my mercy to hear about eternal things, except casually, when from home. I loved sin, and it was sweet to my soul. My religion had a beginning, and when God poured a little light into my mind by means of the dream I have frequently mentioned, I, for the first time, discovered the fact that I was a lost sinner, and that with feelings which I cannot describe, I realised the danger I was in, and I felt I merited God's wrath, and that it would overtake me. I had insulted a holy and just God, and felt I was pursued by His justice; and when this hope was set before me, and I had some welcome conceptions of God's way of saving sinners, I fled to this Refuge. Since there was a hope before me, I tried to lay hold upon it, and the city of refuge I tried to enter; and blessed be God, I did reach it, and lay hold! and here I am this morning, as one that has found a refuge in Christ, and mercy for His dear name's sake. " Fled for refuge." There was death behind the manslayer, and life before him, and He was between the two. Hope and fear were conflicting in his breast. Death was behind him, and he feared that; and life before him, which he hoped for; and thus he fled towards the Refuge, and thus it is with the children of God. Eternal death was behind you; you knew it was pursuing you, and you fled from the wrath to come. Eternal life was revealed before you, and you hoped in God's mercy, prayed for favour, and ran towards the saving Son of God. I have heard the experience of many of you, and I do hope and believe that you have entered Christ the Refuge, found peace in His dear Person, and rest in His finished work. Now you adore the God of grace, and sing,

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

Let us notice in the third place, *the security indicated*. " That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie." How comprehensive a text we have this morning! Guilty sinners deserving condemnation; the God of grace convincing them of that fact, the divine preparation made for them; they are helped to flee to the refuge, and to enter in; and these two immutable things guard and secure them. Now God says, " I promise, and I swear that I am thine, and thou art Mine; that I will never leave thee, never forsake thee; and that I will save thee in Myself, with an everlasting salvation. What do you think of this security in this Divine refuge? " Two immutable things." What are they? Well, I think if you look at the context, you will see they are God's promise and His oath. Some have said, they are the life of God, and

His holiness ; because He has said, "Once have I sworn by My holiness, that I will not lie unto David." I think, however, the two immutable things here are God's promise and oath. But why did God give us both ? Can one be stronger or more immutable than the other ? He did not add His oath to His promise for the purpose of making the promise stronger than it was in itself ; but He interposed Himself with an oath for our sakes, because He knew we should come up from depths so great that we should be afraid to lay hold unless the encouragement was very strong. He foresaw that we should see the vastness of the blessings held out, and should fear to put our hands upon them, because they were so great. Hence He gave us not only His promise, but swore by Himself that we were in a right position, that He was our God, and that all we wanted, and all we could see, and infinitely more, was ours, for ever and ever. Two immutable things—His promise cannot fail, and His oath can never change. Well, then, the poor sinner is represented as fleeing from Sinai to Calvary, from guilt to mercy, and from himself to Christ ; and having reached Calvary, and Christ, and salvation, and entered by a living faith into that place of safety, God shuts him up, and speaks two immutable words, or gives him two immutable things. I have promised eternal life, and I swear by Myself that you shall have it. Having brought the sinner into experimental union with His Son, He throws around him His oath and His promise, to guard, secure, and save him all the days of his life.

Fourthly, we have *the basis of this security*. Two immutable things in which it was *impossible for God to lie*. You see we have one strong thing based upon, and rising out of another : first, we have the promise, then we have the oath of God upon that promise ; and thus we have divine assurance given, and surely more than this was not required. Yes, we have in addition to this the assurance, that the Promiser cannot possibly lie. Now, how is this ? It is so as to His nature ; He is all truth, immutably and unchangeably true. There are some things God cannot do ; but His inability in these respects is a divine excellency, and not an infirmity. He cannot lie ; He cannot change ; He cannot deny Himself ; He cannot do anything unworthy of Himself. Here, for our strong consolation it is said, "It is impossible for Him to lie." He has made the promise, and given it to us, and His resources are equal to its fulfilment, and He will never be at a loss for making all good, and we have His name, His honour, and His glory all united to His word—

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

Oh, my dear friends, how vast is the difference between your experience and God's facts ! Here is "strong consolation ;" for "it is impossible for God to lie."

