

SERMONS,

PREACHED AT

THE OCTAGON CHAPEL, BATH.

BY

THE REV. FOUNTAIN ELWIN,

VICAR OF TEMPLE, BRISTOL; AND ONE OF THE MINISTERS OF
THE OCTAGON.

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TO
THE CONGREGATION
OF
THE OCTAGON CHAPEL, BATH,
THE FOLLOWING
SERMONS,
PREACHED BEFORE THEM,
AND NOW PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST
ARE INSCRIBED,
WITH EVERY SENTIMENT OF ESTEEM AND REGARD
AND
WITH EARNEST PRAYER FOR THEIR PRESENT
AND ETERNAL WELFARE,
BY THEIR FAITHFUL AND AFFECTIONATE
FRIEND AND SERVANT,
F. ELWIN

Bath, April 15, 1842

Beaufort Buildings East, Bath,

April 15th, 1842.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

It is but natural that I should wish to connect your name with the present publication; and it gives me the greatest pleasure to know that it is your own desire that I should do so.

Very few prefatory remarks are necessary, since you are already aware that I have been induced to submit the following sermons to the public eye, solely at the request of an attentive and affectionate congregation. It will require no critical discernment to perceive that they were not written with any view to publication. My chief aim in composing them was to bring before my hearers, in a very plain, simple, and practical manner, the great leading truths of the Gospel. They are now committed to the press, nearly in the same form in which they were delivered; as I have not felt myself at liberty to extend my alterations much beyond the correction of mere verbal inaccuracies. In thus complying with the kindly expressed wishes of my friends at the Octagon, it is a source of much thankfulness to me, to feel, that whenever, in the providence of God, I shall be removed from that portion of His vineyard, I shall have had this opportunity of leaving behind me a memorial of the blessed sabbath intercourse which it has been my privilege to maintain amongst them, during nearly four years, -to me a highly gratifying period of friendly and ministerial connexion with yourself. You will, I am sure, unite your prayers with mine, that it may please Almighty God, who alone can "give the increase," to render this little publication

useful, by vii leading some to the knowledge of Him “whom to know is life eternal.”

Believe me to remain,
With the utmost regard and esteem,
My dear friend,
Yours affectionately,
F. ELWIN.

*To the Rev. G. G. Gardiner,
Cavendish Place, Bath.*

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SERMON I.

THE STRONG HOLD FOR THE PRISONERS OF HOPE

Zech. ix. 12.

“Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope: even to-day do I declare that I will render double unto thee.”

WE can have no hesitation in declaring this to be a gracious invitation, on the part of a merciful God, communicated by the prophet to *Israel*, while in their captivity at *Babylon*; and, through them, to a *world of sinners*, who are in captivity to *Satan*. There needs no further proof of this than a reference to the ninth and eleventh verses of this chapter. In the *former* verse we have that glorious prediction of the *incarnate Messiah*, which was so wonderfully fulfilled, as recorded by the Evangelists: “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: Behold, thy king cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding on an ass, and a colt, the foal of an ass.” And in the *latter* of the two verses we have a declaration of *Messiah's work*, as the surety and covenant head of his people: “As for thee, by the blood of thy covenant have I sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water.” I am fully warranted, therefore, in treating this text as addressed to a *world of sinners*. The text points out, 1st. The *name* by which they are designated: “Prisoners of hope.” 2nd. The *refuge* to which they are to flee: “Turn ye to the strong hold.” 3rd. The *blessings* which they will then enjoy: “I will render double unto thee.” See 1st, then, in what character you and I, dear brethren, stand before God. We are “prisoners.” Why should the

Bible address us thus? The expression is full of meaning; for though the general term “sinners” is the most *comprehensive*, and therefore the most frequently employed, yet the word “prisoners” may show us more particularly the state and condition of us all *in consequence of sin*. Man is a “sinner,” because he is a *transgressor* of God's law; but he is a “prisoner,” because that law has *arrested* him for his crime, has *condemned* him for it, has *sentenced* him to be given up to justice; and justice has decreed that he is worthy of *death*, according to the word of the Law, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die;” yea, and that death *accursed*, for it is written, “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the law, to do them.” “Now we know,” says the apostle Paul, “that whatsoever things the law saith, it saith to them that are *under* the law:” and who are they! Mark the *universality* of this condemnation! He says, “that *every* mouth may be stopped, and *all the world* become guilty before God.” This constitutes us *all* “prisoners;” “God hath concluded,” Or shut up together, in one common prison house, “*all under sin.*” But *sentence* has *not* yet been *executed* on us. Here we are still, “shut up;” but the sword of divine justice has not yet been bathed in our blood. Why not? The text calls us “prisoners of *hope.*” So then our case is not absolutely desperate. We may yet escape and live. It is of great importance then to know *what* our “hope” is; what possibility exists of our ever escaping the punishment—the ignominious, accursed, eternal death which awaits us. If we look round our dungeon, we can find no opening; not a bolt or a bar will yield to our efforts; all is *fast*. How *can* we escape? That which *we* could neither devise nor effect, *God* has devised and effected for us. While all is darkness and despair in our prison-house of sin, a voice is heard, a light is seen, the gates burst open, and *the Lord Jesus Christ* is discovered, coming to us, bearing in his pierced hands a *pardon* from heaven, sealed with his own blood; and he cries, . “Turn ye to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope ” He says, “The spirit of the Lord is upon me: because he hath sent me to

bind up the broken-hearted, to preach *liberty* to the *captives*, and the *opening* of the *prison* to them that are *bound*.’ Thus the prisoners of *despair* have become prisoners of *hope*, and the prisoners of *hope* are at once directed to a *refuge*. *Sin* need not now hold us in its iron bondage, nor *Satan* keep us any longer in his dark dungeon. We may escape to a secure refuge; we are commanded to “turn to the strong hold.”

This is our next point.

2nd. The question must now be answered, What *is* this “strong hold;” and *how* has it been provided ? It is evident that the great king of heaven has provided it in the person, and character, and offices, of *the Lord Jesus*. The perfect work which he has accomplished, and the sufferings and death which he has endured, constitute a “strong hold” for the poor helpless “prisoner of hope.” And let it be remembered, that no *other* is spoken of He is the *only* “strong hold,” just as he is the *only* “foundation.” The sinner is to *run into this*, just as he is to *build on that*, for salvation. The apostle says, “Other *foundation* can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ;” so we may say, “Other *strong hold* can no man find or flee to, than that which is here provided.” There *need* be no other; for this is of itself a perfect, complete, and sufficient one; and there *can* be no other, for there is no completeness, sufficiency, or perfection, but in *Him*. If Christ is a Saviour *at all*, he must be the *only*, because the *all-sufficient* one. See how the case stands. The poor “prisoner of hope,” who has been under the bondage of sin and Satan, must make his escape to some place of safety, where he may be as secure from the grasp of his great enemy, as the poor “man-slayer” was from the sword of the “avenger of blood,” when he had reached the appointed “city of refuge.” Now, to be *thus* secure, he must be *perfectly* secure. He has not this perfect security in *himself*, nor in anything that he can *do* for himself; neither can he find it in *any one else* on earth, nor in any thing or every thing that *the*

whole world can do for him. Escape where he will beside, flee where he may, his implacable enemy will find him out, seize on him as his captive again, drag him down to the dungeon, fasten upon him the fetters, and bind him with the chains, of his hellish captivity. To speak without a metaphor, the sinner's security must be in an *atonement* which can reach to the extent of his *every* transgression; for if *one* is unatoned for, uncovered, unwashed away, he cannot be accepted in the great day. Where shall he procure this, but from him of whom it is written, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from *all* sin?" Again; The sinner cannot be safe from the condemnation of the violated *law*, unless he can invest himself in a *righteousness* better than his *own*; nay, it must be a righteousness *pure* and *perfect*, a righteousness which may serve as much for *justification*, as the atoning blood of his Lord does for *pardon*. Now where shall he go for this, but to that *same* Lord and Saviour ! It is "unto and upon all them that believe in *Him*." And, therefore, the justifying righteousness, which is by faith, mainly constitutes his "strong hold." Let this be well understood, or we shall commit sad and fatal errors in a matter which respects *salvation*. The text says, "Turn to *the* strong hold;" not to *some* strong hold; not to *one among many*; not to one of our *own* *conceiving*, our *own* *devising*, our *own* *constructing*. We are not to build one for ourselves and then run into it, and *try* if it will answer our purpose. There *is* one. God has conceived, and devised, and constructed it: "Behold, *I* lay in Zion, for the foundation of it, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone ; it is a *sure* foundation, a *complete* refuge, a *perfect* strong hold; one into which *Satan* can find no access, however he may assault it; and against which the gates of *hell* shall never prevail." It was to shew this security of the only "strong hold" that our Lord uttered the parable of "the two builders." He describes *the one* as choosing a *rock* for the foundation of his castle; and when the rains descended, and the winds blew, and the floods beat against it, "it fell *not*, for it was founded on a *rock*." But *the other* built upon the *sand*. The

awful catastrophe is told in few words, but the terrific idea is thereby rendered only the more distinct: “It *fell*; and *great* was the fall thereof.” “great,” because it is intended to describe the loss of an immortal soul; “great,” because the building, as it fell, crushed the inhabitant to death, the very man who had built it as a protection against the storm, as a “strong hold” for himself to shelter in, and in which he expected to be free from harm. On the other hand, let *this* also be well understood, viz, that in order to *our* being benefited by the “strong hold,” we must be *within* it. Its strength will not avail us unless we are *there*. We must exchange our prison-house for it, if we would be safe. The text does not say, “*Look* at the strong hold,” or “*contemplate* it,” or “*admire* it;” but “*turn* to it;” that is, “*go in*, and be safe.” “The name of the Lord,” says Solomon, “is a strong tower.” And what then? He does not say, “*Therefore* the righteous is safe,” but he says, “The righteous *runneth into* it, and is safe.” See the necessity of making the gospel salvation *our own*, by a *personal application*. We may satisfy ourselves that the merits and death of our Lord, his blood and righteousness, are just what the word of God declares them to be, *complete, perfect, and all-sufficient*; and yet we may, to all intents and purposes, be as devoid of any real advantage from them, as if the blood had never been shed, and the righteousness never had been wrought out; as if he had never fulfilled the law for our justification, nor suffered the penalty of it for our pardon: just as the poor “prisoner” might get a glimpse of the “strong hold,” or the “city of refuge,” through the bars of his dungeon, while its doors were still closed upon him, and the chains were still binding him *there*. “There *is* a strong hold,” says the text; “*turn* to it, and make it *yours*; for, though you are *prisoners*, you are prisoners of *hope*, not of *despair* : you are *invited* to come forth from your bondage, and flee to the refuge provided.” In other words, “Flee from the wrath to come; lay hold on eternal life.” But our next point will show, that there is still more mercy intimated in our text. Not only is the captivity to cease, but— 3rd. *Blessings* are to be

enjoyed: "I will render double unto thee; even to-day do I declare it." The expression here used, "I will render double unto thee," is particularly beautiful. It is as if God should say to the "prisoners of hope," "Turn only to *Christ*, whose power and truth and love render him a strong hold for you; and then *joys* and *comforts* shall be yours, far exceeding, yea *double* in amount, all *your sorrows* while in a state of bondage, all your *pleasures* while in a state of sin, all your *advantages* while you were at a distance from God, and enemies to Him by wicked works." This I conceive is the meaning of the promise in the text. How full and comprehensive it is! It speaks of the "joys which are at God's right hand, and the pleasures which are for evermore." Nor is it limited to those; for when God declares, "*to-day* I will render double unto thee," there is intimated the *present* comfort and enjoyment of turning to God. Oh, let no man tell us that religion has no comforts, no pleasures, no joys. We assert it as a truth declared in God's word, and demonstrated by universal experience, that there is no real happiness *without* it. Does *that* deserve the name of *happiness* which lasts just as long as health and strength last; which yields to sickness, and gives way to disease, and vanishes altogether at death? and yet no joys of *earth* last longer. God, in the text, has offered us better things; joys to be had even from *the very day* when we turn to Christ, our "strong hold;" and yet, though *present* joys, they are *everlasting* too. Sickness does not impair them; disease does not waste them; death cannot destroy them. Under the most distressing of external circumstances the joy remains, the pleasure is still abiding, the comfort is in the very *heart* of the sufferer, and he can defy the powers of hell to take it from him. While in prosperity, it is there to *sanctify* it; when in adversity, it is there to keep him from *fainting under* it. Comfort such as this deserves the name. It is "double" what he ever knew *before* of happiness; and it is "double" what his sorrows and afflictions can amount to, let them be what they may. It was this heartfelt consolation which made the holy Paul exclaim, "As the sufferings of Christ

abound in us, so our *consolation* also aboundeth by Christ.” It made the prophet *Habakkuk* cry, “Though the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall there be fruit in the vine; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stall; yet will I *rejoice* in the Lord, I will *joy* in the God of my salvation.” This is “*double*” joy under an accumulation of Sorrows. Do any ask, “*What* is this secret joy, this inward pleasure, this heartfelt consolation?” Why, nothing more nor less than the delightful consciousness of being in the “strong hold” of God our Saviour, instead of the “prison-house” of Sin and Satan. And if so, then it is nothing but what you and I may, every one of us, partake of, even *this very day*, if we have never received it before: “Turn ye to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope: even *to-day* do I declare that I will render double unto thee.” Happy for any of us who shall *this day* obey the command, accept the invitation, and receive into their hearts the promised salvation of the text ! To them will come, through the Spirit's influence, all the blessed comfort of such texts as these: “Being justified by faith, we have *peace* with God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.” “There is therefore now *no condemnation* to them that are in Christ Jesus.” “We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” In these three texts we have the very source and spring of this inward and spiritual happiness. The *First* gives us the *peace* which flows into the heart of a penitent sinner, when he is *justified* by faith in the Son of God. The *second* shews us the *joy* derived from the *pardon* of sin. The *third* points out the comfort which *follows the other two*; for when sin is pardoned, and the sinner justified, then the Holy Spirit opens to him the prospect of a glorious eternity, while, by sanctification, He daily fits and prepares him for it. Death then loses its sting, and the grave its victory. Heaven then becomes a *promised rest*; and the believer is permitted to look for it without fear, yea to long for it as his own “inheritance.”

And while waiting on earth until his change comes, he experiences the truth of another text: “Whom having not seen, ye love”—meaning the gracious Redeemer, who, by his blood and righteousness, has procured all this happiness for him; “In whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, *ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.*” Who shall tell us, after this, that Religion has no joys? That must indeed be a joy deserving the name, which the word of God itself declares to be “*joy unspeakable, and full of glory.*” Was ever any *earthly* joy spoken of in such terms? No, not even by the possessor himself. However he might be satisfied with it for the time, he could not say of any sublunary source of happiness, “this gives me *joy unspeakable, and full of glory.*” But this has been said of the pleasures which religion gives; said at a time when there could be no doubt as to the sincerity of the declaration; said when the soul was about to separate from the body, and to go to God that gave it. How often have I myself heard the *dying* declaration of a *happy* Christian, in such words as these, “never did I know what *real joy* was, till I knew what *real religion* was!”—To be comforted thus amidst all the sorrows of life, and to be cheered thus amidst the anticipations of death, is the portion only of those “prisoners of hope” who have turned to the “strong hold.” Let me make one more remark, in conclusion—it is of an awful nature, but our subject would be incomplete without it. When our text designates us as “prisoners of *hope*,” I conceive there is implied a reference to others, I mean those who are prisoners *without* hope. There *are* such; and if I set before you the description of their hopeless state, as given in the word of God, it is to excite us to thankfulness that *we* are yet upon praying ground, with gospel mercy offered freely to us. St. Jude thus describes the state of the *fallen angels*: “The angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, God hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.” These are “prisoners *without* hope.” Again, St. Peter thus describes the condition of the impenitent inhabitants of the *old*

world, who refused to hearken to the voice of warning: “By which also He went and preached unto the *spirits in prison*;” that is, “by *the Holy Ghost*, He, *the Saviour*, preached, in the person of Noah, to those who *then* were the inhabitants of the earth, but having, for their disobedience and unbelief, been finally condemned, are *now* “spirits in prison;” no longer hearers of the warning voice of the preacher of righteousness; no longer careless neglecters and despisers of the word of truth; but “spirits in prison;” in other words, “prisoners *without hope*.” And so it will be with *all* who, in *our* day of grace and mercy, slight the offered salvation, and pass into eternity impenitent and unpardoned. The stroke of death instantly makes the awful distinction. *Today* they are “prisoners of *hope* ;” but *to-morrow* they may be “prisoners *without hope*.” If any here are of that character, we say to them, see the fearful state in which you stand; just on the brink of the eternal world, and your everlasting doom depending upon the manner in which the gospel invitation is received by you. Look at the *mercy* and *lovingkindness* contained in that word, “*to-day*.” It is as if the Lord said, “not *to-morrow*; for it may be too late; to-morrow may never come; but *to-day*, while it is called to-day, harden not your hearts; turn to the strong hold; even *to-day* do I declare that I will render *double* unto thee: instead of “indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, I will render *mercies* in rich abundance; not mercies *according to* the sufferings you have endured in a world of sin and sorrow, but *double*; not mercies *corresponding to* the punishment you have deserved, but *double*; not mercies *equal to* the pleasures you thought you had when in your state of ungodliness, but *double* : It shall be good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, and poured into your bosom.”

What *answer* shall we return? Shall we say that we *love* our chains and dungeon, and prefer staying where we are, the bond-slaves of sin and Satan? No; let us thankfully embrace the offer of deliverance; and *to-day*, if we have not done it

before, make our escape from this bondage, into “the glorious liberty of the children of God.”

O God, whose nature and property is ever to have mercy and to forgive, receive our humble petitions; and though we be tied and bound with the chain of our sins, yet let the pitifulness of thy great mercy loose us, for the honour of Jesus Christ our Mediator and Advocate.

SERMON II. JOB'S VIEW OF THE GRAVE, AND HIS HOPE BEYOND IT.

Job xvii. 13.

“If I wait, the grave is my house: I have made my bed in the darkness. I have said to corruption, Thou art my father; and to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister. And where is now my hope? As for my hope, who shall see it P”

God's afflictive dispensations in reference to those who love and trust in Him, have always perplexed persons of a contrary character. Either they have been ready to charge the Almighty with injustice and severity, in sending unmerited affliction; or they have supposed that the sufferer must have been “a sinner above all men,” because he was so visited. Job's friends seem to have fallen into the latter of these two errors. After exhorting him to put away the abomination, whatever it was, by which they supposed he had provoked the judgment of God; they attempted to comfort him, by assuring him of a removal of his calamity, and a return to earthly prosperity, when he should have done so. Job, however, had a better instructor than those well-meaning but ignorant friends; and he had better consolation than those “miserable comforters,” as he calls them, could afford him. While they were directing his hopes to something more prosperous on this side the grave, he was looking forward to *another* and a *better world*.

The language which he uses in the text is very beautiful and affecting. We shall perhaps see this to most advantage, if we divide it into two subjects of consideration.

I. The manner in which he describes the grave to which he was going.

II. The manner in which he implies a good hope of happiness beyond it.

The *application* of our subject will easily be made afterwards, from the circumstance, as declared in the text, that he was “*waiting*” for *both*.

I. We notice the manner in which Job describes the grave to which he was going. “The grave is my *house*.” It is called elsewhere, “The house appointed for all living.” It is the dwelling-place for the poor *body*, when worn out with the toils of life. This idea is more strongly expressed afterwards, when he says, “I have made my *bed* in the darkness.” There is not only the “house” to which the body is taken after death, but the “bed” in which it is to lie. The believer, when wearied with life's journey, and tired of the occupations which have engaged and harassed him, is described here as lying down in the *dormitory* of the grave, and resting in the “bed” prepared for him: so that we may say of such, even as regards the *body* merely, “Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord! for they rest from their labours.” But how humiliating to our natural *pride* is the language here used ! We look on our houses, and call them our own; and we call our lands after our own name; but there is nothing here so certainly ours as the grave to which we are going. Job's estimate is the true one: he had possessed houses, but the winds of heaven had destroyed them; and he had possessed lands, and cattle, and servants, and wealth to an immense extent; but the *Sabeans* and the *Chaldeans* had snatched them from him. He had enjoyed the fond hope of a posterity that should be called after his name; but they were all dead and gone. And now he looks at the *only* thing connected with earth which can be really called his own property, and he says, “The grave, *that* is my *house*; and the darkness of it, *that* is my *bed*.” And so it must one day be with *us* : We too must

say what Job did, “The grave is my house; mine by *inheritance*; for it was appointed to me, in common with all the children of Adam, that fallen parent, when it was said unto him, “In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely *die*.” This curse constitutes it mine. I am the sinful offspring of a sinful parent; he could only entail upon me his corrupt nature, his consequent sorrow, and the *grave*, to call my own. I must have that for my *house* at last; and I must lie down in the darkness of it, as in my bed. “It is *appointed* unto all men once to die.” Now, with such a view of death as this, how *melancholy* and how *fearful* is the condition of man | Is it not easy to account for the fear of death which influences so many? May we not see how true it is, that “the wicked is driven away in his wickedness?” No wonder that he is found clinging to life, and so loath to part with it! He would fain keep longer in his pleasant dwelling here, and avoid the dark cold house appointed for him; and therefore it is needful that the messengers of death, when sent to bear him hence, should drive him away, and push him out of life: “The wicked is *driven* away in his wickedness.” How inestimably precious then must *that* be, which can take away the fear of death, by taking away the sting of it; and thus can enable a man to say, while he is going, like Job, to the grave, “O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?” We shall see this in Job's case, as we proceed. He goes on to speak, in the next verse, of certain *friends* and *relatives* in this dark and gloomy abode, this “house” of the grave, which he calls his. There is “corruption” dwelling there; and he says to corruption, “Thou art my *father*.” The “worm” is dwelling there; and he says to the worm, “Thou art my *mother* and my *sister*.” As if Job had said, “I find none so intimately connected with me as these, none so suitable to my dying condition. Others may seek their dearest friends among the great ones of the earth, and claim kindred with the rich and the noble; but as for me, I am going where all is *corruption*, and my intimacy will be with *that* ; and, leaving my relatives here, I am about to claim relationship

with the very *worms* of the earth.” There is, I think, another idea conveyed by these remarkable words. They express a *willingness* to depart to the grave, a *joyful* dismissal from the troubles and sorrows of life, a *hastening* to meet the “corruption” and the “worm,” as if they were waiting his arrival, and he longing to join them: as if he had said, “*Hail*, thou corruption of the grave; and *welcome*, ye worms of the earth ! I am weary of life, worn out with sorrow, and can find in a world of sin nothing that should make me desire to stay in it. I would not live alway; I come to my grave, as to my house, in peace; and lie down in it as in my bed, in comfort. I can yield my body to *corruption*, without fearing any evil; and I can give it to the *worms*, without a murmur or a complaint. Knowing, as I do, the glorious *results* of death to those who love the Lord, I hail it as a blessing, I welcome it as a privilege, I rejoice in it as a precious thing; for I look not only *into* the grave, but *beyond* it; I contemplate not only the *corruption*, but the *resurrection*, of the dead.”

This brings us to our next subject of consideration, viz.

II. The manner in which Job implies that he had a good hope of happiness *beyond* the grave. “And where is now my hope As for my hope, who shall see it?” When he says, “Who shall see it?” he intimates, not that he had no “hope” at all; nor that though he once enjoyed a “hope,” he had now lost it; but that his “hope” was of a different kind from that which his friends had spoken of; that it was not a “hope” connected with this world, but the next; and therefore that it was not to be “*seen*,” as those things are, on which the *worldly-minded* fix their hopes. His meaning is, not that his “hope” was *no where*; but that it was not where his friends *supposed* it was, or where they would have had him fix it. As for *his* “hope,” it was in

heaven; out of the sight of men; mortal eyes could not discern it. The apostle *Paul* illustrates this; he says, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, “which *hope* we have as an *anchor* of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.” It lays hold of *heavenly* things, of those things which are “*not seen*” and which are “*eternal*;” it fastens on them, and thus stays and secures the soul, like an anchor securing a ship. It is true, a “*veil*” is between them and the believer, so that he sees them not; but *Faith* knows what they are, and where they are, and trusts to the promise of God for the full fruition of them hereafter ; faith knows that they are “*joys unspeakable and full of glory*;” and that they are *behind or within* the veil that is dropt, for the present, between things temporal and things eternal, as the veil in the temple was hung to conceal what was in the “*holy of holies*.” This “*hope*,” by laying hold of these eternal things, (unseen because “*within the veil*”) secures the soul of the believer, makes it sure and stedfast, just as the anchor, when cast or let down, keeps the ship secure, though the eye cannot discern *what* it is that the anchor fastens on below the water: “*As for my hope*,” says Job, “*who shall see it?*” Now, in order to perceive *what* Job's “*hope*” really was, we must refer to another declaration of his; and we shall see that it was “*a good hope*” beyond the grave, a hope that “*maketh not ashamed*,” a hope “*full of immortality*.” You will find it expressed in the 19th chapter, and at the 25th verse: “*I know that my Redeemer liveth*,” or “*is the living one*;” and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.” Observe how that declaration qualifies and explains our text. When he says, “*As for my hope, who shall see it?*” he Seems to give utterance to the same sentiment which *St. Peter* did, many ages afterwards, when the Redeemer had become incarnate, and had died, and ascended again to heaven: “*Whom, having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory*.” *This* it was that sanctified all

Job's afflictions, that enabled him to bear all the calamities brought on him by the *Sabeans* and the *Chaldeans*, who had fallen upon his servants and his cattle, and carried them away, leaving him in a state of poverty. This it was that enabled him to endure the still heavier affliction of the sudden death of his sons and daughters. This it was that kept him in a state of calm submission to the mysterious will of God, when his body was smitten with a sore disease, and enabled him to say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; and blessed be the name of the Lord." At the very time when his multiplied distresses made him cry out, "The grave is my house; I have made my bed in the darkness; I have said to corruption, thou art my father, and to the worm, thou art my mother and my sister;" I say, at that very time he could *hope*, and in hoping he could *triumph*, and his triumph was a *victory over death*: "I know that my Redeemer liveth." But we have not yet seen all the beauty which there is in the union of these two passages. When Job says, "My Redeemer liveth," he uses a word which has a very especial meaning. The Hebrew word *Goel*, which is here used, signifies the *next kinsman*, or the *nearest of kin*, to whom the redemption of captives, or of alienated estates, belonged, as we find explained in the book of Ruth. Now we know that Job, in using this expression, "*Goel*" or *near kinsman*, is not speaking of any such character *upon earth*. He speaks of *God*; for he says, "I know that my Redeemer liveth;" and then afterwards, "In my flesh I shall see *God*."

How is it then that such a term should be employed? How is it that the same word should express the Israelite's near kinsman, and the sinner's refuge from eternal destruction? Because that all-gracious "Redeemer," the *heavenly* "Goel," is to his people, under the *Gospel*, what the *earthly* "Goel," or nearest blood-relation, was to Israel, under the *Law*. To show this, let me refer to one of those acts which I before pointed out, as devolving on the near kinsman. If, through poverty, the Israelite had sold away his inheritance, the "Goel" was to buy

it back. Now *your* inheritance, Christian, has been thus forfeited. It was a goodly inheritance, “incorruptible, and undefiled, and that could not fade away;” but your forefather lost it: as Esau sold his birthright for “a mess of pottage,” so did your fallen progenitor part with his for one morsel of forbidden fruit. And where, among all his posterity, has one been found, who could act the part of the “near kinsman?” Not one ! All have been compelled to say, as *Ruth's* kinsman said to *Boaz*, “I cannot redeem the inheritance.” Only *God* could do it. And *God* *has* done it: He has done it by the blood-shedding of his own dear Son. When Judas had covenanted with the chief priests and Pharisees, to betray and sell his Master to them for thirty pieces of silver; that divine Redeemer, that heavenly “Goel,” himself paid down the covenant-price of the lost “inheritance” of sinful man, in tears, and agony, and blood, and procured eternal happiness by suffering in their nature; and thus recovered for them their title to eternal life.

Now, observe how all this bears on our text. The blessings purchased by the divine Redeemer, the heavenly “Goel,” were Job's, as well as ours. The “corruption” of the grave, and the “worm,” which he speaks of here, as his “father, his mother, and his sister,” were not the *only* kindred that he claimed. Contemplating the eternal happiness which awaits the people of God, he could lift his eyes *above* the grave, and say even to the Almighty, “*Thou* art my father,” and to the angels and the spirits of the just made perfect, “*Ye* are my brethren and my sisters;” and to the expected *Messiah*, “*Thou* art my near kinsman.” And if so, then he could, by *faith* in Him, claim even *heaven* as his home. Instead of saying, “the grave is my house, I have made my bed in the darkness;” he could say, “I have a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; and there remaineth a rest and a resting-place for me there, among the glorified people of God; for my near kinsman is Immanuel, God with us.” Are we going too far, in thus describing the condescension of our Lord, or the privileges of his people? No;

the condescension of the Saviour is still *greater* than we have expressed, and so are the privileges of his people. We need only quote his own blessed words, in order to prove it. One of the most beautiful and affecting declarations which he ever made is one in which He chooses to acknowledge this near relationship with those who love and obey Him. Turn to Matthew xii. 46. "While He yet talked to the people, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But He answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother, and who are my brethren? And He stretched forth His hand towards His *disciples*, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren for whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." Here then we have the Lord Jesus declaring the holy and intimate connexion, the close and mystical relationship, which exists between Himself and the Church which He has redeemed with his own most precious blood; as he did on a subsequent occasion, when he said to those same disciples, "I ascend to my Father, and to your Father." And He has Himself declared, that, in the last great day, He will welcome them to heaven by the same appellation, saying, "Come, ye blessed *children of my Father*, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Hence St. Paul does not scruple to say, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, chap. ii. ver. 11, "Both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified"—that is, the Redeemer and the redeemed—"are all *of one*,"—*one* nature, one father, one spirit, one blood. "For which cause," continues the apostle, "he is not ashamed to call them *brethren*." Let us now draw the *application* of our subject from the circumstance stated in the text, that Job was *waiting* for the period to arrive, when the *grave* should be the resting-place of his *body*, as "the house appointed for all living;" and when *heaven* should be the resting-place of his *soul*, as "the building of God, the house not made with hands." "If I wait," he says,

or “what if I wait,” meaning “though I should wait ever so long.” He knows that the end of it must be *the grave*; and, knowing this, he *waits* patiently, till the stated period arrives; as he says elsewhere, “All the days of my appointed time will I *wait*, until my change come.” How sadly is this salutary consideration shut out of the minds of most ! What pains are taken to get rid of it, as an unwelcome visitor ! Yet why? The only way to enjoy life wisely and rationally, is to see the prospect of a happy termination of it. Now the truth is, that we are all, however engaged in pleasure, or occupied in business, *waiting* for this termination. Is it not strange that we should be so little concerned whether it shall be a *happy* one or not? Let us strive to be familiar with the thought of death, and, through that, comforted with the hope of glory. That holy preparation which a believer daily makes for his dying hour, is a component part of real happiness; that penitent believing frame of mind, which is the proper state of a *christian* man, is the condition of a truly *happy* man. Look at the *contrary* character. The ungodly man says to “corruption,” not “Thou art my *father*,” but “Thou art my *foe*,” and to “the *worm*,” not “Thou art my *mother* and my *sister*,” but “Thou art my *dread* and my *abhorrence*.” And when death comes, he says what Ahab said to the prophet, “Hast thou found me, O mine *enemy* /* The conviction that life has been spent without preparation for death, constitutes the bitterness and agony of such a man’s last hours. Which then is the *happy* man? He who, “through fear of death, is all his lifetime subject to bondage;” or he who is “waiting,” like Job, in calm and holy expectation that when his *body* shall be carried by *mourning friends* to the *grave*, his *spirit* shall be carried by *rejoicing angels* into *heaven*? Which is the *happy* man? He who is “driven away in his wickedness,” or he who “hath hope in his death?” Conscience and the Bible make one and the same reply: “holy preparation for death is the real enjoyment of life.” Then let the *Believer* “wait,” as Job did. Let him “wait” in *faith*; for what saith his Saviour ! “In my Father’s house are many mansions: I go to prepare a place for

thee; and where I am, there shalt thou be also.” Let him “wait” in *hope*; for what is his privilege? Not only to know that there “is a crown of righteousness” for them that love God; but, through grace, to enjoy the “good hope” that it shall be put upon *his own head*. Let him “wait” in *patience*, till all the work be done which his divine Master has given him to do; till he has suffered all the righteous will of his heavenly Father; and till, by the sanctifying effect of all the dispensations of providence and grace upon his soul, he is “made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.” And if any ask *why* he thus conducts himself, let him give this answer: “I am waiting for my last great change; and I would not have it come upon me unawares, and find me off my guard. I feel that my time is short; and I wish to employ it in the service of God, and for the salvation of my soul. I know that dying will be a solemn thing; and I wish to have nothing to do then *but* to die. I would have no sins unrepented of to hang their weights about my departing soul, nor any self-reproaches to torment me when I am going to appear before God. Therefore I repent *now* of sin; I seek *now* reconciliation with God; I sue *now* for his grace and mercy; I go *now* to the Saviour for pardon, peace, and salvation. So when the time of my departure shall be at hand, I trust to be found *ready*; redeemed by my Saviour's blood, justified by his righteousness, and sanctified by his spirit. And if so, then, when my Lord shall say, “Behold, I come quickly,” my happy spirit shall reply, “Amen, even so, come Lord Jesus.”

SERMON III.

THE PATH OF THE JUST LIKE THE SHINING LIGHT.

Proverbs iv. 18.

“The path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more, unto the perfect day.”

A LARGE portion of the book of Proverbs consists in making a *distinction* between “the *Righteous*” and “the *Wicked*.” This is done in various ways, and by a variety of similes, all showing an awful contrast in their present and future condition. They are represented here as each walking in a “path.” I need not observe, that when the “Just” or the “Righteous” are spoken of, those are intended, whose sins have been repented of, and who are renewed and sanctified by the Spirit of God. These are justified by faith, and their “path” is that way in which they walk, from the time when they begin to seek the Lord, until the close of their days. So also the “wicked” or “ungodly” have a “path” of their own to walk in; and it is said, in the next verse, to be “darkness.” It is the “path” of *sin*; and that makes it “dark.” When sinful thoughts are harboured, and sinful desires cherished, and sinful objects pursued, and sinful pleasures enjoyed; then a man is said, in scripture, to be walking in the “path” of sin. It is a path of *sorrow* too; and that makes it “dark.” Sin and sorrow are inseparable companions. God has joined them together in judgment, as he has joined together holiness and happiness in mercy; and no man can put them asunder. It is the “broad path which leadeth to *destruction*;” and that makes it “dark.” The end of the ungodly man's dark “path” must be the “destruction”

of his *hopes*; for he has none beyond the grave. It must be the "destruction" of his *joys* ; for "the pleasures of sin are but for a season." And it must be the "destruction" of his *soul*; for it is expressly declared in scripture, that the end of the wicked shall be "outer darkness," and the "blackness of darkness for ever." But we turn from this sad description of the dark "path" of the "wicked," to contemplate that of the "Just," and the "shining light" that beams in it. We will look at it in its rise, its progress, and its perfection.

I. In its *rise*—I say "rise," because there is implied even here a previous state of *darkness*. When the sun rises, it rises upon a *dark* world; and when *grace*, for that is "light," first shows itself in the heart, it illuminates what was dark before. Look around, and you will see how perfect the simile is. Just as the sun begins to rise, you may perceive how dark the *valleys* are, while the tops of the *mountains* are gilded by his beams: so, in the moral world, as the "Sun of righteousness" rises, "with healing in his wings," you see some souls remaining in darkness, while others seem glowing with light. Let it be remembered, that in scripture the word "darkness" is used to describe the *natural* state of *every one* of us. So that when we see some in a state of piety and holiness, it is not because they *never were* in a condition of sin, and ignorance of "the path of life;" but because, through grace, they have made their escape from that "darkness," and have got into the "light." St. Paul addresses the Ephesian converts thus: "Ye were sometime darkness," that is, even as others; "but now are ye light in the Lord." And when writing to the Corinthian converts, he enlarges upon the term, and gives its full spiritual meaning: "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ." In this respect how interesting is a *congregation* / What a variety of conditions of soul may we not perceive, all deeply affecting to the christian mind ! The minister may well feel it while he

preaches. O, how delightful it is to him to perceive the change when it is produced ! To be able to say, of any hearer, There is an *enlightened* soul! one on which the Holy Ghost has shined ! It has just felt the warmth of the divine rays, and is now obeying the voice which says, “Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.” We have preached the word of God to that soul, and it has not been in vain: “Thy word is a light unto the feet.” The word has perhaps but just entered the heart; but we do not “despise the day of small things:” “The *entrance* of thy word giveth light.” A short time ago, perhaps, the heart was hard, the affections cold, the mind perverse, the feelings all benumbed, and the whole character at variance with the word and will of God. *Now* the coldness is beginning to feel the genial influence of the gospel; the light and the warmth are *together* in the soul. The sinner *sees* and *feels* the effects of the rising of “the Sun of righteousness;” he sees what *Job* saw, when he said, “I am vile;” and he feels what the converts on the day of Pentecost did, who cried, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” This is very *little*, it may be said. True; but that little is of such a character as required the agency of an omnipotent God, as much as when he said, “Let there be light.” Little as it may seem, to have . come to the conviction that he is a *sinner*, and that he is in want of a *Saviour*, and that without Christ, as such, he must perish; it requires a light even more marvellous than that which broke from heaven upon the astonished Saul of Tarsus, at his conversion. It was to enlighten the dark mind of that prejudiced and injurious man with the light of the glorious gospel, that the gracious Redeemer thus appeared to him; and therefore He seems to have accompanied it with a suitable external emblem, an outward and visible sign of the inward and spiritual grace which He was about to manifest to the soul of His persecuting enemy: “Whereupon,” says the apostle, when declaring his conversion before king Agrippa, “as I went to Damascus, at mid-day, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about

me, and them that journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice saying, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against, the pricks." Turn, now, from this illustration of the subject, to the text itself; and you will see, by the language there used, that though in our case no such external revelation is to be looked for, yet the "light of life," of which that was the appropriate emblem, shines thus into the hearts of men, to convert them. When they are "converted from the error of their way," they are "turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." Now, we love to encourage the first beginnings of this grace, the first dawns of this light, in the heart. Like him who was "the light of the world," it "must increase." The first streaks of morning light are the sure *pledges* of the coming on of the meridian day. This leads us to consider—

II. Its *progress*. "It shineth *more and more*." The sun in the firmament never stops, from the first moment of its rising. Clouds may prevent our seeing it, but there it is, pursuing its destined course; and it is *sure* to arrive at its meridian height. Such is "the path of the Just:" there is always a tendency to higher and greater attainments. St. Paul beautifully describes it: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." It is true, clouds will often intervene, and deprive the Christian of his light and consolation; but if the light be *true*, it will shine *again*. When St. Paul cried, under a sense of sin, "O wretched man that I am !" the clouds might be said to be then obscuring the brightness of his light; but it was only that it might shine more strongly afterwards. What a lustre there was about him when he said, "I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day." And what brightness beamed upon him when he cried, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my

course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day." We see here the "Sun of *righteousness*" rising to its very meridian, at the moment when the sun of his mortal *life* was just about to set in the darkness of the grave. But there is a progressive shining of this light, not only in the *heart* but in the *conduct* of the believer; for he that is *inwardly* growing in *grace*, will be *outwardly* growing in *usefulness*. O what a blessing to others is a real Christian! and how mistaken are they who suppose that religion shuts us up, and renders us fit for nothing but the exercise of prayer and meditation, and other *private* duties! A real Christian is a *public good*; he is a "light shining in a dark place;" nay, "Ye are the light of the *world*," said our Lord to his disciples; and it is no more possible that the Christian should receive an increase of *grace* without communicating an increase of *good*, than it is possible for the sun to rise in the firmament without the earth being more and more illuminated, and warmed, and fructified by it. You may see this in his daily walk and conversation. It is *he* who acts up to the meaning of those words, "Know ye not that ye are not your own For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's 1" It is *he* who thus judges, that "Christ died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again." It is *he* who, like Job, causes "the ear to bless him, and the eye to give witness to him." The dawning of the light in his own heart shews its reality in constant endeavours to do good to others. Men look on, and wonder often that he should do so much; for they cannot understand his motive: they little know that it is simply this, viz. that having been "once darkness, but now light in the Lord," he walks as one of the "children of light," and desires to be always "*adorning* the doctrine," and "*abounding* in the work of the Lord." The love of Christ constrains him. When the grace of God visited him, the message was, "Arise!"—then—"shine!" He first receives

light, then he holds it forth; and in proportion as his light increases will others be benefited by him: "Let your light so shine before men, that they, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father which is in heaven."