In the fifth place, a word *on the consolation itself*. We who have fled for refuge. Perhaps you will get the idea of the Apostle a little better, or more clearly, if you transpose some of the words of the text, "That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us might have strong consolation." Here is a saving God, and a saved sinner, and his Saviour pours out of Himself strong consolation, which sometimes enters into the sinner's heart. Strong consolation in its nature, in its extent,

and in its effects. It is stronger than our miseries, else they would never be drowned. Stronger than our doubts and fears, else it would never destroy them, and stronger than all our sufferings and sorrows, or we should never have peace while passing through this world to another. Saints have been in prison, but they have been happy there. Daniel was in the den of lions, but he spent a happy night there; the three children were in the burning fiery furnace, but they had sweet fellowship and communion with their God there; and martyrs were burned at the stake, and various other forms of cruelty were practised upon them, yet some of them sang in the midst of it all. "That we might have strong consolation," but remember that if these two things were not immutable, the consolation would not be strong enough. Will this blessed promise be fulfilled? Is it a matter of uncertainty? Ground for such questions would weaken the consolation. No. This promise *must* be fulfilled, and as it stands it must be made good: for "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My Word shall not pass away." The things must not only be great, they must be immutable to furnish strong consolation. God's promises must not only be great, they must be suitable; and they are adapted to every circumstance of our life. One thing more, or else I shall not have a drop of consolation from all this. These two immutable things must be mine; I must lay hold of them with the hands of my faith, and feel that God has sworn not only that He will save sinners, and bless them, but that He will save and bless me for ever and ever. These two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, supply strong consolation.

Lastly, *divine facts and the believer's experience*. Now the difference and distance between facts and circumstances are great. It is a fact that you are in Christ. I say so, because you have given me a little account of your character and experience, and I am bound to believe you are in Him. I speak according to the word of God, my inference being drawn from what I have heard from you, that God has broken your heart, made your spirit contrite, laid the burden of guilt upon your conscience, and brought you into His presence as a poor guilty sinner. I say that you are in a saved state, and God has given you His immutable promise, and His inviolable oath, and added to it the fact that He cannot lie or perjure Himself. His name and His honour are at stake. This strong consolation is yours. And yet, like myself, you have doubts and fears, have you not? Yes, doubt in the morning, and fear at night.

"'Tis a point, I long to know,
Oft it causes anxious thought."

Do you indeed sometimes sink down as low as that? Well, I close with this observation. "If we believe not, yet He abideth faithful: He cannot deny Himself." Your salvation is based not upon your frames and feelings, and personal experience, but upon the person and experience of the Saviour; not upon what you feel in relation to Him, but what He felt and did in relation to you. This salvation is so vast and great that God has inseparably connected His oath and His promise with it; and my dear brother and sister, He will surely save you, in spite of all your doubts and fears. The Lord add His blessing, for Christ's sake. Amen.

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THE FATHER'S PERFECT MESSENGER.

A Sermon-

PREACHED BY MR. HAZELTON,

AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, CHADWELL STREET, CLERKENWELL.

"He that speaketh of himself, seeketh his own glory; but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him."—
John vii. 18.

DIVINE sovereignty shines gloriously in every part of the government of God. It shone in the great work of creation; it shines in God's great work of providence, and it shines in the eternal salvation and life of sinners. God does, "according to His will, in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest thou?" And He that does as He pleases in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, must be supreme. When we think that our God is doing according to His will, or just what He pleases, we are lost in wonder; since so many things are taking place here, which we cannot comprehend. Earthquakes, shaking houses down and destroying the lives of our fellow creatures; wars raging here and there, and human blood flowing in streams; wickedness prevailing on the right hand, and on the left, lifting up its head and showing its abominable face without the slightest measure of shame: and yet of God it is said, He does as He pleases, not only in the armies of heaven, but among the inhabitants of the earth. These mysteries seem to indicate the necessity of the end of time, and of the judgment-day. At the final account God will wind up all His matters, and justify all His proceedings before assembled worlds; and His people, and even His enemies, shall see that He was holy and just, and without unrighteousness in all His proceedings, in providence and in grace.

I have been led to make these remarks because the sovereignty of God shines wondrously in the life and relations of our Lord. He, it seems, had brethren, or certain relations, who it is here said, did not believe in Him. They saw Him, and heard His discourses, and saw the marvellous miracles which He wrought. No doubt they heard many of those interesting conversations which took place between Himself and His mother, yet the Holy Spirit has been pleased to inform us, that speaking in a peculiar manner they said, Go up to the feast, and show yourself to the world. You aim to be a popular character, and a universal reformer; and no man who desires to be known, keeps himself in concealment. Thus they spake, "Show thyself to the world: for neither did His brethren believe in Him." Jesus said to His brethren, "The world cannot hate you," for the sentiments you have expressed are essentially worldly, and the world is in perfect sympathy with them, and also with you in uttering them; "but Me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil. Go ye up unto this feast. I go not up yet." All the

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operations of My hand, and the steps I take, are appointed ; for My time is not yet full come, and I have not an hour or a minute to waste or lose. At the appointed hour I shall go up to Jerusalem, and appear in My place at the feast. *Seeing* Christ in the days of His flesh was not *believing* in Him. “ Verily, verily, I say unto you, ye have seen Me, but have not believed.” I speak softly and solemnly; for it is a solemn subject. Thousands that saw the person of Emmanuel perished. They saw Him with their natural eyes, and heard Him with their natural ears, and in all probability came into visible contact with Him : for see how the multitude throng Thee, and sayest Thou, “ Who touched me ?” But though they saw His person, and heard His voice, and touched Him ; they were not savingly influenced or benefitted thereby; for natural seeing and hearing are not saving faith in His dear name. Well, His brethren saw Him, ate with Him, and walked about with Him ; but the Holy Spirit says they did not believe in Him.

The Lord and His disciples went to Jerusalem; and in the midst of the feast, Jesus went up into the temple and taught; for He is the great Prophet of the Church, and as such He had a perfect right to enter the temple and teach. He had not a right, however, to go to the brazen altar, to offer sacrifices ; for He was not of the tribe of Levi, and therefore He was not a Jewish Priest, according to the ceremonial law ; and hence it is said, “ He is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true ; but into heaven itself, there to appear in the presence of God for us.” He went into the temple and taught, but not to sacrifice ; and the lessons He taught were marvellous. He shed not His blood there, nor offered the blood of any victim there, nor ever presented an animal to a Jewish priest, to offer for Himself ; for

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

He Himself was the great Sacrifice for sin. He taught in the temple, and the Jews marvelled, saying, “ How knoweth this man letters, having never learned ?” I have heard some strange observations made concerning the knowledge and education of the Lord Jesus Christ, and I have sometimes thought them exceedingly foolish. He had never sat as a pupil at the feet of any of their learned doctors, and yet He was not ignorant, but marvellously wise. When He appeared in the temple among the doctors, both hearing them and asking questions,—they were astonished ; but their views were carnal, for they were looking for a temporal Christ, and for a worldly kingdom ; therefore they spoke as carnal persons, saying, “ How knoweth this man letters, having never learned ?” Jesus answered, “ My doctrine is not Mine ;” and yet you observe He says, “ *My* doctrine ;” and therefore we have in this one clause, both His divinity and His humanity. He was God, and the doctrine He preached was divine, and therefore it was His. “ My doctrine, however, is not Mine.” Here He spoke as man, and in His official position : “ My doctrine is not Mine [merely,] but His that sent Me.” If He came from heaven to bring heavenly doctrines down into the world, and Divine knowledge from His Father, what necessity was there that He should sit at the feet of any of the learned doctors of the Jewish nation ? My doctrine is not human but Divine ; it is not Mine, but His that sent Me. And if any man will