III. Its *perfection*. Where is that to be seen? not on earth. The Christian's "perfect day" is his *heavenly* day: "They go from strength to strength, till unto the God of gods appeareth every one of them in Zion." We have a glimpse of the "perfect day" in the book of the Revelation: "The city had no need of the sun, for the glory of the Lord doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." He that sits on yonder lofty throne, has prepared this city of glorious light for every poor sinner, whose heart, by divine grace, has been set on the enjoyment of it. How marvellous it is to *think* of! Not a single soul there, of all the heavenly host of the Redeemed, but was once "sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death," and liable to "the blackness of darkness for ever." They were all once under "the power and influence of the prince of darkness;" and "the god of this world had blinded their eyes, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." But it *did* shine; it "shined into their *hearts*, to give them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." That light shined "more and more," while on earth; and now it shines in "perfect day;" and so it will shine for ever. Marvellous grace and mercy The poor guilty and hell-deserving sinner, whose whole mind and soul and spirit were formerly so benighted, that he could see nothing desirable even in Christ himself, has, by the operation of the illuminating Spirit, passed into a state where he beholds, without a vail, the glorious God, and is himself transformed into the same image, from glory to glory. What shall we say to these things? "If God be for us, who shall be against us?" Having made these observations on the *rise*, *progress*, and *perfection* of this "light," let me offer some directions as to the *obtaining*, *using*, and *enjoying* it. 1st. As to *obtaining* it. How

awful the state of those who are in *darkness* / This may be the case though there is light all around us. "The light shined in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not." You may be in a parish or congregation, like the *Egyptians* among the *Israelites*, suffering, by unbelief, "a darkness that may be felt;" while others, by faith, have "light in their dwellings." Nay, the very pillar of cloud and fire, gave darkness to some, while it gave light to others. Now to such we say, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Come to the light; and let it shine *on* you and *in* you. Be not content to have it merely shining *round* you. *That* shining may be your *condemnation*. Let your prayer be, "Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord!" Listen to the invitation: "Come, and let us walk in the light of the Lord. But let me give a caution here—Beware of being deceived by a *false* light. How many think they are in the light, when all is dark! "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" There is a light which is not that of Christ "the sun of righteousness," not "the light of life;" but is called in scripture "the light of the wicked;" and it is declared that it shall be "put out, *put out with him* : " it may last as long as he lasts; but when he dies, it is put out." It does not illuminate the "dark valley of the shadow of death;" it does not shine in the world of glory; it has no "perfect day." What is this *Jalse light* # It is *self-righteousness*. You may always tell it by its leading the soul *into* sin and danger, instead of *out* of it; just as the ignis fatuus conducts the poor deceived traveller into the miry pit, instead of the habitation where he would be.

2nd. As to the *using* it.

It is a *borrowed* light, and must shine in piety towards the author of it. The rays must be reflected back again towards their source: "We love him because he first loved us." It is thus that it will be *increased*; and the increase of it will always be the best proof of its *genuineness*. Use this light to look into the

dark recesses of your *heart*. Why is it that men make such sad mistakes respecting the state of the heart? They do not search it with *this* light. Evils are there, but unseen, like loathsome reptiles in a dark pit. Men cannot see their own corruptions by their own light, and therefore they say there are none. But take *this* light, and look; and, oh, how many will be discovered ! Our Lord seems to hold this light at the door of the human heart, and to show the horrible contents of it to man: "Those things," he says, "which proceed from the mouth, come forth from the *heart*; and they defile the man." And then he shows how sinful thoughts become sinful words and acts; and how they lie in the corrupt pit of the heart; and while he holds his light there, you seem to see them start forth from their hiding place as he particularizes them, in all their frightful abominations, and thus "defile the man." 3rd. As to the *enjoying* it. Many who have it enjoy it not, and are inclined to think such a text as this *against* them. But it is not said that there are *no clouds* interposing; nor that the light is always bright, as to the *perception* of its *comfort*. If this were the case, there would be no "mourners in Zion," none "writing bitter things against themselves;" no "smoking flax," no "bruised reeds." It is possible for the soul to be in a state of *affliction* which may dim its perception of the light, though not deprive it of the *sun*. It was the case with Job: he exclaims, "Wherefore hidest thouthy face? O that I knew where I might find Him ! Behold I go forward, but He is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive Him: on the left hand, where He doth walk, but I cannot behold Him: He hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see Him." Yet there was the true light; and who that reads of him but sees that the mists were cleared away when he cried, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though, after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another." It was the case with David. "How long wilt thou be absent from me? For ever ?" yet there was the true

light. And who does not rejoice with him, when he says, "The Lord is my light, and my salvation : whom then shall I fear? He is the strength of my life: of whom then shall I be afraid "" And it has been the case, more or less, with all the people of God, however eminent for their Christian graces, that they have known the *hidings* of His countenance. Nay, was it not the case with the Lord Jesus himself? That *outward* darkness which was occasioned by the sun's withdrawing his light, "from the sixth to the ninth hour," while the Redeemer hung on the cross, was the emblem of the *inward* darkness which He himself experienced, when He cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" As, in quality of our surety, He was to feel our pains, to carry our sorrows, and to suffer for our sins, in His own *body* on the tree; so likewise He was to endure them *mentally*, by being deprived, for a while, of the brightness of His Father's countenance. And I cannot but think that it is calculated to impart unspeakable consolation to the poor sorrowing and downcast believer, to call to mind the *sympathy* of his Redeemer even in such a sorrow as that; and to advert to the darkness of His pure and spotless soul, when, suffering for His people, He cried, "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Let such an one listen to that Redeemer's voice, now that He is in glory; and he will hear it comforting him out of heaven, and saying, "Who is there among you, that feareth the Lord, and yet walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the Lord, and stay himself upon his God." Let me, in conclusion, say, that, whether we are *mourning* for the manifestation of that light, or *rejoicing* in the *possession* of it, there is the *full and eternal* brightness of its glory still to be expected. The "*perfect day*" is still to come—and oh, what a day will *that* be | You will observe that the simile used in our text fails in one respect. The allusion made to the natural day goes no further than its *mid-day* shining. We know that when the sun has reached its meridian height, it begins *to decline*; it goes down by degrees, sets in darkness, and gives place to night. This is the case with every day, and always has been. It was the case

even with that day in which God changed the course of nature, when Joshua, at His command, cried, "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon!" It is said, "The sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day." But after that, it did go down; and nature returned to her course again. But the *perfect* day, to which the believer is looking forward in heaven, is a day which shall never decline, never close in, never give place to any evening, and never be susceptible of night. It is written, as a part of the description of heaven, "there is no night there." And we may address the prophet's language to every believer, and say, "Thy sun shall no more go down; for the Lord shall be to thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory."

SERMON IV. THE SINNER'S HIDING-PLACE.

Psalm xxxii. 7.

"Thou art my hiding-place."

WE find the strongest figurative expressions used in scripture, to show forth the power and grace of Jehovah. David, in the fervour of a mind overflowing with gratitude and love to God, speaks of Him as a "tower," and a "shield," and a "rock;" and, as if to interpret those expressions, he says, "My strong salvation." The expression used here is very striking. David had been exposed to so many dangers in battle, that he could value a place of safety. He was one of those who were compelled, on account of persecution, to "hide themselves in dens and caves of the earth;" and perhaps he had particularly in his recollection, at this time, the shelter which God providentially afforded him, when he hid himself from the malice of Saul, in *the cave of Engedi*. However this may be, it

is certain that David intended, by this expression, to ascribe all the protection which he experienced, both of a temporal and spiritual kind, to the grace and mercy shown him by *his God*. In the 91st Psalm we find a similar confidence expressed towards God: "He that abideth in the *secret place* of the most High, shall dwell under the *shadow* of the Almighty." It is on this account that the people of God are so wonderfully preserved, when snares are laid for them by the wicked; when calumny aims her shafts at them; when attempts are made to overturn their faith, or to seduce them to evil practice. They who thus afflict do not see the sheltering and protecting God to whom a Christian flies, as David did, in times of persecution and distress. He is far out of their sight. It is a *secret* refuge which He affords, a "hiding-place" which they cannot discover. But it was not merely as a God of *providential* safety and protection that David found comfort in Him. David was a *sinner*, and exposed to the wrath of a just and holy God. He wanted a "hidingplace" from the curse of a broken *law*. He wanted a "hiding-place" from the punishment due to *sin*. He wanted a "hiding-place" from *Satan*, that "roaring lion, who walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." The cave of Engedi would not conceal him from *these* enemies; nor would any *providential* deliverances answer his purpose here. These enemies were *spiritual*. He had moreover to conceal himself from the terrors of his own *mind*, from the misgivings of his own *heart*, from the convictions of his own *conscience*. Where shall he find a "hidingplace" from *these* ? He looks up to *God*, and says, " *Thou* art my hidingplace." But was it not God that he had sinned against ? Does he not say, in another place, "Against *Thee* only have I sinned ?" How then could it be, that God should constitute a "hiding-place" for him, from the effects of that wrath which God Himself denounces against sin? The question can only be answered, by referring to the one grand *scheme of salvation*, which has been appointed by God throughout all ages; which pervades the whole Bible, from Genesis to Revelations; which was made known to the *old*

Testament saints by types, and emblems, and figures; and which is discovered to those of the *New* Testament dispensation, in the person and character of *the Lord Jesus Christ*. David's was a *prospective* faith in the Messiah which was for to come; as ours is a *retrospective* faith in Him who did come, and did fulfil "all that was written in Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Him." The same blessed *Mediator* between sinful man and his offended God has ever existed; the same *Saviour* has ever been the propitiation for the sins of the whole world; the same *blood* has been ever the means of reconciliation, as the blood of "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world;" the same *stone* has been always the "chief corner-stone" of the church of God; and the same *name* has always been the "only name given under heaven, whereby men must be saved," even the name of *the Lord Jesus Christ*. Hence the prophet Isaiah cried, "A man shall be as a hiding-place"—the "Man Christ Jesus;" the "man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;" the "man" who is, and ever was, the "fellow of the Lord Almighty." To Him typically David had recourse by prayer and faith; through Him David obtained pardon and peace; and by Him he was enabled to look up to heaven, to see in Jehovah a reconciled God, and to say, as we read in the first verse of this Psalm, "Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, and whose sin is *covered*." Thus David found in God a "hiding-place." *We* want the same shelter which David did; and it is our mercy to know that we may find it where David found it. It will be a profitable subject of reflection, if we consider some of those *times* and *seasons* in which especially the Saviour is found to be a "hiding-place."

I. When the Christian first becomes acquainted with the *danger* he is in, from the *guilt* and *punishment* of *sin*. He sees himself to be a *sinner*, in the most unqualified sense of the word; his nature corrupt; his heart "deceitful, and desperately wicked;" his mind and conscience naturally defiled; a sinner by nature, and practice; a sinner in thought, word, and deed; such

a sinner, as that if he should seek for suitable language to describe his case, he could find none more completely apposite than that by which the word of God itself depicts the natural state of fallen man. Now, the same divine Spirit who has shown him thus his real state and condition, shows him also the *purity* and *holiness* of *God*; shows him the *condemning* power of the *Law* over him as a transgressor; shows him the inevitable *punishment* which awaits the transgressor in consequence. When a man is brought to such a state of mind as this, he cannot *put off* the concern to “a more convenient season;” he cannot content himself with hoping that because God is merciful, and he not so great a sinner as another, therefore all may yet be well at last. The matter is too important to be passed over so; the danger is too great to allow him to depend on such a miserable peradventure as that. He must have a sure and certain warrant that he is *delivered* from this impending evil; he wants a decisive and satisfactory answer to the one grand and all-important question which occupies his thoughts, “What must I do to be saved P” How is that question to be answered ? What shall he do? Shall he do what he *can*, and trust to the mercy of God to make up any *deficiency*? No; for how shall he venture to say he has done all that he *could* * or how shall he know *when* he has done *enough* When will he be able to assure himself that he has performed his own proper part? Besides, God is a *just* God, as well as a merciful; and how will the divine justice appear on such a plan as that? Shall he try then to stand upon his *own righteousness*, and determine to keep the whole law, and not offend in one point? No; for one day’s experience will show him the impossibility of it, by bringing him in guilty on self-examination. But suppose it should not, what shall he do with the *past*? Shall he then resolve all the obedience of the Law to external forms, outward ceremonies, attendance upon means of grace and ordinances; relying upon his regularity, his punctuality, his decent deportment, his moral character in the world; and then add to these, his social virtues, his relative

kindness, his charities, and general benevolence to all around him? Will that give him ease? No; for still the *heart* remains as it was, and still the *past* is not atoned for; still the *Law* is unsatisfied, because the obedience is not perfect. The question therefore is unanswered still, conscience is uneasy still; and the man stands helpless in the wide world, as a sinner exposed to an angry God above, an evil heart within, and a gulph of perdition beneath. Need I say, that in such a condition as this, a man *feels* that he wants a “hiding-place.”

If then you would rightly appreciate the value of the gospel, the efficacy of the atoning blood, and the preciousness of Him that shed it; conceive such a person, in the awakened state of mind which I have mentioned, to meet with that grand, sublime, and apostolic answer to his question, “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” Conceive him searching and discovering, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the other precious truths which belong to it: “The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.” “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you.” “Him that cometh I will in no wise cast out.” Would not his heart leap for joy, to see what Christ had done and suffered for him? Would he not be overcome with gratitude and love, to find a way open for *reconciliation*, by the blood of the cross; *peace* and *pardon* secured to him, by the merits and sufferings of a Redeemer; *justification*, by the imputed righteousness of the spotless Son of God; and *heaven* kept in reserve, as “an inheritance” for him, “incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away?” What a change of condition, when all these comforts are made his, by an humble, penitent, *appropriating* faith! When he thus finds Christ *his* “hiding-place” from *guilt*, and *wrath*, and *hell* /I may appeal here to two classes of persons. To the one I may say, Have I not, in what I have just stated, depicted a part of your own experience? Have you not known the misery of being without a “hiding-place;” and do you not, at this moment, bless God that you have found one in

Christ your Lord? When we thus testify before our congregations, of the necessity of such a refuge as the gospel holds forth in the Saviour, we say to you, "Ye are our witnesses." You know that it is not "a cunningly-devised fable" that we are uttering, when we tell of Christ's being to every believer now, what He was to David of old, a "hiding-place" from the guilt, and power, and punishment, of sin. At this moment you feel his sheltering protection; your life is *hid* with Christ in God; and not a day passes which does not give you reason to exclaim, with gratitude and love, "Thou art *my* hiding-place." But I may make another appeal to persons of a contrary description, and say, Is it not a matter worth your while to inquire into, why *you* have not the same comfortable enjoyment of God, the same experience of Him as, in Christ, a "hiding-place" for *your* souls? Does conscience never tell you that you need one? Or do you think it sufficient to know, from scripture, that there *is* such a refuge to go to, and then leave the matter there? This will never answer the purpose of salvation. David does not say, "Thou art *a* hiding-place" merely, as one among many; or *the* "hiding-place," as the only one; but, "Thou art *my* hiding-place." *There* lies all the excellency of the text. "He is *mine*: I have embraced the offer of His salvation," says David; "I have applied to Him in my own person; I have, as a sinner, taken shelter in His love and compassion; I have placed myself under His wings; I have covered myself with the robe of His righteousness; and now, therefore, I am safe. Blessed is the man whose iniquity is forgiven, and whose sin is covered." This is having a part and a lot in the matter, having the personal and individual benefit of the Saviour's work of atonement. How different is an *appropriating* from a *speculative* faith ! Men tell us that they believe the doctrine, that they acknowledge the truth, that they assent to our creed; and they say, that to declare to them the character of Christ, as the sinner's only help and safety, is merely putting before them what they already know. Now, follow up the idea suggested by the figure in our text, and see the folly and danger of acting

thus. Suppose a traveller upon a bleak and exposed heath, to be alarmed by the approach of a storm. He looks out for shelter. But if his eye discern a place to hide him from the storm, does he stand still, and say, "I see there *is* a shelter, and therefore I may remain where I am?" Does he not betake himself to it! Does he not run, in order to escape from the stormy wind and tempest? It was a "hiding-place" before; but it was *his* "hiding-place" only when he ran into it, and was safe. Had he not gone into it, though it might have been a protection to a thousand other travellers who resorted there, to him it would have been as if no such place existed. Who does not see at once, from this simple illustration, that the blessings of the gospel are such only in their being *appropriated to* the soul? The physician can cure only by being *applied to*; the medicine can heal only by being *taken*; money can enrich only by being *possessed*; and the merchantman in the parable would have been none the wealthier for discovering that there was a "pearl of great price," had he not made *it his*. So with the salvation of the gospel: if Christ is the "balm in Gilead," *apply* the remedy; if He is the "physician there," *go* to Him; if He is the "pearl of great price," sell all that you have, and *buy* it; and if He is a "hiding-place," *run into* it, and be safe; there will be no solid joy and peace in the mind, until He is *your* "hiding-place."

II. How sweet the Believer's appropriation of the text to himself in times of *trial* and *temptation*, *affliction* and *distress* / "In the time of trouble," said David, "He shall *hide* me in His pavilion; in the *secret* of His tabernacle shall He *hide* me." Say, ye who, by grace, have obtained this blessed security I do not outward trials serve to drive you continually to your refuge, and make you cling more closely to your Saviour and your God? But, ah! the ungodly man is exposed to all the violence of the tempest; he must bear it all. He must discover, from painful experience, how one refuge after another gives way, and leaves him still exposed and helpless. The empty pleasures of sin will not satisfy; vain company, idle

amusements, riotous mirth, all fail, and give him back to the storm, miserable as he was before : no reconciled God, no peace-procuring Saviour, no refuge, no “hiding-place I’ One after another, of the things of the world to which he flees for comfort, tell him, in fact, the same truth : “I am a carnal delight for a worldly mind; I am a pleasing fancy for a deluded imagination; I am a temporary gratification for a sensual appetite; but I am not a hiding-place from the wrath of God.” And they all cry to him, as his experience gives them utterance, “Arise, and depart hence, for this is not your rest, for it is polluted.”

Take one more view of the Saviour under this figure—

III. Conceive the value of an appropriating faith in Him, at the *hour of death*. What is it that staggers the confidence of an impenitent and ungodly man at that period : What is it that so appals him, as he enters the dark valley? He knew, all along, that Christ was a refuge, and a shelter, and a “hidingplace;” and he knows it now. Then why fear and tremble? Because he feels now, in a manner peculiar to a death-bed, that the “hiding-place” is not *his*. He has not made it so, throughout life, by repentance and faith; and now he discovers that he wants a shelter for his *own soul*, one in which he may hide the multitude of his own individual sins. The grave will be a temporary “hidingplace” for his body; but his soul ! his immortal soul ! *that* must stand before the bar of God, and must be tried by the unerring Judge, in the presence of assembled worlds. And in what condition? unsheltered, unprotected, naked, and exposed to the eternal wrath of the Almighty! The mountains could not cover it, nor the rocks hide it, even if they should fall upon him. If sin has not been covered before, what shall hide it *then* ? Not a man's own righteousness; for it will be proclaimed to be only “filthy rags;” not even the *Saviour's* righteousness *then*; for the day of Judgment is not the time to seek or grant it. How can he meet

his God? Where shall be his “hidingplace?” - * . From this awful scene may best be learnt, at least by those who have hitherto disregarded the subject, the value of a “hiding-place” from wrath and fiery indignation. The Believer may have it, in all the comfort of self-appropriation, even in the hour of death, and in the day of Judgment. “Thou art my hiding-place,” he may say, as he lies on his *dying bed*, contemplating all that his Redeemer has done for him, and waiting for death to conduct him to the world above. And, as he gives up his body to the *grave*, he may exclaim, “I know that my Redeemer liveth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.” And as his happy soul, freed from its clay tenement, expands into the *world of spirits*, this may be his triumphant language: “Unto him that loved me, and washed me from my sins in his own blood, be glory and dominion for ever.” If this appropriation shall be blissful, when the period of *heavenly fruition* comes; let the contemplation of it *now* fill the heart, and engage the tongue, of every humble follower of Christ. And while he walks to and fro upon the face of the earth, waiting for the Master's coming, let him adopt the language of one of our Christian poets, and say,

A few more rolling suns at most,
Shall bring me to fair Canaan's coast;
There I shall sing the song of grace,
And see my glorious “hiding-place.”

SERMON V.
THE GOODNESS AND THE
BEAUTY OF JEHOVAH.

Zech. ix. 17.

“How great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty 1”

“THE testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” We may perceive it to be so in the chapter before us. If, when we read our text, we should ask, “Of whom speaketh the prophet this?” it might be replied, “He is speaking of *the Lord God Almighty.*” And we should easily perceive the application of the words to Him, as the *Creator* of the world, the *Preserver* of men, the *Director* and *Governor* of all;

for “in Him we live, and move, and have our being.” Contemplating His providential care of us, guarding us from all things hurtful, and supplying us with health and strength, with food and raiment, we might say, and we should say well, “How great is His *goodness* P’ Then passing, in our contemplations, from earth, as the scene of His providence, to *heaven*, as the scene of His *glory*; and viewing Him, as described in His word, seated upon His throne, surrounded with the cherubim and seraphim, “dwelling in the light which no man can approach,” we might say, and we should say well, “How great is His *beauty* 1” But this is not the view to take of our text. God is to be seen here in the display of more “goodness” than even the bounty of His providence exhibits, and invested with a “beauty” which increases the lustre of every attribute of the Divine Majesty. Our text is a description of the excellency of God as manifest *in Christ*. In order to

perceive this, look at the 9th verse: “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: Behold, thy King cometh to thee: He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass.” Of whom speaketh the prophet this? It is a prophecy respecting *the Lord Jesus*; and it has had its minute and literal accomplishment. Turn to the 21st chapter of St Matthew, and you will read it: “When they drew nigh to Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the Mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me. And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them.” All this was done, says the Evangelist, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, “Tellye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting on an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.” So then, this prophecy refers explicitly to *Christ*, as the Messiah which was for to come; it represents Him as a king, as Zion's king, and as bringing salvation. Now then, let the verse which contains the *prophecy* be compared with the verse which contains our *text*, and you will see at once of whom the prophet speaks when he exclaims, “How great is His goodness, and how great is His beauty P “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” But there is another verse in this chapter, with which our text is connected, and which equally enforces its reference to the Saviour. In the 11th verse we have an address to *Zion* from Jehovah, in these words: “As for thee, by the blood of thy covenant have I sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water.” The bondage here alluded to, whether the captivity of Israel in *Egypt or Babylon*, was typical bondage; their deliverances shadowed forth the deliverance of sinners from the bondage of sin and

Satan, and from the sentence of condemnation under which they lay. It is only by the “blood” of that “covenant” that any

sinners are “sent forth” from their gloomy captivity; and only by that blood that they are saved from going down to “the *pit*,” of which it may indeed be said that “there is no water,” no, not so much as a drop “to cool the tongue that is tormented in that flame.” There is therefore a distinct reference to *Christ* in both the verses which I have quoted; and as those verses stand in close connexion with my text, I infer that there is as distinct a reference to him in *that* also. “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.” I purpose then to keep in view this connexion; and shall attempt to show from the first of those passages, “How great is His *goodness*,” and from the second, “how great is His *beauty*.” Behold then the blessed Redeemer *fulfilling* that prophecy! Contemplate, with the eye of your mind, the whole transaction. See yonder the village of *Bethany*. It is at the foot of the *Mount of Olives*, and about two miles from *Jerusalem*. A few persons are standing there, with an ass tied, and a colt with her. Two men, apparently of mean condition, come up to the door against which the ass and the colt are tied, and begin to loose them, in order to take them away. The owners of the beasts cry out, “What do ye loosing the colt?” The strangers do not desist, but turn to the owners, and make this strange reply: “The Lord hath need of them.” The disciples say not “our Master,” or “Jesus,” but “The Lord.” Would you not suppose that the owners would have either ridiculed such a claim thus made upon their property; or that they would have prevented the disciples, by some act of violence, from leading the animals away? but not so. No sooner do they hear those words, “The Lord hath need of them,” than they suffer them to go. What have you here, then, but a miraculous overruling of the *minds* of those men, in order to the accomplishment of this prophecy. It is declared to be so by the evangelist: “All this was done, that it might be *fulfilled* which was spoken by the prophet.” Observe, “*all* this;” that is, the finding of the ass and her colt there, and the overruling of the minds of the owners, as well as what took place afterwards. You have then here one of the most literal fulfilments of

prophecy which are to be found in the whole of scripture; and it is “the testimony of Jesus.” Now see “His *goodness*” in all this. The disciples bring the ass and colt, as Jesus had commanded; they set Him thereon; and He rides along amidst the acclamations of the multitude. Let us ask a few questions respecting this extraordinary transaction. The answers will show His “*goodness.*” *Who* is it that is thus entering “*Zion*” as her “*king?*” The multitude put this very question at the time: “Who is this?” And the answer was, “This is Jesus, the prophet, of Nazareth, of Galilee.” And then they shouted, “Hosannah to the son of David | Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!”. Yes, He comes in the name of the Lord, to deliver His people from their sins, to bring in an everlasting righteousness, to accomplish for them the work of redemption, and to secure their eternal salvation. All that is exhibited to you here of contempt or degradation, He has *voluntarily* taken upon Himself; and He is come from *heaven* to do it; and He does it that men may not perish, but have everlasting life. If this is the case, can you look upon that meek and condescending Lord as He rides along, and not say, “how great is His *goodness* I” We might follow up this question by asking others: Where is it that He is going, as He rides along upon that lowly beast ! And what is His errand? And why is He so bent on accomplishing His journey? Who are those whom he is to join at His journey's end? And what is to be the issue of it all? He is going to *Jerusalem*, where He is to be “baptized with a baptism of blood;” and He is, as you hear Him say Himself, “straitened till it be accomplished.” His *enemies* are there, and He is hastening to give Himself up to them. There are those waiting for Him who will seize upon Him, and put Him to a cruel death. He knows all this; He is perfectly conscious of all the torments that await Him; He knows the very hearts of all with whom He will have to do, when He reaches the place. Nothing is hid from Him, of all the cruelty that He is to experience, of all the bodily suffering that He is to endure, of all the mental agony that is to bow Him to the earth,

and of all the terrors of darkness and desertion with which Hell is to assail Him: I say, He knows it all; and yet yonder He goes; He rides on, as if only joy awaited Him; He hastens, as if to partake of nothing but pleasure. If you would know why it is that He *voluntarily* enters Jerusalem, that there He may suffer, and bleed, and die; you may find the reason in the apostle's remarkable words, "Who, for the *joy* that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame." Yes, there *was* "joy before Him;" there was the joy of saving His people from their sins, and opening the kingdom of heaven to all believers; the "joy" of paying a ransom price, which should preserve them from going down to destruction; the "joy" of plucking them as brands from the everlasting burnings, and snatching them from the grasp of Satan; the joy of raising them up from the degradation and misery into which sin had sunk them, and placing them on thrones of everlasting glory in heaven. *That* was the joy that was set before Him; and *that* is the reason why you see Him here, in this chapter, journeying to Jerusalem; calling, as it were, to divine justice, as He passes along, "Save them from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom." Can you forbear exclaiming, as you see him thus, "How great is His goodness

But there is something more to admire in that meek and lowly Saviour, which the text speaks of—There is the "*beauty*" of His character. To bring this distinctly before you, I will, as I said, refer to the 11th verse: "As for thee," saith the Lord, addressing Zion, "by the blood of thy covenant have I sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water." I have already explained these words; let me now show how they exemplify the "*beauty*" of the character of the Lord Jesus. "The blood of the covenant," here spoken of, is the blood of *Jesus*, as the surety of the covenant on behalf of His people. The "prisoners" represent, in a spiritual sense, those *sinner*s of mankind whom Satan has been holding in his iron bondage. And "the pit wherein is no water," from whence those

“prisoners” have been “sent forth,” intimates the condition of hopeless misery from which the Redeemer, in His mercy, and by His power, has eternally delivered them. But how was this accomplished? you cannot conceive of its being done by the “goodness,” of the divine character, abstractedly considered. If it could, then God would not have been “a *just* God,” though He would have been “a *Saviour*.” No, we must look for something besides the “goodness” of our God in this transaction; we must see His “beauty.” And in order to behold it properly, we must go to *Bethlehem*, and see that great thing which is come to pass. Another scene presents itself there, still more wonderful than that just contemplated at *Bethany*. You find there two persons, Joseph and Mary, who come, among others, to be taxed; and because there is no room for them in the inn, the mother is constrained to take her new-born child to the stable, and cradle Him in a manger. Some shepherds are standing near, and looking at the infant; they fall down before Him, and worship Him. *Who* is this child of a span long? Let the language of *prophecy* tell: “Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name *Immanuel*, which being interpreted is God with us.” Yes, in that infant you see “God manifest in the flesh;” in Him you see the *union* of the divine and human nature; and that union is the “*beauty*” of the character of Jehovah manifested for the redemption of man.” Unto us a *child* is born, unto us a *son* is given; and His name shall be called *Wonderful*—mark the union of the two natures. The “child born” is “the mighty God.” The taking of the manhood into God, for our salvation, constitutes the “beauty” of the divine character. But this is not all. Proceed further, and you come to another scene. You are at *Gethsemane*. This “child of a span long” has become “a man of sorrows;” he has become a *suffering* Saviour. Yonder He lies, prostrate in agony and prayer. His sweat is, as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground. Why this pain and suffering? It is occasioned by the anticipation of still greater misery. He is expecting the torments of the *cross*. We

described Him just now *on His way* thither; see Him now *arrived* ! “Behold the man !” But where is His “beauty ?” All signs of the Godhead are gone: He is “despised and rejected of men;” He stands before His persecutors in mock majesty, with a crown of thorns on His head, and a reed in His right hand, for a sceptre. He has been buffeted, scourged, and spit upon. He is now fulfilling another prophecy, viz, “He hath no form nor comeliness; and there is *no beauty* in Him, that we should desire Him. His visage is marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men.” He has “given His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair.” And, when all these torments have been inflicted, the last and greatest still remains. Follow the multitude to the Mount of *Calvary*, just beyond the gates of the city. There you behold what an evangelist emphatically calls “that sight.” I will not describe it. I will only say, it is now that He is shedding “the blood of the covenant;” it is now that He is rescuing those “prisoners” from going down to the “pit” of perdition. He is doing this by dying in their stead, “the just for the unjust, that he may bring them to God.” Yes, “He was wounded for our transgressions,” cry the ransomed prisoners, as they make their escape, “he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.” This has been so done by the God-man Mediator, as that the *justice* of Jehovah has not been sacrificed to his *goodness*, nor his *purity* to his *mercy*. The Son of God has died in the stead of sinful man, the calls of justice have been satisfied, the demands of the law have been fulfilled, the penalties of the transgression have been endured, by Him; and thus have been preserved in harmony all the attributes of Jehovah; and the harmony of those attributes, in the salvation of a sinner, constitutes the “*beauty*” of the character of God. Can we look upon the mangled form of our bleeding, dying Redeemer, as it hangs upon the cross, without saying, “How great is his ‘*beauty*!’” Can we view a crucified Saviour, knowing that in his sacred person, thus “marred more than any man's,” justice and mercy

meet together, without exclaiming, "How great is his *beauty* " And here we cannot but remark the difference there is between the *world's* estimate of the crucified Jesus, and that which his *Church* forms of him. What is *deformity* to the *one*, is *beauty* to the *other*. While the *world* say, "He hath no form nor comeliness, and there is no beauty in him that we should desire him;" the *Church* cries, "He is the chief among ten thousand and the altogether lovely: This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O ye daughters of Jerusalem!"—"To them that believe he is precious." Thus I have endeavoured to show, from the condescension and voluntary sufferings of our Saviour, "how great is his *goodness*;" and from the union of the divine and human nature in his sacred person, and the harmony of the divine attributes in his suffering humanity, "how great is his *beauty*." Let me now apply the subject closely to the hearts and consciences of all who hear me. I may do this by urging upon you two admonitions. 1st. Strive to obtain strong and abiding convictions of your Saviour's "goodness," in suffering and dying for *you*. The apostle Paul brings the great salvation of Christ home to his own soul, and sees his own part and lot in the matter: "He loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*." Look into your *heart*, and see there how you need personally the cleansing influence of the blood which he has shed. All those sins and corruptions which you will find there, if the Holy Ghost has enlightened you to see them, (He alone can do it,) would have sunk you down into "the pit wherein there is no water," if Christ had not found a ransom for you. If then he had your *individual* salvation in view, when he gave himself up to the cross, what ought you to do, in return for his "goodness?" You are to live, not unto yourself, but unto him who died for you. If you do not, then what proof can you give that you are "saved from going down into the pit?" Remember, that no soul is saved from the guilt and punishment of sin, who is not saved from the love and practice of it. It is easy to say, "How great is his goodness "" and leave the matter there. But the "goodness" of God, if it is felt in the *heart*, will have practical power and

influence on the *life* of a man. Those are awful words which St Paul addresses to the Romans, respecting the “goodness” of God. He says to the impenitent transgressor, “Thou despisest the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth to *repentance*.” The proper and legitimate end to which God's “goodness” leads, is repentance for all past sin. And when a man has really repented of all those transgressions which brought his Redeemer to an accursed death, he has occasion to thank God, not only for his “goodness” in providing a Saviour, but in pardoning his sins, and renewing him unto righteousness. Then, and not till then, can he understand “the riches of the goodness of God.” 2nd. Strive to obtain clear and distinct views of His “*beauty*,” as it is displayed in the ordinances of grace. Let *David's* prayer be yours: “One thing have I desired of the Lord, and that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the fair *beauty* of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple.” This is “worshipping the Lord in the *beauty* of holiness.” You to whom the Saviour of sinners has been rendered “precious,” by God the Holy Ghost, know experimentally how great the enjoyment is of meeting him in the *sanctuary*, when he fulfils his promise, viz, “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst.” You feel a desire to be there, because *He* is there, to bless His people; and you come away refreshed and comforted by the smiling countenance of a *reconciled* God in Christ. To be thus near to Him whom you love is a sweet anticipation of heaven: “O, how amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord God of hosts | my soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord.” And what a *hatred* of *sin* does this love of God's house occasion “I had rather be a *door-keeper* in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.” I said, that this sight of “the fair beauty of the Lord” in His temple is an earnest of the happiness of heaven. But how little is known here below of “the beauty of the Lord,” even in His own temple, and by the holiest of His own people!

Only *heaven itself* can fully show it. The “veil” must be taken away; *flesh* and *blood* must be cast aside; *sin* must be entirely and eternally separated from us. Here we can get only a glimpse of the excellency of the glory, and the “beauty” of the divine Majesty. But when we shall see our Redeemer as he is, we shall be *like* him; and that holy resemblance will enable us to *bear* the splendour of the beatific vision. And when we shall look upon that *throne*, and see the *Lamb* in the midst of it, and cast ourselves before it, as sinners ransomed by the blood of the everlasting covenant, and rescued from “the pit wherein is no water;” when we shall mingle with the hosts of the redeemed in glory, and join their triumphant hallelujahs; then, and not till then, shall we be able fully to comprehend the meaning of our text, “How great is His goodness, and how great is His beauty!”

SERMON VI. THE RAINBOW OF THE COVENANT.

GENESIS ix. 12–15.

“And God said, This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations. I do set my bow in the cloud; and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth. And it shall come to pass, that when I bring a cloud over the earth, the bow shall be seen in the cloud; and I will remember my covenant which is between me and you, and every living creature of all flesh, and the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy all flesh.”

THE circumstances to which the text alludes are well known to all; yet, in order to enter properly into the meaning of some expressions which are used, I must briefly touch upon them. Sin had provoked wrath. God had executed the fierceness of his anger upon the world, because the world lay in wickedness. He had called for a separation from sin, but it was still held fast; He had given warning, but it was not taken; He had allowed time, but it was not improved; He had afforded space for repentance, but men repented not; He sent Noah to preach righteousness, but Noah was not regarded; the ark was built before their face, but none were “moved with fear.” The awful account of the whole is thus given by our Lord: “They were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage; and knew not,”—they *would not* know, though all these warnings were given, “until the flood came, and swept them all away.” But “Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.” He and his family entered into the ark, and “the Lord shut them in.” Here they were safe, though all was death around. The waters, which destroyed all flesh, lifted up the ark between earth and heaven, a monument of God's power to *save*, as the waters themselves were of his power to *destroy*. Noah, after waiting the appointed time till the waters were abated, came forth out of the ark; and his first act was an act of worship. “Noah built an altar unto the Lord.” And God's reply to Noah's prayer, and praise, and thanksgiving, was given in the words of the text.

I shall now offer some observations upon the rainbow,

I. As the token of God's covenant with *??ature*.

II. As an emblem of His covenant in *grace*.

May the Holy Spirit render them profitable to our souls !

I. We may observe the remarkable manner in which this covenant is introduced to our notice—"And I, behold I do establish my covenant with you." "Behold"—take notice, mark the wonderful truth—I, the supreme Lord of the universe, do condescend to make a covenant with my creatures. *I*, who have been sinned against, do yet promise to stay my hand, and, in the midst of wrath, to remember mercy." How strongly and how frequently the confirmation of it is repeated ! "I do set my *bow* in the clouds:" "The bow shall be *seen* in the clouds:" "I will *remember* my covenant with you:" And then, to bring down the eternal purpose of Jehovah to man's comprehension, in order to enable the human mind to catch some idea of the divine, mark the expression used: "I will *look* upon it, that I may *remember* it." As if God could forget ! As if Jehovah required to be reminded of his promise, and to have it called to his recollection, by casting his eye continually upon some token or memorial of it! And *has* God forgotten to be gracious? No: thousands of years have rolled on since that covenant was made, and He has been mindful of it unto this day. If God had dealt with the world after its sins, and not according to his covenant, floods might long since have come, and swept all away. We may easily conceive what God *could* do in his wrath, by the storms and tempests which occasionally rage around us. It is because He is faithful to his promise to Noah, that such awful visitations are only *partial*, and not *universal*. The old world was a monument of God's *justice*; the present is a monument of His *mercy*. There are waters above the earth, and waters under the earth; but they have all received a charge to keep this promise of their Creator, that they shall not drown the earth; and the rainbow is seen as the pledge of it, "the faithful witness in heaven."