do His will,"—not if any man does it, but *will* do it, "he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself." No man can do His will until he is made willing by God; and hence it is said, "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power." If, therefore, you and I have been made willing, we know the doctrine of Christ. The officers who went to apprehend the Saviour, returned without Him, and the Sanhedrim said, "Why have you not brought Him?" And they said, "Never man spake like this Man." There was something so peculiar in His words, that they were quite disarmed, and deprived at once of power and will to take Him. Never man spake like Him. And "if any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself." There is a holy warmth and power in Bible doctrines, which cannot be found in other truths. Is there not a sweet and melting influence in the doctrine of Jesus Christ, which you look in vain for in human statements, and human theories? We may be called fanatical in connection with the things of God and eternity; but we know that honey is sweet, because we have tasted it; we know that water slakes natural thirst, because we have tried it; and we can speak with experimental confidence of these facts; and we, many of us I trust, know that there is something peculiar, something powerful in the doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no book like the Bible, no doctrine like the doctrine of heaven, and no word like the word of the blest Redeemer, when it falls not merely upon the ear, but upon the immortal mind. Some people take a long time to make up their minds as to what they will believe. Do you say, that is a strange expression? I do not think so; for there are many professors of religion, who have not made up their minds as to their creed. They are looking at this side, and that side, and they will believe something in the course of time; but at present they are not decided. Well, such persons are not taught of the Spirit, at least, in so far as they consult their carnal reason and their prejudices as to their creed. He *shall know* of the doctrine, and his knowledge shall be certain and positive, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself. "He that speaketh of himself, seeketh his own glory; but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and there is no unrighteousness in him."

Now, perhaps, I have been a little too long in what is called the introduction; but then, I am not a perfect preacher. I will, however, do as well as I can, in a few remarks upon the words I have read. I may just say, the text no doubt expresses a general fact, and it may be so regarded. "He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory," is a general fact; "but he that seeketh his glory that sent him," the same is true, and there is no unrighteousness in him, in respect to himself, as a messenger, and the message which he delivered to whom he was sent. The text, however, was no doubt intended to apply to our Lord Himself, and in that respect I shall look at it for a few minutes this morning.

In the first place, let me notice that *the text embodies a great mystery*. Looking at it in relation to Christ,—He sought His glory that sent Him. I sometimes sit and endeavour to meditate upon these marvellous transactions between the Father and the Son, and I like to lose myself in them. I cannot explain it; for it is a great mystery, that the Father sent the

Son, and the Son came according to the commandment of the Father. "This commandment have I received of My Father." I open certain books, and I see observations sneeringly made, or written, upon the perfect equality between the Persons in the Godhead; and Unitarians and Socinians say, What becomes of your perfect equality, since the Son Jesus Christ was sent by the Father? He who sends must necessarily be greater than he that is sent. How, therefore, is there perfect equality between the Persons of the Godhead? Surely two persons, who are in all respects as to mind, temper, and circumstances, perfectly equal, may mutually agree, the one to send, and the other to be sent; and such a mutual agreement between those two persons would not be supposed to affect their perfect equality. He that sends does not become greater than he that is sent, because he sends, and he that is sent does not become inferior to him that sent him, because he voluntarily agrees to go. "The counsel of peace was between them both." The Father and the Son mutually agreed,

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

to be Sender and Sent. The Father resolved to send; and "thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift!" for what He has sent down to this poor sinful world, and for what He has sent into your heart and mine. The Father resolved to send, and the Son resolved to come at the appointed time, and the counsel of peace was between them both; while all the great and equal Persons in the Godhead agreed in the eternal salvation of sinners; and therefore the Saviour here intimates that He was sent.

But further in relation to this matter. The Father sent Him in our flesh,—sent Him from heaven and from His bosom. Christ came far to save us, and His advent was a wonderful one. Well, He was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and the Father said, His name shall be called Immanuel, or God with us. God is in Him, and the manhood in which Deity resides, is our flesh, our nature; and the Father sent Him, to indicate the fact that you are as near and dear to Him as possible, and that He is near to you, though you are poor sinners, God is near to you in Christ your Lord. "Call His name Immanuel," for He is not merely a Man; and think not of Him as a creature, nor merely as sustaining an official position: speak of Him in these respects, but see God in Him, and see in Him the great fact, that He seeks the glory of Him that sent Him. "Call His name Immanuel, that is to say, being interpreted, God with us." Then the Father sent Him in the flesh, or as man into the world; for otherwise, I suppose, He could not have been sent. As God, He was in the world,—as He was and is, and always will be, everywhere; and therefore, He said on one occasion, in the days of His flesh, "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven:"—not which was, or shall be in heaven, but which is in heaven. He was here in special forms, but as to His essential omnipresence as God, He was in heaven and everywhere, when as Immanuel He was here. In this world He appeared as a man, in particular houses and localities. He was sent into this ruined world, and to millions of poor bankrupt guilty sinners,—not an empty person with an empty hand, nor with authority to try to improve society, and to make the world bet-

ter ; but to seek the glory of Him that sent Him : and in doing this, He proved the fact that He was true, and there was no unrighteousness in Him. Why did He not remain in heaven ? He could not redeem us there ; He could not be cursed there ; Justice could not smite Him there ; He could not be a Man of sorrows there : none of these things could be experienced there ; and therefore the Father said, Go into their flesh, and live in it for ever ; go into their world, and die for them. And hence the Saviour said, " I lay down My life ; I lay it down of Myself ; I have power to lay it down, and power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father." He was sent, not only in the flesh, and into our world, but He was sent under the law also ; He was made of a woman, made under the law, that He might redeem them that were under the law. The people were removed from under its curse and condemning power, and the dear Redeemer was left alone there. He required no helper ; and a second person was not with Him, nor was one needed. " I delight to do Thy will, O God ; yea, Thy law is within My heart !" The Father sent Him, and He proceeded in His mediatorial and law-filling career, and went from precept to precept, until He had passed through them all ; and then He met the cross at the end, where the penalty due to sin was inflicted upon Him, and He glorified Him that sent Him, and avowed the fact when He said, " It is finished !" and bowed His head, and gave up the ghost. He is true, " and there is no unrighteousness in Him." He was sent under the law, and into death. He met death in its most terrible forms, with all its bitterness, and with all its sting. He wrestled with death, and conquered and destroyed it, as a penal evil. The death of the Lord Jesus Christ swallowed up all that was evil, and destructive in death, which was the fruit of sin. And did He send Him lower than that ? We are ready to say, He could not go lower. Yes, He was buried, according to the Scriptures. He was sent into the grave, and His perfect, spotless, precious, fragrant body—not separated from His Divinity, for that can never take place, there lay in the tomb, and now we sing—

" Where should the dying members rest,
But with their dying Head ?"

My Father hath sent Me, and I seek His glory. In this we have an explanation of another character of our Lord, namely, the Messenger of the Covenant—of the covenant of grace. A messenger was required to bring us tidings ; and Jesus, its great Head, was constituted that Messenger, and thus He appeared with the good news of covenant mercy, for all was committed to Him. The Father loved the Son, in whom it pleased Him that all fulness should dwell ; and when in the fulness of time Christ came, He was brimfull of love and salvation. His hands were full ; His heart was full ; His Person was full ; and He had full authority to execute the vast plans and deep designs of the everlasting God : and, blessed be His name ! He did it all, and did it well, and returned to Him that sent Him, leaving a sweet and precious fragrance here on the earth, which the devil, the world, and popery can never destroy.