But there are greater things than these, I conceive, to be seen in that token of God's mercy, the rainbow. And therefore, I proceed,

II. To consider it in reference to the *covenant of grace*. When we speak of a covenant of *grace*, we use the term in opposition to the covenant which had existed between God and man, at the creation. Man transgressed; he broke the covenant; he fell; and, as the covenant head of all his posterity, he entailed on them the penalty which attached to his own transgression; and that penalty was a liability to death temporal, spiritual, and eternal; for, “as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin: so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” The state to which the breach of this first covenant has reduced you and me, and every man naturally engendered of the offspring of Adam, is sad indeed. It is a state, to describe which, the very word of God seems to labour for expressions. It is called “darkness,” and “ignorance,” and “weakness,” and “bondage,” and “condemnation,” and “death.” In such a state as this, man cannot stand before God in any covenant engagement of *his own*; he must have one to undertake for him, and the covenant itself must be of another kind; it must be by the intervention of a *Surety* and a *Mediator*. And if God enter into covenant at all, for the benefit of the creature, fallen and sinful as he is, by which he may be brought into favour and acceptance with God, that covenant must needs be an act of free mercy and favour: it must be the result of God’s own love and compassion. You will find the first revelation of this covenant of grace in the 3rd chapter of Genesis,—“The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent’s head.” Here is the earliest glimmering of the gospel twilight upon the darkness of sin into which man had fallen, the first discovery of the eternal counsel of Jehovah respecting man’s salvation, in which the hopeless case was undertaken by Christ, as the God-man Mediator.—“I have laid help upon one that is *mighty*,” says God in prophecy. And see how vast the engagement was—“Lo, I come,” in the place of fallen man, “to do thy will, O God.” The surety is to fulfil all righteousness; to satisfy divine justice; to make the law of God honourable, as the covenant-head of his people: and then, to sprinkle them by

his Spirit, as with clean water; to take away the stony heart, and to give a heart of flesh; to enlighten and justify them; and, at last, to “present them a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.” This is a glimpse (for we can call it nothing else) of the covenant of *grace*; made by the Father, in his everlasting love; undertaken by the Son, as the Head of his people; and sealed by the Holy Ghost on all their hearts, as a witnessing Spirit, unto the day of redemption. To this covenant of grace all the promises made to the patriarchs, all the revelations made to the prophets, and all the institutions of the ceremonial law, directly pointed; till, the fulness of time being come, all the types and prophecies and promises received their accomplishment in the birth, and life, and death, and resurrection, and ascension, of the Lord Jesus. On this account, Christ is called “The Mediator of the *new* covenant.” He is called also “The Surety of a *better* covenant,” because He who has undertaken it has made the *keeping* of it sure, and consequently the *salvation* of all that are interested in it. And “the blood which he shed” is called “the blood of the *everlasting* covenant,” the seal by which He ratified and confirmed it. I might speak here of the application of this covenant to the converted soul, when fleeing to the Lord Jesus, as the sinner's only refuge. Do any of you, my dear hearers, look back upon a happy time, when you gave yourselves, your souls and bodies, unto the Lord, in “a perpetual covenant never to be forgotten?” That covenant was the effect of this, which is “ordered in all things and sure.” When you thus gave yourselves up unto the Lord, you put yourselves under the guardianship of everlasting love; you entrusted yourselves to the care of an unchangeable Jehovah. He is “ever mindful of His covenant;” with Him is “no variableness, neither shadow of turning;” and He is “the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.” And because of this, you may be “persuaded that he is able to keep that which you have committed unto Him, against that day.” I may say to you, as Joshua said to Israel, “You know in all your hearts, and in all your souls, that not one thing

hath failed, of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof." And as nothing has failed, so you may be assured that nothing shall fail. You can look at that covenant again and again, and rejoice to see its completeness in all its parts. You see it contained in the word of God, written by the finger of God, ratified by the oath of God, witnessed by the Spirit of God, and sealed by the blood of the Son of God. This, then, is the covenant to which we call your attention; the emblem of which the spiritual mind of a Christian may rejoice to find in the "bow" which God has set, as "the faithful witness in heaven." Let us endeavour to show this by comparing spiritual things with spiritual, one part of God's word with another. We read in the 54th of Isaiah these words of the Lord to His church : "For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee; in a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer. For this is as the *waters of Noah* unto me; for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee: for the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the *covenant of my peace* be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee." Here then we see that the covenant made with Noah was not without its *spiritual* allusion. And therefore the perpetuity of that covenant is thus described by Jehovah himself, in the 89th Psalm : "His seed"—that is, the spiritual Son of David, viz. the Messiah,—"shall endure for ever; and his throne is as the *sun* before me. It shall be established for ever as the *moon*, and as *the Faithful witness in heaven*;" that is the *rainbow*. If you look into the 4th chapter of the Revelation of St John, you will find a representation of God reconciled to man, through the "Mediator of the new covenant." How is the description given? "I looked, and behold, a throne was set in heaven; and He that sat upon it was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine

stone; and there was a *rainbow* round about the throne.” How beautiful and sublime the imagery! How remarkable the connexion between the first book of the Bible, and the last! In Genesis, God says, “I do set my bow in the heavens, that I may remember my covenant. In Revelation He sets round the throne of his glory, the *rainbow* which He before set in the heavens: as if He would tell us, that He has not forgotten his promise, and that He is faithful to his covenant. If you turn to the 10th of Revelation, you find the same token, in the description of the Lord Jesus himself, as the *Angel* of the everlasting covenant: “I saw a mighty *Angel* come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud, and a *rainbow* was upon his head.” It was fit that the *Angel* of the covenant should be distinguished by the *rainbow* of the covenant; it was fit that He whose title is the “Prince of Peace,” should wear for a crown that emblem of peace which God appointed of old. But there is a *natural analogy* to be traced. Let me briefly point out some particulars. The rainbow is occasioned by the light of the sun reflected on a watery cloud. It is the sun which gives being to the rainbow. If there were no sun in the firmament, there would be no rainbow in the clouds. Jesus is the Sun of Righteousness, and He it is that gives being to the covenant of grace. Without Him, what assurance could the poor trembling penitent have of his acceptance with God? what hope of the pardon of his sin? what comfortable persuasion that, when the flood of divine wrath shall be poured out, he shall not be swept away? In Christ Jesus, all the promises are yea and amen, like the rays of light all centering in the *sun*. Take away Christ, the *Sun of Righteousness*, and there is no *rainbow* of the *covenant*; there is no promise, no assurance, no hope of salvation. But let the glorious beams of that sun shine upon the clouds—the black and threatening clouds—of the wrath of Almighty God, which sin has occasioned; and instantly the lovely rainbow of the everlasting covenant is seen, to comfort and encourage the believer. Again; the rainbow is composed of a variety of colours; and if you observe particularly the blending of these

colours with each other, you will perceive that they all lose themselves insensibly in one predominant colour, and that is *green*, the colour which of all others the eye most delights in. Now if you will refer again to the passage just alluded to, you will find that “the rainbow round about the throne was like unto an *emerald*,” that is, it was *green*; all its colours were lost in that. “He that sat upon the throne was to look upon like a *jasper* and a *sardine stone*.” The jasper, being a mixture of colours all glaring and dazzling, seem to have denoted the inscrutable perfections and attributes of God; and the sardine stone, being of a red and bloody colour, might be the emblem of divine wrath and fiery indignation. But the *rainbow*, which was the token of peace through a Mediator, and went *round* the throne, “was in sight like unto an *emerald*.” Observe its situation. God has set it in the *heavens*, that it may be seen of all men. Oh, would to God, that when we looked upon it, we might think more of Him whom it represents thus spiritually, who is exalted at the right hand of the majesty on high, and now wears the rainbow encircling that head which, for our salvation, was once crowned with *thorns*. Behold, dear brethren, this token of peace erected between heaven and earth; and think of Him who “made peace by the blood of his cross,” when He was lifted up upon Mount Calvary, a spectacle to God and angels and men; and who still cries, “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.” And when you see that arch stretching from one end of heaven to the other, think of the comprehensive extent of that covenant. What room there is for sinners Does not the vast expanse of that arch seem like the stretching out of the arms of divine mercy, while the Spirit and the Bride say “Come! and, whosoever will, let him come!” If it is so comprehensive, then there is room enough for us, -for you, and for me. Oh, let us be found within the arch of the covenant ! Why do we stand without, when there is room for us there, and an invitation for us to enter? There is no peace but within the compass of that. *Death* and *hell* are without, and the *floods* of divine wrath sweeping all away. Lastly; I beg my

hearers not to suppose that I have brought this subject before them, as a *fanciful speculation*. I wish to draw from it nothing but plain gospel truth. My desire is, that we should see in the rainbow a token, not only of deliverance from a flood of waters, but from the flood of divine wrath, if we be partakers, through faith, of the privileges contained in the *covenant* which it represents; that when we look at the *rainbow*, we may see a *Saviour*; that the sight of that bow in the clouds may give us a view of salvation through Christ. Do storms blow upon you from *the world*, believer? Do the clouds gather blackness, with regard to your *temporal circumstances*? Look at the rainbow of the covenant, in the midst of the tempest, and see what a portion it promises you in the heavens where it is set—"a better and an enduring substance." Do you find clouds of darkness gather round you, with respect to your *acceptance with God*? Are you afraid lest you should not hold on your way to Zion? In that "bow" you have the assurance that "He who hath begun a good work in you, will perfect it unto the day of Jesus Christ." Do the clouds of *death* begin to gather round you, and does the terror of its darkness overshadow you? The bow of the covenant is to be seen even in the dark clouds of *death*. Behold what a *promise* shines there, reflected by the beams of "The Sun of Righteousness:" "I will ransom them from the power of the grave, I will redeem them from Death. O Death, I will be thy plagues. O Grave, I will be thy destruction." Look at this promise. It shines there for you, believer; and it is written, that you may echo back the triumph of it, "O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?" You may wait, therefore, with inward peace and comfort, all your appointed time upon earth, until your change shall come; and may say, under the most dark and trying dispensations, as David did, "He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure. This is all my salvation, and all my desire."

SERMON VII.

THE BRUISED REED AND THE SMOKING FLAX.

ISAIAH xlii. 3.

“A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench.”

“THE prophet Isaiah,” says St. John, “saw the glory of Christ, and spake of Him.” The text contains some of those blessed promises which the prophet was enabled to record, when the Holy Ghost took of the things of Jesus, and showed them in vision to him. The chapter begins by calling upon the ends of the earth to see the salvation of God: “Behold my *servant*!” It is the language of the *Father* concerning His only-begotten and well-beloved *Son*; and yet *this* is the title by which that Son is distinguished, and to which the attention of the whole world is called. Is it asked why? Because all the virtue of the redemption which He wrought out is contained in that deep mystery, that unfathomable truth, “Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, yet took upon Himself the form of a *servant*.” All that He did for lost man, in this character, is here, as it were, anticipated, prophetically alluded to; and you find the passage quoted by an evangelist, most appositely, whilst he describes the Saviour as ministering to the temporal and spiritual necessities of the people, “healing all manner of sickness, and pardoning all manner of sin : that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias, saying, Behold my *servant*, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth !”

In a former chapter, the Saviour is described in His state of *glory*; in this chapter He is set forth in His state of *humiliation*. It seems purposely intended, that this prophet, who was to hold forth to the expecting nations a Messiah, a Saviour, in all the degradation and *meanness* of His *manhood*, should first be permitted to look upon Him in all the *eternal majesty* of his *godhead*; should view Him “in the form of *God*,” before he prophesied of Him in “the form of a *servant* ” Accordingly, in the 6th chapter he describes the Messiah thus: “I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and His train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims. And one cried to another, and said, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts; the whole earth is filled with His glory.” After such a revelation of Messiah’s godhead; after being caught up, as it were, into the third heavens, and seeing Him upon His “throne, high and lifted up;” the prophet could better prophecy of His humiliation, and testify of the amazing condescension which those words imply, “He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.” I will add, that, as applied to us, in our character of weak, helpless, and sinful creatures, our text possesses an additional beauty by its connexion with the first verse. It is, indeed, the happiness of the *heavenly host* to look upon the Redeemer’s face as it shines upon the throne of His *glory*, and to see Him without the veil between. But the poor trembling *sinner*, who desires to be “saved from the wrath to come,” wants to look upon God as “manifest in the flesh;” desires to have his eyes directed to Him in His state of *humiliation*; would realize the prophet’s description of Him, as “bearing the sins of many, and making intercession for the transgressors.” *This* is the God *he* wants to go to ; *this* is the object *he* wants to look at. Now, mark the divine compassion! In speaking to the *trembling penitent*, Jehovah does not say, “Behold the great white throne, and Him that sitteth upon it;” for then the poor sinner would fall down, as the prophet did, saying, “Woe is me !” but He says, “Behold my *servant* ;” look at the Redeemer clothed in *manhood*; see

Him going about, doing the work which the Father gave Him to do. Behold Him in his lowliness and sorrow; see Him “acquainted with grief.” And whilst you are looking upon Him, whether in the manger at Bethlehem, or in the garden at Gethsemane, or on the cross at Calvary, remember that He suffered all for *you*; and He has carried into the heavens with Him the same tenderness and compassion which He felt when upon earth; and that tenderness and compassion are comprehended, even to their fullest extent, in the words of the text; and those words are as much a promise intended to encourage you now that He is in heaven, as they were a prophecy to designate Him before He came upon the earth: “A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench.”

The expressions here used may be applied to the *Church* of Christ generally, or to the various characters of *individuals* belonging to it. We shall endeavour to show their application to both.

The first emblem is that of a “bruised reed:” not the lordly oak, or the goodly cedar of Lebanon, but the lowly “*reed*;” and that reed not only bending to the blast of the storm which blows upon it, but “bruised” and hurt by it. Its mean appearance is calculated to produce contempt; and the injury it has sustained makes it appear useless: it has been laid prostrate on the ground by the storm, and then the foot of the passenger has trampled upon it. And, humble as this image is, it is not too much so to represent the state of Christ's church. What was it in its first estate, I mean when the Saviour Himself was laying its foundation under the New Testament dispensation? Perhaps the lowly emblem of the “bruised reed” was more appropriate than any other to the Son of God Himself, in the days of his humiliation. When we behold Him stretched upon the ground in Gethsemane by the storm of divine wrath, and trampled, as it were, under foot by the contempt and

persecuting hatred of His enemies; when we see Him standing before Pilate in mock majesty, as “King of the Jews,” with the *reed* in His hand, as the sceptre of His kingdom; and when we trace Him, I had almost said, by the marks of His own blood, to the top of Calvary; we see the aptness of the figure in the prophet's words, “He was *bruised* for our iniquities.” But was the “reed” *broken*? Men thought it was: the Messiah was dead, His body was in the tomb, the seal was fixed, and the watch was set; the disciples had given up all for lost: “We thought it had been He which should have redeemed Israel.” But *was* the “reed” broken? No, “Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine holy one to see corruption.” Accordingly, the third day He rises again, He ascends into heaven, He sitteth on the right hand of God; He has cast aside the purple robe of mock majesty, and has clothed Himself with light as with a garment; He has put the “reed” out of His right hand, and has taken His own goodly sceptre of everlasting dominion, “angels and principalities and powers being made subject unto Him.” Now He ever liveth to make intercession. Now, having been Himself tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted. Now, having been Himself *bruised* for the iniquities of His people, He looks upon them in all the tenderness of divine love and compassion, and says, by the word of His truth, and by the witness of His Spirit, “The bruised reed I will not break.” We may mark also the aptness of the metaphor to the Church of Christ, after He had left it to militate here upon earth. What was it but a “bruised reed,” when Saul of Tarsus persecuted and wasted it? What was it but a “bruised reed,” when Stephen suffered under the murderous hands of those who had lately crucified the Lord of glory? What was it but a “bruised reed,” when the apostles gave this description of the few who composed that church: “We both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place?” But was it *broken*? No! “We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not

destroyed:” in other words, *bruised*, but not *broken*. No, not broken, because this lowly reed was in time to be strengthened into the staff of the divine power; and, like the rod of Moses, though nothing in itself, was to work miracles for the salvation of men: it pleased God by the *foolishness* of their preaching to save them that believed. That lowly reed became “the rod of His power out of Zion.” And though the offence of the cross has not ceased; though, to this day, the church of Christ stands in the midst of an ungodly world, like a reed shaken with the tempest; though it is exposed to the blast of idolatry and infidelity, and almost trampled on by the foot of the scorner, and “the man of sin;” yet He that planted it will keep it; He will water the roots of it with that “stream which maketh glad the city of God;” and “the gates of hell shall never prevail against it.” It shall outlive the last storm, as the ark, which once contained it, outlived the flood of old. In that day it shall be a glorious church, no longer finding its emblem in the lowly “bruised reed,” but, as Balaam declared, like the “trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted, and the cedar trees beside the waters.” The other emblem here used may set forth the same truth respecting the state of the church of Christ, and the dealings of God towards it—“The smoking flax.” Here we have that significant image which the word of God so frequently employs, to represent the Christian church, whether outward and visible, or inward and spiritual. It is, I conceive, a *lamp* containing flax steeped in oil, which, when fire is applied to it, burns so as to give light. The Hebrew word rendered “smoking,” is very judiciously translated in the margin, “dimly-burning.” The two renderings of the original have in this place, as in many others, the beautiful effect of illustrating and enforcing each other: the dimly-burning lamp has more of smoke, perhaps, than flame; yet unless the fire had touched it, there would not be even smoke visible: the smoking flax is burning flax, though the flax burn but dimly. This seems to me to be the idea conveyed. And as we took the emblem of “the bruised reed” to depict the state of the church of God *at large*,

we will take that of “the smoking flax” to point out the spiritual state of *some individuals* belonging to it. Whom then does this figurative expression represent? It is the *weak and timid* Christian, the man who is depressed and bowed down under the feeling of his infirmity; in whose heart guilt has become a heavy burden; and to whom the consequences of sin appear in so awful a view, that he cries out, “Oh, wretched man that I am!” He is discouraged at the sight of *sin* and *God* at the same time; there is a painful connexion in his mind between the two, for want of a due apprehension of the Saviour *between*, as the “daysman, that might lay his hand upon both.” (Job ix. 33.) He can only say of sin, “The wages of sin is death;” and he can only say of God, “He is a consuming fire.” He is discouraged by a sense of his own unworthiness. He wants to cast himself at the feet of the Saviour; but he fears, and doubts, and hesitates. He thinks that *his* may not be the character invited. He knows that the “King of kings” holds the sceptre of mercy in His hand; but he does not see it pointed towards him, and he is fearful of touching the top of it. Such a character it is our duty and our delight to encourage. No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, and then desire to go to Him for pardon and grace, but by the Holy Ghost. No man can feel the burden of sin, and the value of a Saviour, but by the Holy Ghost. No man can be persuaded of his utterly lost state as a sinner, and of the complete recovery which Jesus came to effect, (I mean with a spiritual application of the doctrine to his own soul,) but by the Holy Ghost. The lamp of spiritual life, therefore, is “burning,” in this case, though but “dimly;” the spark is alive, though but hardly seen; the flax has felt the kindling influences of the fire, though we can only speak of it as in the text, and call it “*smoking flax.*” We may perceive the truth of this by contrast. When I behold an outward Christian profession, unaccompanied with any of those practical influences which God Himself has said always accompany real religion, what in fact do I see but a lamp not burning? That which should have been a light shining in a dark place is itself

complete obscurity: the light that is in it is darkness, and therefore how great is that darkness! Such lamps were the *Pharisees* in our Lord's time; such are the *self-righteous* in our own; such, in short, is every professor of religion who is destitute of those marks and evidences which the Scriptures speak of, as distinguishing the works of the Spirit from the vain imagination of man; and such our Lord intended to point out, when He said, "The foolish virgins took no oil in their vessels with their lamps." Yes, the profession made with regard to religion may be a high profession; the outward appearance of religion may be imposing, as that of the Pharisees was; and yet there may be no real godliness. The lamp may be of fine gold: its form may be so moulded as to appear goodly to every beholder; it may be hung in the Temple of the Lord, (I mean the visible church of Christ,) in a conspicuous and commanding situation; and yet to what purpose, if it do not *shine*? When our Lord put the highest honour upon His disciples, and distinguished them by the strongest language which He ever used, He did not say, "Ye are the *goodly lamps* of the temple, or the *golden candlesticks* of the tabernacle;" but, "Ye are the *light* of the world." And when He would press upon them the necessity of showing the reality of the grace that was in them, He said not, "Let your *lamps* hang *conspicuous*;" but, "Let your *light* *shine* before men." And when He would remind them of the coming of the Son of Man, and of the state of preparation in which they should be then found, He said not, "Stand with your *golden candlesticks*" held out, but, "Stand with your *lights burning*." Considering then both these expressions, "the bruised reed" and "the smoking flax," to mean, as already stated, the depressed condition of the church at large, or the first glimmerings of spiritual light in its particular members; we will endeavour to show the gracious dealings of God our Saviour with such. "The bruised reed He will not break." Then the poor afflicted believer has got a promise and a hope to depend on, of more value than the whole world to him. See,

Christian, how *suitable* the expression is ! What is your case? You are perhaps bowed down by some storm that has blown upon you. What has been the storm ? Was it such as Satan stirs up against a man, when the prodigal comes to himself, and when the soul begins to make a covenant with the Lord? Do you feel the unkindness of those who consider religion to be enthusiasm, and sorrow for sin to be melancholy, and a determination to come out and be separate from sinners to be righteousness overmuch Are you mocked by the infidel? Are you scoffed at by the profane? Do men persecute you without cause ? Are your foes they of your own household, because you serve *God*, and they serve *Mammon* ? Or, is it a storm of another kind that has laid prostrate the reed, and bruised it; — a storm not raised by *Satan*, but by the *Holy Ghost* £ That wind of the Spirit, which “bloweth where it listeth,” may have come with gracious, yet such mighty influence, as to bow down your soul to the dust: you may have not only heard the sound thereof, but felt its power;—felt it as the dry bones in the valley did, when, as the prophet describes it, there was not only a noise, but a *shaking* among them; or, to speak without a figure, (for here it would be dangerous to be misunderstood,) you have been influenced, possibly, as those were who, under the sound of the gospel, on the day of Pentecost, were pricked to the heart, and said to the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” or as he was, who came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” You, perhaps, like these, see the tempest of divine wrath gathering around you; and, like the reed shaken with the wind, you lie “bruised” and prostrate before God. Now, I wish you to see the suitability of this expression to your own case: “He will not break it.” I say the *suitableness*; for it is necessary to mark how much is implied in the words. Think you that no more is meant than that He will not set His foot upon the “reed,” to crush it in His anger? or that He will not tear it up by the roots, and commit it to the fire, as fuel to be burnt? Oh no! His *not breaking* the “reed” implies that He will *nourish* and

strengthen it, that He will *guard* and *protect* it. When it is declared that He does “*not despise* the day of small things,” it is intimated that He will *honour* it and *cherish* it. Was it sufficient for the good Samaritan, that he did not destroy with his own hand the poor wayfaring man who fell among thieves, but left him as he was? no; it was the character of the priest and Levite, who “passed by on the other side;” but the good Samaritan “went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine;” and *his* was the character of the *Saviour*. It was not the character of the good Shepherd, that He did not *slay* the sheep that wandered; but that he went after it, and sought it, and laid it on his shoulders, and brought it back to the fold rejoicing. When it is said, “He shall lead His flock like a shepherd,” it is not implied merely that He will not leave them to perish in the wilderness; but that “He shall gather the lambs with his arms, He shall carry them in His bosom, He shall gently lead those that are with young;” or, as it is elsewhere expressed, “He shall seek that which was lost, He shall bring back that which was driven away, He shall bind up that which was broken, and heal that which was sick.” The Lord will not put the feeble Christian to trials beyond his strength, but will enable him to bear them. “He will give courage to the faint, and to them that have no might He will increase strength.” Let us now take a view of God's dealings with His people, under the other figure, viz. “the smoking flax,” or “the dimly-burning lamp.” The same grace and tenderness appear. “He will not quench it.” But will He then let it alone, and leave it to *expire of itself*? Will He suffer its feeble glimmerings to die away in utter darkness? Does the expression mean nothing more than that *His* hand shall not be stretched forth to put it out? no; the smoking of the flax shows that there is fire, and *that* fire is *holy*; it is a spark of His own kindling by the Spirit's influence, and He will not forsake the work of His own hands. Though it may lie concealed, scarcely seen at all, yet He knows that a *vital* spark is there; and, under His fostering care, that spark shall become a *flame*. The sincere, though timid and downcast

Christian, may take much comfort here. Like the church at Philadelphia, he has “a little strength,” and he seeks for more. The spark of life is in Him, the light of Israel is not quenched. True grace is abiding grace; and, like Him that gave it, it “must increase.” I shall now close with *one admonition*, which I feel called upon to press, in order to qualify, and to protect from abuse, the consolatory observations which I have been making on the text. I charge my hearers them to beware of supposing that there is *weak* grace in the heart, when there is *none at all*; I charge then to beware of supposing that the “flax” is “smoking,” and that the “lamp” is “burning,” though but “dimly,” when, in fact, the spark of vital godliness has never kindled upon it, and there has been “no oil in the vessel with the lamp.” Distinguish, I entreat you, with the most anxious solicitude, between the *real* and the *counterfeit* in your religion. If it be *false*, it will not require “many waters” to “quench it.” It will die away of itself: for want of nourishment, the flame will become smoke, and the smoke will vanish into air. A little wind of adversity will blow out the flame of an unstable profession of religion; but if it be *genuine*, that wind will blow the spark into brightness. If it be of the Spirit's kindling, what shall put it out? not the wind of adversity, not the waters of affliction, not the damp vapours of the valley of the shadow of death. Real grace is the life of God in the soul of man. It is light from above, and can never become dark; it is fire from heaven, and can never be extinguished; it is the candle of the Lord, and must burn before Him for ever. Distinguish it then from its counterfeit. Ascertain the reality of the principle of religion that is in you. And whether you consider it under the emblem of the “reed,” or the “lamp,” you will be taught equally the *means* which you are to use, to get that principle nourished and strengthened in your souls. Remember that the “reed” obtains its strength from the *water*, and that the *lamp* derives its nourishment from the *oil*.

“To keep the lamp alive,

With oil we fill the bowl;
'Tis water makes the reed to thrive,
And *grace* that keeps the *soul*.”

SERMON VIII.

DAVID'S ROCK OF SALVATION

PSALM lxi. 2.

“Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.”

THERE is perhaps no mark by which the character of a man may be more decidedly ascertained, than the *refuge* to which he flies in his *affliction*. At such seasons we hear the worldly and carnally minded cry, “Who will show us any good?” We hear the godly and spiritually-minded cry, “Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us.” The former run to trifling vanities, in order to drive away melancholy; and the latter hasten to their God and Saviour, in order to enjoy consolation. David was of the latter of these two classes. He was often sore distressed, but he always knew where to go for relief. We do not see him going to one refuge at one time, and to another refuge at another time. Whatever his affliction may be, his comfort is always *the same* ; and however various his sorrows, his consolation is always *one*, and that one is *the Lord*. He traces all his sorrows to his sin, and all his comforts to his God. This Psalm was most probably composed when he was driven by Absalom's rebellion, like an exile, beyond Jordan, to the very extremities of the promised land, and far from the sanctuary of God. He felt that this was the effect of his *sin*. His heart was consequently overwhelmed with complicated distresses, as by an inundation. His feelings seem to be such as he describes in another Psalm, where he says, “All Thy billows and Thy waves are gone over me.” But, great as was his distress, his consolation was great too. He knew that *prayer* was the sure remedy. “Is any among you afflicted,”

says an apostle, whether by sin or suffering, "let him pray." David prays earnestly, for he suffers greatly. And if you look at the previous part of the verse, you will see not only the earnestness of the prayer which he offered, but the confidence which he had in the pardoning mercy of God when he offered it. He says, "Hear my cry, O God! Attend unto my prayer:" — there is his *earnestness*. Then he says, "From the end of the earth will I cry unto Thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: —"there is his *confidence*. David knew that distance was no hindrance to his penitential prayer; and that God could hear him, and would, when he cried for mercy, even though he should be at the utmost corners of the world when he uttered his supplication. Oh, what comfort has it afforded the afflicted servants of God, to know that the throne of grace is *everywhere* ! It was in the island of Patmos, when St. John was banished there; and the apostle was at the footstool of it day by day. It was in the dungeon at Philippi, when Paul and Silas were there; and they poured out their hearts before God. It was at Mamre, when Abraham pleaded for Sodom. It was at Penuel, when Jacob wrestled with the angel. It was at the extremity of David's kingdom, when he was banished there by the cruelty of his enemies; and he too found the blessing of it. And it will be even at "the ends of the earth," if there is any poor afflicted saint, or any poor humble penitent there, who is desirous, like David, to cry unto God in his affliction. These general observations on David's state of mind when he offered this prayer, seem necessary, in order to our understanding the full meaning of the prayer itself. "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I " The language is very remarkable. It gives us the idea of a man suffering shipwreck. The vessel in which he has been sailing has sunk. He has been plunged into the mighty ocean; and there he is buffeting the waves, struggling for life, panting for breath, and just about to give up all for lost. Suddenly he discovers a *rock* towering above him. If he can but climb up to the top of it, and get sure footing upon it, the billows will not be able to reach him, and he will be safe. Now,

the prayer in our text is the cry of that poor wretch for help. He is so spent and exhausted, that he cannot reach the rock *himself*. He shouts aloud for the friendly hand of some one stronger than himself, or for a rope that may be flung to him by those who are already safe on the rock, if by these helps he may gain it. "Lead me to the rock," cries the poor perishing wretch, "O, lead me, guide me, direct me to it; for I am so worn and spent, that I cannot reach it otherwise. I am at the point to die; and I must sink, and be no more seen for ever, if there is none to help me." Thus he calls for some one to rescue him from the deep, and to place him on the "rock." But what rock? He knows that unless the rock be a high one, he will not be in safety, though he should be on it; "The rock," he says, "must be *higher than I*, or the waves will reach me, and wash me off again." It is not a rock, the top of which just shows itself above the sea, no higher than a man's own body, that will save the life of a shipwrecked mariner. Such a rock may occasion the wreck, but it will not afford any help to the sufferers afterwards; it is a rock to split upon for destruction, not to stand upon for safety. "Lead me to the rock," or as it is in the Prayer-book version, "Set me upon the rock, that is *higher than I*!" It is now time that we should inquire what it is that the Psalmist teaches us by this figurative description of his own state. The most important of all lessons is taught us here. May God enable us to profit by it. In thus recording his own cry to God, in time of extreme danger, David seems to say to us, "This is your case, as well as mine. Sin has shipwrecked you, as it did me; and it has placed your souls in the same peril that it did mine. Have you made the cry that I did for help; and have you been placed on that "rock" which I have found so high, so firm, and so secure?" We cannot answer this question, unless we know all that is meant by the language employed in this remarkable prayer. Let me, then, endeavour to show how accurately it describes the alarming state of every man, as a sinner in the sight of God. He is a *shipwrecked* man. Sin has raised the storm of divine wrath. It has been blowing with all

its fury on the poor vessel of *self-confidence*, in which he had embarked; while the mighty thunders of the violated Law are roaring all around, and the lightnings of God's anger are flashing, and the waves have overwhelmed him. The consequence has been the destruction of all his hopes; for the ship has sunk, and his own soul is in jeopardy. He is like a man struggling among the billows, and giving up all for lost. How descriptive of such a state of mind are David's words in another psalm : "Innumerable evils have compassed me round about; mine iniquities have taken such hold upon me, that I am not able to look up; they are more in number than the hairs of my head, and therefore my heart hath failed me." What a picture of wretchedness and despondency is here ! And yet it is not an exaggerated statement: it is true, just, and scriptural. It is not confined to David's case; it has been, more or less, the condition of all who have been brought at last to a state of "peace and joy in believing." And I may observe here, how wide a difference there is between the mere outward confession of sin, and the real inward feeling of it. David's was a state of conviction, contrition, and repentance; for the words imply a sense of guilt, and an apprehension of danger. His sense of guilt raised the storm that troubled him; the wrath due to his sin occasioned the shipwreck that he suffered; and the destruction which he apprehended in consequence was that which made him cry, "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I." What a just criterion then does this text offer, by which to try our own sorrow for sin . It is the *seeking* for a *refuge* that can alone determine the point. A man may say, "I *am* a sinner; I *know* that I am; I *confess* that I am." But if he seeks no shelter from the consequences of sin, how are we to believe that he is in earnest ? It is not so when men are in danger of their *lives*. Shipwrecked men do not act in this manner. What efforts are made by them to escape from the watery grave! How they cry for help ! How they strive to get upon the rock! Look at the vessel in which St. Paul sailed, as a prisoner, when he was on his way to Rome. She is caught by the tempestuous wind

called Euroclydon. What are the crew doing? Are they listless and inactive No, they are aware of their danger: they strive for safety; they undergird the ship; they cast the tackle out; and, after that, they cast the very wheat into the sea. They look out for a rock, or a creek, or an island to which they may commit themselves, if by any means they may save their lives. The sense of danger induces them thus to strive. Conviction of their miserable state produces all this exertion. Nor do they cease their anxieties and their efforts, till, “some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship, they all get safe to land.” If then this be a true picture of the state of a sinner when rendered sensible of his condition, what little apprehension of eternal destruction, that shipwreck of the soul, can there be in most of those who confess that they are sinners! And surely, of all the sad conditions in which the soul can be placed, this is the worst, viz. to be perishing everlastingly from the consequences of sin confessed every day, but felt not for a moment. How marvellous the infatuation It defies illustration. We cannot conceive any one sinking into the deep without a cry for help, or an effort for deliverance, or a struggle for life; but we can conceive, because we see every day, the poor careless sinner sinking into the gulf of eternal destruction, quite insensible of his danger, and therefore asking no help, desiring no assistance, nay, absolutely refusing it when offered. If any of *us* have been in this sad state of danger and delusion hitherto, I pray God that my subject may tend, by His mercy, to help them out of it. It does not follow, sinner, that there is no danger because you see none; and we never can believe that you really do see it to its full extent, till the cry of your heart is, “Lead me to the rock! Set me up upon the rock that is higher than I.” But let me observe, in the next place, that the text, having shown us the *danger of sin*, does not leave us comfortless; it shows us the *security of the refuge*. We have before remarked, that the prayer of David, as a shipwrecked man, is, to be “led to,” and “set upon,” a “rock” that is *higher than himself*. The expression seems to imply much. The rock that is higher than *he*, must be

higher than *any man*; for David was a mighty monarch. He implies, therefore, that the refuge he seeks must be more than any “arm of flesh” can afford him ; it must be therefore *divine*. Now, we must bear in mind the Holy Spirit's explanation respecting the word “rock” here used. St. Paul, adverting to the rock at *Horeb*, which was the appointed means of supplying water to the perishing Israelites, says, “That rock was *Christ* ;” that is, it represented and typified Christ. And we may use the same language here, and say respecting the “rock” to which David prayed to be “led,” and on which he desired, to be “set,” “*that rock was Christ*.” Hence the Saviour is called “the rock of *ages* ;” as much the security of his church and people under the *old* Testament dispensation as under the *new* ; and therefore David was as safe, when once fixed on Him by a *prospective* faith, as any believer can now be by a *retrospective* faith.

Mark then the implied divinity and eternal godhead of Messiah. David's *son*, according to the flesh, is David's *Lord*, and the “rock” of his *salvation*. And what is He to *us*? Not a rock of *salvation* if He is not “higher than we;” and He is not high enough to save a single soul among us, unless He is “equal to the Father, as touching His godhead.” To speak of Him as a *Saviour*, and yet to see no divine power and majesty in Him; to call Him a “rock,” and yet find no security in Him from the gulf of sin and hell; what is it but to dishonour Him, and to deceive ourselves | The “rock” that is not “higher than I,” is only a “rock” for my destruction, not for my salvation; and the soul that is set upon such a rock must suffer an eternal shipwreck. The only rock of salvation is “God manifest in the flesh.” To Him we direct every soul among you. What is your state of mind, Christian? Does the guilt of sin distress and appal you? It is written, “The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin.” That text, applied to your heart by the Holy Ghost, will set your feet upon the “rock.” Do temptations harass and perplex you? Are they the billows that you are

buffeting? It is written, "My grace is sufficient for you, and my strength is made perfect in weakness." That text, applied to your heart by the Holy Ghost, will set your feet upon the "rock." Does sin appear so "exceeding sinful" to you, that you fear you must actually despair of pardon? It is written, "Come, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." That text, applied to your heart by the Holy Ghost, will set your feet upon the "rock." But perhaps the very height of the rock alarms you. When you see it towering aloft, with its top reaching, as it were, unto heaven, you say, "How can I ever climb up to it?" But you forget, while thinking of your own helplessness, how strong that arm is, which you have been engaging by prayer to help you. "No man can come unto me," says our Lord, "except the Father which hath sent me draw." When, under the teaching of the Spirit, you prayed that Christ might be the rock of your salvation, the Father undertook to put you upon it. He knows how faint and feeble, how breathless and exhausted, you are: He knew, from the first, that you could not see it until He pointed it out to you; He knew that you could not reach it, when you saw it, until He guided you to it; and that even when there, you could not stand without resting on His omnipotent arm. I say, therefore, He has, in His unspeakable mercy, undertaken all this for His poor, weak, and helpless servant; for it has been sufficient to excite His compassion, that you have cried to Him, like David, from a sense of your sin, your danger, and your helplessness, "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I." If you would know how the Lord will deal with you in your distress, how graciously He will condescend to your prayer for mercy, and how readily He will come to your help, I think I can point you to a case which will afford you all the encouragement and consolation that you need. It is the case of the apostle *Peter*. See him in the ship, with the other disciples, in the midst of the sea, tossed with the waves, for the wind is contrary! In this extremity, their divine Master is

discovered coming to them, walking on the sea. When the poor timid disciples are astonished, and cry out for fear, He says, "It is I; be not afraid." Peter says, "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water." Jesus saith unto him, "Come." Peter makes the attempt. We are told, however, that "when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and, beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me!" Here is a drowning man crying to the Lord for help. What is the result : Mark the language which is used to express the Lord's compassion, and His willingness to save: "Immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand, and caught him, and said unto him, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" The cry for help reaches the Saviour's ear *immediately*; and no sooner does He hear than He *helps* the sufferer: "He stretched forth His hand." And the stretching forth of that hand, that omnipotent hand, was at once the salvation of the perishing man; it bore him up above the billows, and placed him in security and peace. Here then is described, not only your forlorn case, as a sinner, by the cry, "Lord, save me;" but your certain deliverance, by the outstretched arm of the omnipotent God. I will only observe, for your further encouragement, that David's experience of God's mercy, in answering his prayer, is set forth in this psalm with peculiar beauty. He says, "I will dwell in thy tabernacle for ever, and my trust shall be under the covering of thy wings; for thou, O Lord, hast heard my desires, and hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy name. So shall I sing praise unto thy name for ever, that I may daily perform my vows." Thus, though David begins the psalm as one mourning over sin, he ends it in a strain of triumphant joy. How often do we find it so with the Psalmist ! . At one time we hear him say, "Hearken to my prayer, O Lord, and give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears." But, a little while after, he bursts forth into praise: "The Lord hath inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He hath brought me up also out of the horrible pit, out of the miry clay. *He hath set my feet upon the rock*, and ordered all my goings." So true it is, that "weeping may endure for a night, but

joy cometh in the morning.” Let me, in the last place, express a hope that I am addressing, not only those who are in David's state of *penitent sorrow* for sin, but some who are in his subsequent state of *joy and peace* in consequence of the pardoning mercy manifested to him by God. You cannot be too frequently reminded, that by the grace God you are *what* you are, —partakers of everlasting life; and that by His grace you are *where* you are,—on “the rock.” How firm and how secure is that on which you stand! Contemplate your Saviour as “the rock of ages.” Think of Him as “the rock higher than you,” not only as regards His eternal *power and godhead*, but the length and breadth and depth and height of that *love* of His which passeth knowledge. What thankfulness should pervade your heart, to think that though the waves of this world's trouble and vanity and sin are continually tossing themselves, yet can they not prevail; they cannot overwhelm you, because you are on the “rock.” Remember, that the prayer of *thanksgiving* is to follow the prayer of *repentance*. Remember, that self-dedication to the God of pardoning mercy is part of the “new song” which is put into the mouths of the redeemed. Let David's language of gratitude and love to his God and Saviour be yours. “Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, and whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity. For this shall every one that is godly make his prayer unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found; *and in the great water-floods they shall not come nigh him.*”

SERMON IX. CHRIST NOT HID.