In the second place, the text *indicates the object of His visit*. " He that seeketh His glory that sent Him." He came on the most important business that was ever transacted between earth and heaven, between God

and man, between poor sinners, and the great Lawgiver. Did He come to make an experiment? No! I do not understand that word, in connection with God. Did He come to make salvation possible? If that was all He did on earth, I think I should not be able to say very much about salvation. If the sufferings and death of Christ, whom the Father sent to save, have left salvation only possible, then I have misread the Bible, or I do not understand the Word. I read with pleasure and joy that "Israel *shall* be saved in the Lord, with an everlasting salvation." "I give unto My sheep eternal life, and they shall *never* perish." You must let the possibility of salvation go; for it forms no part of God's plan. Jesus did not come from heaven to earth; He did not put on our nature, and resolve to wear it for ever, merely for the purpose of rendering salvation possible. He came on more important business than to conduct an experiment,—even to execute a divine plan, and to fulfil a grand design. He did not come to try whether He could save or not; whether sinners would allow Him to save them or not; whether He could overcome the world or not, or whether He could destroy the works of the devil or not: He came, resolved and determined to save. "The Lord was *ready* to save me." Yonder is a friend in danger, and away you run with all possible haste to try to rescue him. You resolve to do all you can to deliver him; but should you reach him, you are not sure you are strong enough to save him. That is like men, and like a creature; but surely we cannot thus speak of Immanuel, who is the Almighty God, and the everlasting Father! He came to save, and He accomplished the purpose for which He came. He ever lives to make intercession for all that come unto God by Him. But, further, as to the object of His visit. He came to reveal. He is the bright and morning Star. Oh, bless His dear name! the heavens, the moral heavens, had been for ever dark, tempestuous and stormy, had it not been for Him. But there He is the Morning Star, according to His own testimony. "I am the Root and Offspring of David, the bright and morning Star;" and as He was a bringer of light, and the harbinger of day, so at the appointed time the Sun rose: for "Unto you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise, with healing in His wings." He brought intelligence and light from heaven. Atheists and others have sneeringly said, "No one ever came from hell to tell us what that world is; and no one ever came from heaven to tell us what heaven is, what is being done there." It is not true that no one ever came from heaven to tell us what it is, and what life is there. The Saviour, the Son of God, the Messenger of the covenant, came from that glorious world, and brought all needed intelligence and information for men. The angel said, "I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people: for unto you is born this day . . . a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Christ has brought a revelation from heaven, from eternity, and from His Father's heart. But have we any intelligence from hell? Just as much as we need, and as we want. He who brought good news from heaven has given us intelligence enough concerning hell, also. If you desire to know what hell is, see its pangs and sufferings, and sorrows, and bitterness in Gethsemane, and on Calvary, where our Lord met our hell, and bore it all, and quenched the wrath of God. I deny that we have no trustworthy intelligence from heaven or hell. The Father sent

Him to redeem, to reconcile, to save. "Go, Son, for those people are the objects of My love, and your brethren, and they are far from Me," for sin carries all sinners to a distance from God, and keeps them there. They are far off, and hate and fight against Me, and the language of their spirits is, 'Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways.' Go and reconcile them. Die for them, and bring them near by your blood. Hence, we who sometime were afar off are made nigh by the blood of Christ; for He sent Him to reconcile. Here is an army of poor, wretched, miserable sinners, all born with the seeds of enmity in their nature against their Maker, and here is their God with all the love of His heart calling to His Son to die, between the rebels and Himself, and then to bring them into a reconciled condition to Himself by His blood. He was sent to reconcile and to justify them. He came on a justifying errand, and was sent to acquire what He could not have possessed had He not come. He was sent to acquire an experience for Himself, and for His people, which He could not have possessed had He not entered the world. Therefore, the Father said : Go into poverty, and learn what it is to be poor with them. And "He learned obedience by the things which He suffered." Go into temptation, and learn what it is to be tempted, that you may be able to succour them. "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." Go into desertion and darkness, and I will hide My face from You; and then You will know what it is to mourn an absent God, so You will be able to succour Your brethren in darkness and in night. He sent Him to acquire much for Himself, and for His people. He sent Him to connect together worlds—heaven and earth,—and beings; God and men; and the connection is a wonderful one. He sent Him to make a way for guilty sinners to heaven, and to make a way from heaven for God to come down to guilty men.