MARK vii. 24.

“He could not be hid.”

WHENEVER we read of Christ in the scripture, we should have this thought uppermost in our mind: “I am reading what the Holy Ghost has revealed in the divine word respecting God manifest in the flesh.” It is just in proportion as this conviction elevates the mind, and sanctifies the heart, that the history of Jesus will prove beneficial to the soul. We frequently find, as we read holy scripture, how the historical parts display the godhead of Christ, without any remark on the part of the sacred historian, which might lead us to that conclusion. The fact stated is supposed to be enough to show it. For instance, when the baptism of our Lord is narrated, our attention is not called by the evangelist, to the glorious truth, “This is the true God and eternal life;” but a stupendous fact is told in the simplest language: “It came to pass, that the heavens were opened unto him; and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him; and he heard a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” So also at His transfiguration: that marvellous event is not prefaced by any remark, to tell us that what the Evangelist is about to state is an indisputable proof of the Saviour's divinity; but, in the plainest manner possible, he brings before our eyes the sublime description, and leaves it to speak for itself: he tells us, that the face of his Lord “did shine as the light;” that “His raiment was white and glistening;” that “there appeared Moses and Elias;” and that “there came a voice out of the cloud which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Having stated

this, he has done enough to bring us to the conviction of the godhead of Christ, without a word of persuasion from him; for he has displayed it to us by the bare statement of a fact of which he was himself a witness. So again in the performance of the miracles: the Evangelist does not say, "on this occasion He proved Himself the Son of God with power;" but, "Jesus arose, and rebuked the winds and the waves, saying, "Peace, be still !" and there was a great calm." Here is a display of the godhead of Christ; and we are left to form the conclusion for ourselves, as those did who saw the miracle. The declaration of our text is of the same simple and sublime character. St. Mark is speaking of the miraculous power of Christ, as manifested in one place after another, till He came to the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house. "He would have no man know it; but He could not be hid." What is the Evangelist's meaning here? Surely the words do not mean that Jesus could not *conceal Himself* from the multitude. He could do that as *man*: He could go to the top of a high mountain, or into a desert place; or He could take ship, and cross from one shore to the other. Jesus *could* hide himself, and did, whenever it pleased Him. Nay, did He not, when the Jews took up stones to east at Him, do precisely this, in a manner as astonishing as any miracle He ever performed? St. John says, "Jesus *hid* Himself, and went out of the temple, *going through the midst of them*, and so passed by." What then was there in Jesus that "could not be hid" ? There was the *divine* nature mysteriously united with the human; and *that* "could not be hid." There was the *godhead* connected with his manhood; and *that* could not be hid. There was, in all that He said and did, continual substantial overpowering proof of a *oneness* with the eternal Father: and *that* "could not be hid." He showed, in every cure that He performed, in every mercy that He bestowed, in every precept that He spake, and in every invitation that He gave, how thin that veil was which hung, as it were, between the two natures; so that, on occasions, the Deity shone through, and displayed its glorious effulgence; the God became manifest

through the flesh, and Jesus “*could not* be hid.” There is a beautiful illustration of this in the next verse; and it gives us the proof which we should look for respecting the assertion in our text : “He could not be hid; *for* a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, *heard of Him*, and came, and fell at His feet.” She had a conviction that a power existed in Him, as the Messiah, which existed in no other; and that was a power to *cast out Satan*, which is necessarily “the great power of God;” and she fell down at His feet, and entreated Him to cast the devil out of her daughter. He did so, did it with a word: “Go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter.” This took place in consequence of her having heard of Him as the Messiah : the Godhead had been often displayed before; so that it is said, “He could not be hid.” But yet it is worthy of remark how much there was, in all *eternal* circumstances, to “hide” the Godhead of Christ. The *meanness* of His *birth* : a *stable* is His house, and a *manger* is His cradle, and He is “a *child* of a span long!” Can this be *He* As He increases in stature, how contemptible He is in the eyes of those around Him! “Is not this the *carpenter's Son* ? In the exercise of His ministry, He hungers, and thirsts, and “has not where to lay His head.” His followers are a few poor fishermen. He is not only despised, but hated; and because hated, tried as a malefactor, and condemned to an accursed death; He is crucified, dead, and buried. What a thick impenetrable veil there

seems to be, in all this, to cover and conceal the glorious Godhead of Christ! But *did* it? No, “He could not be hid.” He lies, indeed, a babe in the manger; but angels attend on Him; and they cry to the shepherds, “Unto you is born this day a *Saviour*, which is *Christ the Lord*;” and He who “numbers the stars, and calls them all by their names,” has ordained one particular star to shine with miraculous effulgence over the place, the *mean* place, where the child is lying. He hungers, indeed, and thirsts; but though He hungers, He can blast the fig-tree with His word; and though He thirsts, He can so speak

to her who gives Him drink, that she says, "Come, see the Man | Is not this *the Christ* ?" And though He hath not where to lay His *own* head, He can raise the heads of *others* from pillows of sickness, and beds of death, saying, "Come forth !" When seized as a *malefactor*, He casts all His enemies to the ground with His word: "I am He." Oh, what a bursting forth of His Godhead dowe behold ! When crucified, the *heavens* mourn for Him; the *sun* confesses his Lord, and hides his face; the *earth* owns her Maker, and trembles; the *rocks* cry out and are rent asunder; the *graves* give up the dead, because Christ gives up the ghost. The *sepulchre* cannot "hide" Him when buried; the *stone* cannot hide Him, nor the *seal*, nor the *watch*. He remains in that concealment only till the appointed time is up, till the prophecy is accomplished, till the third day is ended; and *then* the angel flies from heaven, and rolls away the stone, and tears off the seal; and Jesus rises, and shows Himself openly, proclaiming that "He could not be hid." He proves, that, having had power to lay down His life, He has power to take it again; and that, having died for His people's sins, He can rise again for their justification. He proves His Godhead afterwards, by showing Himself to His disciples, that He may comfort and bless them; and then by showing Himself at the gates of heaven, that He may claim admittance to His own eternal throne, and to the glory which He had with the Father before the world was: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in." If it be asked, "Who is the King of Glory," the reply of the universal Church is, "Jesus is the Lord of Hosts, and He is the King of Glory." Well may the admiring apostle exclaim, "Great is the mystery of godliness: *God* was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

II. As He *could* not be "hid" *then*, so He *cannot* be "hid" *now*. It is the glory of his Church to know, that, let men, opposed to the blessed truths which hang on this doctrine, do

what they will, they cannot “hide” the Saviour: no sophistry of the blasphemer, no ingenuity of the infidel, no learning of the scribe, no selfrighteousness of the pharisee, no wisdom of the world, can do it. Men may strive to do so, by sneering at the faith which trusts the power and grace of an omnipotent and all-merciful Redeemer; or by setting Him forth as an example of holiness, while His atoning blood is kept from view; or by the unhallowed association of other mediators with Him; but they *cannot* “hide” the Saviour. “Why do the people imagine a vain thing?” “Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion.” But cannot persecution hide Him? Persecution may strive to do it, by attacking and afflicting, in various ways, the faithful followers of the Lamb, and especially those who are the honoured instruments of turning men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. Persecutors may show their hostility to “the truth as it is in Jesus,” and prove thereby that “the carnal mind is enmity against God;” but they cannot “hide” the Saviour, they cannot obscure His glory, nor darken the beams of His mercy, nor shut out the effulgence of His grace, as revealed to penitent sinners in His gospel. No: so far from it, God has shown us how all such efforts must end. We have it as a matter of history, recorded in the Bible; recorded by one who was himself as bitter a persecutor as the Church ever suffered from; recorded, too, with tears of contrition and unfeigned repentance, for having made the foolish and the wicked attempt. There was a time when Saul of Tarsus thought to hide the Saviour from the adoring view of poor perishing sinners; striving to blot out, with his puny arm, the “Sun of Righteousness” from the spiritual firmament. But that “Sun of Righteousness” only shone forth with increased splendour, dazzled the eyes of the wretched persecutor, and cast him helpless and disappointed to the ground: “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.” How apt an emblem of the folly and wickedness of persecution 1 Man is a sinner; and, give him what you will, as a remedy for that heartaffecting and that soul-destroying evil,

you give him nothing that reaches his case, nothing that touches his disorder, till you find him a *Saviour*; and you can find him no adequate *Saviour* that is not *omnipotent*, and “able to save to the *uttermost* all that come unto God by him;” and you can find him no adequate *Saviour* that is not *willing* as well as able, and can be “touched with the feelings of his infirmities.” Where can you find such a *Saviour*? The Bible proclaims, “there is but *one*;” and the wounded conscience whispers, “there is but *one*;” and the poor self-destroying sinner, who, after passing years in attempting to keep off the conviction, finds, on his bed of sickness, that it *will* force itself upon him, *he* will tell you, “there is but *one*.” Yes: while, to use the language of Job, he lies “chastened with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain, so that his flesh is consumed away that it cannot be seen, and his bones which were not seen stick out; and his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life unto the destroyers;” *then* he wants “a messenger with him, an *interpreter*, one among a thousand;” *then* he wants *one, only one*, but it must be one who can be gracious to him, and say, “Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom.” I say, it is *then* that Christ is found and confessed to be needful : his righteousness is needed for the sinner's justification; his blood is needed for the sinner's pardon; his advocacy is needed for the sinner's acquittal at the bar of God; and his grace, his spirit, his presence, his love, all are needed, to bless and keep the soul. *He* brings the balm from Gilead, and he is the physician there. All other remedies are now rejected, as mere useless *nostrums*; and all those who have prescribed them, as “physicians of no value;” “miserable comforters are they all.” *Jesus* stands forth revealed as the great, and glorious, and all-sufficient Saviour, He *cannot* be “hid.” The renewed soul clings to him for salvation, and testifies of him, “This is my beloved, and this is my friend.” Shall not we who preach, then, exhibit this Saviour to *you*? Yes; God helping us, he shall never be “hid.” *All* his grace and mercy, *all* his love and power, *all* his righteousness and truth,

shall be brought before you. We will lift him up, as Moses lifted up the serpent; that every one among you may see, and live for ever. In doing this, we shall always find his blessing on the word. He will “*manifest* himself as He does not to the world;” and your souls, if instructed by his spirit, and influenced by his love, shall confess with joy and triumph, that he *cannot* be “hid.”

III. As he *could not* be “hid” *of old*, and *cannot* be “hid” *now*, so he *will not* be “hid” *hereafter*.—There is a manifestation of him which is yet to take place, in order to the fulfilment of prophecy, and the accomplishment of his own word: “Every eye shall see him.” He is to come *again*, “to judge the world in righteousness;” he is to come “in the glory of his father, and of the holy angels;” he is to come that he may be “glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe.” What a display of the God-man! What joy among his people ! What confusion among his enemies ! What a bursting of the graves, when the dead shall start from them to *look* at Jesus! What a look will that be, which shall express the awaiting of *final judgment* / Oh, how many who are now trying to “hide” Christ, will then call on the rocks to hide *them* “from the wrath of the Lamb I’ and how many poor downcast souls, who had long thought that the Saviour was “hid” from *them*, though revealed to *others*, saying, “Verily, thou art a God that hidest thyself,” shall have all those mists cleared away, and be told, “for a little moment I hid my face from thee, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee. Enter thou into the joy of the Lord.” To this awful manifestation of the Lord Jesus we are all hastening. Let me, then, by way of practical application of our subject, make two or three remarks. Though Christ *cannot* be “hid,” as it respects the glory of his Godhead, and the attempts of men or devils to deprive his church of the blessings belonging to it; and though he *cannot* be “hid” as respects the exercise of his power and willingness, to “save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him;” yet there is a

sense in which he *may* be “hid;” and when he is, it is the everlasting perdition of the soul. The Apostle Paul has shown this in the following text: “If our gospel be *hid*, it is hid unto them that are lost :”— and then he proceeds to declare how this comes to pass in any case: “In whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them who believe not, lest the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” If we shut our eyes to the truth; if we close our hearts against the reception of it; if we turn away from the Saviour exhibited, revealed, preached, and “set forth as crucified among us;” then we give evidence, that, as far as we are concerned, Christ is “hid;” as far as our comfort, peace, and salvation are interested, all is *darkness* and *obscurity*. Oh, what a condition of soul! The Sun of Righteousness shining all around ! and yet there sits one who discerns him not ! The Saviour seen, known, worshipped, glorified by thousands ! and yet there sits one enveloped, like a poor Egyptian, in darkness that may be *felt*; or, if it be not so, yet, with all his looking, he sees not *Christ*; with all his observation, he fixes not his eye upon Jesus. *Satan*, “the god of the world,” has hung something between him and the Saviour, some dark veil or other; and the sinner strives not to tear it away. Concealment is as fatal to him, as it would have been to a perishing Israelite, if some enemy had *covered up* the brazen serpent, so that his dying eyes could not get a glimpse of it. The man dies because *Christ is hid*. Conceive such an one *opening* his eyes to look on the Saviour's *glory* in the day of *judgment*, after *closing* them against that Saviour's *grace* in the day of *mercy*. How awfully applicable the words of the Apostle Paul, which he quotes to show the final condemnation of the hardened and impenitent “Behold, ye despisers; and wonder, and perish !” Mark those three words, as uttered in the great day of account. “*Behold* the glorious Saviour whom you slighted | *Wonder* at the excellency of his character, and at the hardness of your hearts in rejecting Him! and then, having glanced at his glorious presence, and having been astonished for a moment at yourselves, *Perish* !

for you cannot partake of that happiness now, which you despised and neglected when it was so freely offered to your acceptance.”

The subject is so appalling, that it harrows up the feelings of the minister whom pastoral fidelity compels to advert to it. Let us turn from it that we may pray: Oh that *God*, “who caused the light to shine out of darkness,” would “shine into all such hearts, to give them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.” *Then* how different the state of the soul ! *Then* what a revealing of Christ by the Holy Ghost! What a discovery of his person, character, righteousness, atonement, mediation! Delightful thought ! The first object which a man beholds, when the veil of unbelief is taken away, is, as it were, the very *face of Jesus Christ*, as the manifestation of a *reconciled God*. He cannot be “hid ” *then*. The penitent believer falls at his Redeemer's feet, overcome with gratitude and love; and, like the disciple Thomas, when his doubts were all removed by a view of his divine Master, cries out with tears of joy, “My Lord, and my God!” May there be such a display of him to us! that we may enjoy the anticipation of the *beatific* vision, when we shall “see him as he *is*,” and be *like* him when we see him; when there shall be no interposing object to hide him one moment from our view, throughout eternity. Meanwhile, let us remember that it is our privilege to “look unto Jesus” even *here*; to *look off* from *other* things, and fix the eye of faith on *him*. We may thus “set the Lord always before us;” for “we walk by *faith*, and not by *sight*.” The character and conduct of the people of God are thus depicted by an apostle: “Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” One more remark in conclusion. There is an exhibition of Christ to *others*, which you are called on to make, day after day; I mean in your life and conversation. You are thus to hold the Saviour forth to the world. All men are to take knowledge of you, as they did of the

disciples of old, that you have been with Jesus; that you have imbibed his spirit; and that you bear his marks, his stamp and impress, on you. You will be exhibiting him to others, while you are showing forth his power and grace upon yourselves. When our Lord had healed the lepers, he said, "Go, show yourselves," that it might be known that they were cleansed. We say to you, "Go, show yourselves," not in order that *you*, but *your Saviour*, may be exalted among men; and that, "seeing your good works, they may glorify, not you, but your Father which is in heaven." And while your lives adorn the doctrine of your divine Master, your lips will show forth his praise. The soul to whom the Saviour has been manifested cannot "hide" him from others; but longs to bring all around to a saving knowledge of him "whom to know is life eternal." Such an one acts as we find the disciples did, when our Lord first appeared among them, while the holy Baptist was pointing Him out as "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world:" "one who heard John speak, and who followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus." So, again, when Philip had become a follower of Jesus, we read, "Philip findeth Nathaniel, and said unto him, We have found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." It was thus that they exhibited Christ to each other, as the Saviour of sinners. And St. John has so beautifully displayed the same spirit of love, and holy desire for the manifestation of the Saviour to others, that I will close this discourse by quoting his own words, as they occur in the 1st chapter of his First General Epistle:—"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) that which we have

seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.”

SERMON X.

THE SCRIBE RESOLVING TO FOLLOW CHRIST.

MATTHEW viii. 19, 20.

“A certain scribe came and said, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.”