Then, thirdly, let us look at *the Messenger's daily and life-long aim*. "He that seeketh the glory of Him that sent Him." Jesus was He who was sent, and came for a certain object, which He accomplished. Now we have in the life-long course and conduct of Christ the fact that He sought the glory of Him that sent Him. I have only time for one or two matters here. The glory of His Father's attributes and perfections, was sought. Mercy and justice parted company, so to speak, in the fall of man; and they could never have been united otherwise than in and by the blood of Christ. Mercy did not die when man became a sinner, but it could not work with justice, and justice could not work with mercy. Man having become a fallen creature and a vile transgressor, it behoved justice to smite, and mercy could not rescue guilty men unless a true atonement was interposed between them and God. Thus, when mercy and justice, and righteousness and peace separated, and the milder perfections of God appeared as it were at variance with His sterner attributes, Jesus "sought the glory of Him that sent Him," by harmonizing them; He yielded to justice and honoured it, and made a righteous-way for mercy. The sword of Justice awoke upon His dear Person, and satisfaction flowed out, till her cup was full, and then "Mercy and Truth met together, and Righteousness and Peace embraced and kissed each other. He "sought the glory of Him that sent Him." He sought the glory of God's law, for He magnified it. The first edition of the law was

given in the garden of Eden ; but man became so blind and corrupt by sin that he could not read it. God gave a second edition on tables of stone on Sinai ; and then a third edition of the same law in Christ, the great Law-fulfiller ; and whilst we can see the law in the life and sufferings and death of Christ, we see it in all its solemn perfection and glory. He magnified the law, and made it honourable. What a salvation is that, my dear brethren, which delivers you from hell, rescues you from wrath, gives you a good character, and assures you of an everlasting heaven beyond death, whilst it satisfies every claim of God and meets every demand of Jehovah ! Nothing is ultimately lost by sin and transgression, God loses nothing, and man shall finally lose nothing. Death shall be destroyed, and all the works of the devil shall be undone. " He sought the glory of Him that sent Him," the glory of His attributes, the glory of His decrees, and the glory of His love, as our Father.

Let us pass on, and notice in the fourth place, *that Christ's character comes out prominently and clearly in all this work.* There is not unrighteousness in Him. That ambassador that seeks the glory of the king that sends him is true to his royal master, and no unrighteousness is in him in that respect. He may not be faultless in other respects ; but if he seeks the glory of the country, and the glory of the monarch he represents, and ever tries to advance that glory, he is true to his mission and its objects. Well, our dear Lord ever sought the glory of the Father, and was true, and there was no unrighteousness in Him. He stood between the Judge and the prisoner, and He still stands between them, and which does He more love ? He loves them both. He seeks the glory of the Judge, and will take care that the law and justice shall lose nothing, and He seeks the salvation of the prisoner ; for He loves him with all His heart, and will take care that he shall be saved. Thus whilst He honours the Judge and meets all His claims, He establishes the character of the sinner and brings the prisoner and the Judge together, and reconciles them for ever and ever. The Saviour is true to both parties, and there is no unrighteousness in Him. True to the Law-giver, and true to the law-breaker. True to the criminal, and true to the law under which he is guilty. No unrighteousness in His nature, none in His character, none in His course, none in His words, and none in His proceedings. He can be mysterious, and deep, and dark in His conduct, and he can have His way in the whirlwind, and in the storm ; but He cannot be unrighteous. He would forfeit,—and let me speak it with reverence,—His claim to the confidence of His creatures, if He could be unrighteous. He cannot be unrighteous to God, nor to Himself, nor to His people, nor to Satan, nor to the greatest enemy He has in the universe. He will treat all righteously ; and hell shall have no more than it deserves, and the punishment shall not be greater than the crime. And it is an everlasting comfort to His dear people, that their Lord is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him. I thought I would have said a word or two as to the results of all this ; but the time is gone, and therefore, I conclude. May the Lord add His blessing, for Christ's sake. Amen.

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