WE have hardly a more decided and zealous offer of service and self-dedication to our Lord exhibited in all his history, than our text seems here to set before us. While some are hesitating, and fearing to commit themselves by becoming his followers; and while others are despising him, and laughing him to scorn; here comes one who has no doubt at all on the subject, no fear at all in the matter. He breaks through the crowd of mere lookerson; and, setting an example of decision, as one would have thought, worthy of an honest conviction, he says, “Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.” Now, if we had stood by, and had seen this man thus urge his way to Christ, and then make his open, frank declaration to Him, we should probably have said, “There is, at all events, *one* follower, on whose zeal and affection the Saviour may depend; there is, at least, *one* to encourage him in his ministry, and to cheer him on in his way, as he is going about doing good.” We should have expected our Lord to have “rejoiced in spirit,” and to have said to this scribe, “Blessed art thou; for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.” And how surprised should we have been, and how disappointed too, had we seen the Lord turn towards

him, and coldly say, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." Why did He make so discouraging a reply? No reason is given in the text, but we may suppose a reason. But before we do this, let me remind you that we may infer, from this circumstance, his *omniscience* as *God*. We know how willingly he received and blessed those who came; how he carried out, in every act, that declaration of his own, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out;" and therefore, when we see him almost rejecting the offer of this man's service, we have this word of Scripture brought before us, "he knew what was in man;" and we may be sure that he is that God "unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid." The reason, then, which caused our Lord to make so discouraging a reply, might have been this:—There were some among his hearers, who followed him, as he himself said, on more occasions than one, from unworthy motives. To the multitude who "took shipping and came to Capernaum, seeking him," he said, "Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled." There were also some who said, "Grant that we may sit on thy right hand, and on thy left, when thou comest into thy kingdom;" supposing that his kingdom would be of an earthly kind, and wishing to partake of its splendour. There were others, again, who said, "Lord, we have left all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?" Now, though this scribe could not have been actuated by the first of these motives, (for he could not have needed the "loaves and fishes,") yet by the second motive he might have been actuated,—the expectation of a *temporal* kingdom, in which our Lord should appear in great power and grandeur, and in which his followers, and *he*, the scribe, among them, might obtain high dignity. If this were his motive, then mark how apposite our Lord's reply was: "Your expectations of worldly advantage, by following me, will only end in disappointment. My kingdom is not of this world. I am only recognized here as 'the Son of man.' I shall

not be hailed as “King of kings, and Lord of lords, till I ascend to heaven, and sit on my throne of glory. In my present state on earth, I am even without the comforts and conveniences of ordinary men; nay, the foxes have their holes of retreat, for rest and safety; and the birds of the air have their nests to lodge in, and cherish their young; but I have no settled place of abode, therefore can hold out no inducement of comfort to any who follow me. I have not so much as a place to lie down in at this moment. Weary as I am with feeding the multitude, and healing all manner of sickness and disease among the people, ‘I have not where to lay my head.’” If our Lord's reply, then, was intended to reprove such a corrupt motive as this, which he saw in the heart of the Scribe, it may be considered as affording us a caution on a most important point. It seems to say— Examine the *grounds* and *motives* of your religious profession. Christianity is a religion of *motives* ; and those motives are known unto Him whom we call “Master.” We all profess exactly what this Scribe did, to *follow Christ*; and we have said this again and again, when we have met together for prayer and praise. We have been the witnesses to each other's declaration; but as to the *grounds* and *motives* of it, only our God can tell. There will come a day, however, when they will be known to the whole world. If then, we would have them approved in the day of judgment, let us examine them now. Has there been any mixed motive, any desire to serve self; any wish for self-exaltation, or self-aggrandizement, in our choice? What are the motives which *should* influence us in our religious profession ? a *sense of sin*, and a *value for Christ*. Put the words of this Scribe into the mouth of a sincere disciple of the Lord Jesus, and see what they express: “Master, I will follow thee; for I can find no comfort, no peace, no salvation, but in thee. I am a *sinner*; and, as such, I need to be taught, and guided, and directed in the way in which I should go; but I know not the way myself, neither can I hope to learn it but of thee. I am a *sinner*; and, as such, I want pardon; and thou hast opened a fountain of precious blood, in which I may wash and

be clean. I am a *sinner*; and, as such, I am in want of a righteousness which only thou canst give me, and of a sanctification which only thy Spirit can effectually work in me. Oh, how needful for my poor helpless soul then is it, that I should follow thee! Whither should I go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.”

In using this language, have I been uttering your sentiments, my dear brethren, and expressing the motives by which you are actuated? Be assured, that if your hearts are not conscious of some such feelings as these, the grounds and motives of your religious profession are to be doubted, and suspected. Carefully examine them, I beseech you; lest, in any case, it should be found at last, that instead of following *Christ*, you have been following some “cunningly-devised fable,” some “vain imagination” of your own, which has nothing to do with real religion; or only following “the devices and desires of your own hearts.”

But it is possible that a different reason might have caused our Lord to give this remarkable answer to the Scribe. His profession of attachment to the Saviour might have been free from any bad motive. He might have honestly and sincerely meant what he said. He might have been impressed with what he had heard and seen. The Saviour's preaching and miracles might have so wrought upon him, as to make him, in the fullness of his heart, declare himself convinced of the necessity of joining in the train of our Lord's followers, and becoming at once a disciple. If this were the case, then our Lord's reply will admit of another construction: Jesus seems to say to him, “Be not over-hasty in your determination to join me and my despised disciples. I am not only poor and mean, but am continually exposed to pain, sorrow, reproach, and suffering. Are you prepared to share these with me? Is it not probable that you will go back, and . forsake me; and, for fear of

contempt or persecution, will after a time deny me, or turn to the world again, and thus show that your profession of attachment to me has been the mere ebullition of a momentary feeling, and nothing more? Weigh the matter well. There will be many difficulties in your way, there will be many hardships to undergo, there will be many afflictions to endure. All these will be brought upon you by the mere circumstance of your being my disciple. Have you reckoned upon this? Have you taken it into the account? Can you, for love of me, suffer with me the pains and sorrows which surround me? The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has not where to shelter himself from pain, sorrow, and reproach.” If this was the meaning of our Lord's reply to the Scribe, then we may receive a different admonition, but one no less important than in the other case. We are advised to *count the cost* of our religious profession. Our divine Master, when he says, “Follow me,” does not seduce men into his service. He does not inveigle and entrap men, by pointing out the pleasures of his religion only, and then leave them to find out for themselves, by unhappy experience, the pains and hardships of it afterwards. When he says, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden;” he says also, “Take my yoke upon you;” for he would have us to remember, that there is a “yoke” to be borne by his followers, ay, and a “burden” to be carried. But see the description of them. “My yoke is *easy*, and my burden is *light*.” Make the comparison, and you will find it so. Compare *his* “yoke” with that of *Satan*. Compare *his* “burden” with that of *sin*. It is of *Satan's* galling yoke that the believer says, when brought from under it, “The remembrance of it is *grievous*;” and it is of *sin*, while unpardoned, that he says, “the burden of it is *intolerable*.” The comparison causes him to cry out, “Thy service, O Lord, is perfect freedom; thy commandments are not grievous.” Again, when our Saviour is directing his hearers to the kingdom of heaven, he says, in order that they may make the comparison, and count the cost, “*Strait* is the gate, and *narrow* is the way;” that is, hard to

enter, and painful to walk in. Then he tells them the advantages of the other way: "*Wide* is the gate, and *broad* is the way;" that is, easy to enter, and convenient to walk in. But he says, "the former leads to *life*, and the other to *destruction*." And then he seems to say, "Make choice accordingly. Will you enter into eternal life, by the path of repentance, and faith, and holiness, and self-denial; or will you go down to eternal death, with all your sins about you, unrepented of, unforsaken, and unpardoned?" Once more. When he is showing the necessity of a man's becoming his disciple, in order to peace and happiness in the end, how does he do this? He says, "If any man will follow me, let him *deny himself*, and take up his *cross*." It is left, you see, to the person to whom the words are addressed, to weigh the matter, and to count the cost. In order to estimate rightly the words of Christ, he must look at the inestimable blessedness of being a disciple of Christ here, and a sharer of his glory hereafter. He must take the balances of the sanctuary, and weigh the matter in them. I may add, that it is not till a man has so weighed the matter, that he can understand those *paradoxes* in Christian experience, "as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." "*Count the cost*, then, of your religious profession," says the Saviour to us, by this answer to the Scribe. "Behold," he says, "I set before you good and evil, sweet and bitter, life and death." And O, how important the caution is ! A religious profession may be hastily taken up, and as hastily laid aside. It is remarkable that our Lord, in his parable of *the sower*, describes the seed on the stony ground as springing up sooner than any other, "because it had *no* deepness of earth." But was its rapid growth a sign of its being better than any other? No; "when the sun was up, it withered." Hear His own comment : "He that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he no root in himself, but dureth only for a while; for when *tribulation* or *persecution* ariseth because of the word," that is the scorching of the sun, "by-and-by he is *offended*." Now

then, Christian, take your good resolutions, your best intentions, your holiest purposes, and try them by this standard. If they are made hastily, and in your own presumed strength, they will not abide the trial: "*when the sun is up,*" they will wither away; when affliction or persecution come, they will be scorched and blasted; when obloquy, contempt, or ridicule, (for these are among the "persecutions,") are brought to bear upon your purposes and resolutions, they will shrink up to nothing, and wither away. But if your purposes and resolutions to follow Christ are made considerately, prayerfully, humbly, and in dependence on the grace and power of Him whom you profess to follow; then that very "sun," that very affliction or persecution shall cherish, and warm, and nourish, and invigorate those purposes and resolutions; your principles and your graces shall gain strength; and you shall be enabled to bring forth fruit, thirty, sixty, yea, a hundred fold. Again I say, count the cost; Christ's service is *active* service. Remember, Christian, that candidates for heaven are not only followers but soldiers of Jesus Christ. When you say, "Lord, I will follow thee *whithersoever* thou goest," think *where* he went. He entered not into his glory, until he had first gone into the field of battle against sin and Satan; and you must follow him *there*. Are you prepared for the conflict? Will you "fight the good fight of faith," that you may "lay hold on eternal life? Will you "bear hardship," as a good soldier for Christ? He is represented as a mighty conqueror, and all the members of his church are described as "*militant* here upon earth." They follow him, fighting under his banner, against sin and Satan; and it is not till they have partaken of the dangers and toils of the warfare, that they are permitted to partake of the joys and triumphs of the victory. "Unto him that *overcometh,*" He says, "will I give to sit on my throne." Are you determined, according to your baptismal covenant, to be on the Lord's side against sin, the world, and the devil; and to continue Christ's *soldier*, as well as servant, "unto your life's end?" If so, you must expect the soldier's wounds and scars in the conflict. Can you bear them?

You will be required to show the spoils you have obtained: have you them to exhibit? You will be expected to give proof of your valour and fidelity, by the subjugation of your foes. Can you do this? In other words, you will be unable to prove yourself a real follower and soldier of Christ, unless you have been striving against sin, and mortifying the corruptions of your own heart, crucifying the flesh, resisting the smiles as well as the frowns of a wicked world, and watching against the devices of your grand enemy Satan. It is only to such that heaven is promised. No crown without a victory, and no victory without a battle! "To him that *overcometh*," and to him *only*, is the promise of glory made. I have said, that our Lord's reply to this Scribe suggests to us the necessity of *examining the grounds*, and *counting the cost*, of our religious profession. I have recommended a calm, cautious, and deliberate weighing of the matter; and have deprecated a hasty, rash, and precipitate determination. Let me now guard what I have said against any misconception. When we recommend deliberation and caution, we do not recommend postponement and delay. When we protest against rashness and precipitancy, we do not favour any "halting between two opinions." When we say, "*Weigh* the matter," we do not say, "*Put off* the matter." Beware of this extreme, as well as of the other. It is remarkable that our Lord, on this very occasion, rebukes the man who *hesitates* and *delays*, when told to come and follow Him, as well as the man who *rushes* into his service without thought and reflection. No sooner had this Scribe received the answer from our Lord, than two other persons came to him. One said, "Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go, and bid them farewell that are at home in my house." How plausible this excuse! How reasonable the delay! But Jesus "knew what was in man;" and the deceitfulness of the human heart was always open before him. He saw that, plausible as the excuse was, it was *but* an excuse, a mere subterfuge, which would have ended in an entire departure from Him. Mark how stern He appears: "No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back,

is fit for the kingdom of God.” The other instance is still stronger. Jesus said unto another, “ Follow me,” and he said, “Lord, suffer me first to bury my father.” Here is an excuse for delay, which involves not only the best affections of our nature, as the other did, but the most sacred obligations of filial piety. But here again the Saviour's godhead is manifest. He saw that in this case it was a device of Satan, to turn away the heart of one who had just begun to seek after a saviour; and therefore he says, “Let the dead bury their dead, but follow thou me.” As if he had said, “Dead bodies can be buried by those who are themselves dead in trespasses and sins. Thou hast a command from heaven, and a charge from God. Thou hast a golden opportunity given thee; and to let it slip will be destruction. The tempter is trying to deceive thee; this is a snare laid to entrap thee. Follow me; and do it now, while thine heart is tender, and thy conscience quick and feeling; do it now, while the Spirit of God invites thee, and thy Saviour bids thee come.” Put this construction on the reply of our Lord; and, however stern it may have appeared before, you will see in it only the exercise of his mercy, and the manifestation of his love, and the putting forth of his omnipotent hand to save a poor wavering creature from destruction; as the angels rescued Lot with holy violence, when he was lingering in Sodom: “It came to pass, that while he lingered, they laid hold upon his hand, (the Lord being merciful to him,) and they brought him forth, and put him without the city.” It was merely because Felix, the Roman governor, yielded to this device of Satan, that he lost his day of grace and mercy. He seems to have sealed his own condemnation by saying to the apostle, who was preaching to him of “righteousness, temperance, and a judgment to come,” those fearful words, “Go thy way for this time. When I have a convenient season, I will send for thee.” It is written, “*now* is the accepted time.” Let me, before I conclude, address a few words of affectionate admonition to all who profess to follow Christ. Follow the Saviour *fully*. There is an instance which is to be met with in the history of Israel, in

which that expression occurs; and it may serve to illustrate my meaning." At the time when Israel were distrustful of God, and afraid of their enemies, though the promise had been declared that those enemies should be vanquished if Israel would but fight, Numbers xiv. 24.

Caleb and Joshua showed "another spirit;" they said, "We are able to overcome them." The spirit of those two soldiers and servants of God was a spirit of faith in the promise of God, of dependence on the power of God, of zeal for the glory of God, and of obedience to the command of God ; and therefore their conduct is designated by God himself, as "following the Lord *fully*;" and while He declared to Moses, that those rebellious and half-hearted Israelites should not enter the promised land, He said that Caleb and Joshua, because they were "of *another* spirit," and had "followed the Lord *fully*," should surely have the land for an inheritance. And so He declares with regard to his professed followers now. They must "follow him fully;" and to do this, they must be "of another spirit" from that of the carnal and the compromising, the timid and the treacherous, the lukewarm and the lingering professors of religion. Oh, how disgraceful to our Christianity is such a spirit as that Let us abhor it. God is dishonoured by it; Satan triumphs by it; heaven is forfeited by it; souls are lost by it. May God give us another and a better spirit; a spirit of zeal for Him, so that we may be willing to go through evil report, as well as good report; to bear hardness, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ; to glory in him, and in him only; and when called upon by the foolish or the wicked around us to declare ourselves, then to say openly, freely, boldly, and unhesitatingly, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to all them that believe." Follow the Saviour *perseveringly*. To set out on the heavenly journey, and then to turn back at some difficulty in the way, is merely to show that we started without the grace of God, and that we put self-confidence in the place of it. We read of some, who, after

continuing with our Lord for some time, “went back, and walked no more with Him.” The Galatians “did run well,” but something “hindered” them. The apostle's reproof of their conduct is amongst the sharpest the ever administered. “O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth?” They had listened to the suggestions of the great adversary, and had been turned away from the truth, and were turned unto fables. Look at the effect of those suggestions in another case—that of Demas. He had taken up a profession of religion, and to all outward appearance was following Christ. But Satan, after a time, whispered in the ear of Demas, that the world had some sweet enjoyments which he was losing, by continuing among the friends and followers of St. Paul. Demas listens to the tempter, and then turns back, and we hear no more of him except this appalling testimony from the disappointed apostle, “Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.”

Let me point you to another instance, which, though not one of actual apostacy, like that of Demas, is one which holds out to us a most awful warning. It is that of Peter. The Evangelist, after stating the manner in which the blessed Jesus was seized by his enemies, and dragged away, says, “But Peter followed him *afar off*.” How descriptive of his character ! It was not the case when his Lord was seen walking on the water; he said then, “Bid me come unto thee.” It was not so when he first was told of his Saviour's approaching sufferings; he said then, “Lord, I am ready to go with thee to prison and to death.” How did this change take place? What “hindered” him from following perseveringly, and confessing boldly, his blessed Master? The *fear of man* which bringeth a snare seems to have been among the hurtful causes of this defection. *Shame*, that common suggestion of the devil, was another of those causes; these, operating with others, mean and despicable in themselves, wrought on Peter; and being suffered to gain upon him in consequence of not being watched and prayed against,

fought and struggled against, brought him to the wretched state of mind so aptly described by St. Matthew, "But Peter followed him *afar off*." And where would have been the difference between the case of Peter and that of the apostate Judas, had it not been that "the Lord looked upon Peter," and melted him into tears of agonizing and bitter repentance? Now, this shows us the necessity of praying for grace to *persevere* in our Christian course, and seems to say, "Follow the Lord *closely*, if you would not be found at last among those who have *denied* him, or *forsaken* him, or *betrayed* him." Let me add one more admonition. Follow the Lord *lovingly*. There must be a *constraining* principle at work, in order to make a sinner crucify the flesh, and persevere against all the obstacles and difficulties which sin, the world, and the devil are constantly putting in his way; and that principle is *love*, "the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost." No other has ever been found strong enough, nor ever will. "The love of Christ constraineth us," says St. Paul. How beautifully is this illustrated in the character of Ruth, particularly as contrasted with that of her sister-in-law Orpah. The poor widowed mother-in-law Naomi, when about to return to her native land, tried the affections of both; she said, "Go, return, each of you." Then she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice, and wept. And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth *clave* to her. After this, Orpah turned back to Moab. But not so Ruth. She had not so learned the truths of real religion, nor could she quit the dear relative who had taught her. She "conferred not with flesh and blood," as her sister had done. She counted the cost; and, with salvation for her object, she resolved to come out from among idolaters, to follow Naomi, and join herself to the people of God. And therefore when Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, and then went back to Moab, Ruth *clave* to her, in all the ardour of filial affection, saying, "Intreat me not to leave thee; for where thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; where thou dies, I will die, and there will I be buried." Brethren, there are many

motives which will induce a person to go *a little way* towards heaven, as Orpah did towards Bethlehem, and then *turn back again*. But it is only love to Christ, as a suffering, bleeding, dying Saviour, that will carry a man through the whole journey; that love which not only follows, but actually cleaves to the Saviour, as Ruth did to Naomi. Let us, then, follow the Lord *fully, perseveringly, lovingly*; “He that endureth unto the end shall be saved.” “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” Consider, then, who are *thus* following Christ, where it is that you are going. You are following your divine Master, not only through the trials and tribulations of this world, but to the everlasting rest and glory of the world to come. That rest and that glory once gained, you will confess that they are worth all the hardships of the road which led you to them. And each of you will have occasion to rejoice throughout eternity, that ever you made the holy resolution expressed in the text, “Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.”

SERMON XI.

THE BELIEVER'S ANCHOR.

HEBREWS vi. 19.

“Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.”

THE Apostle Paul had been encouraging and strengthening the faith of those to whom he addressed this epistle, by setting before them the “exceeding great and precious promises,” and the unchangeable character of the God who gave them. In a preceding verse he states the *sanction* which these promises have, and the *reason* for such a sanction: “Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things,” the promise and the oath, we might have a “strong consolation.” There is an allusion made afterwards to the “cities of refuge” appointed under the Mosaic dispensation: “who have fled for refuge, to lay hold upon the hope set before us,”—just as “the manslayer” fled from “the avenger of blood.” Then, to show how “strong” the “consolation” is, he uses the remarkable term in the text: “which hope we have as an *anchor*.”¹ See, then, the beauty of

¹“Hope” in this, and perhaps in the next verse, cannot well mean the *grace* of hope that is in us; for it is said to be a “hope set before us,” and a hope which we “fly to,” and “lay hold upon,” in allusion to the manslayer's flying to the city of refuge, and laying hold of the hope provided for his security there; and it is called “an anchor of the soul, sure and stedfast,” in allusion to the anchor of a ship, which does not hold it stedfast as it is in the ship itself, but as cast out of it, and fastening on sure ground at a distance from it. “Hope,” there fore, there includes, and in this verse directly

the whole passage, and how calculated it is to comfort and support every true believer. I say *every* one; for there is no state, either of body or mind, in which one or other of the “promises” (and all are “exceedingly great and precious”) may not be found to bring “strong consolation.” These are made by *God*, made to *man*, made to him for his *peace* and *comfort*; and, that nothing may be wanting to enable the Christian to enjoy them, God adds his *oath* to his promises; he swears by *himself*; he pledges his Godhead, his attributes, and his perfections, for the fulfilment of every promise, in every particular, under every circumstance, in every age, and in every place. Take any promise in the Bible, and add to it the oath of God; and see if there be not “strong consolation” in the believing of it. For instance, “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.” Is it a surprising thing that this should be? Yes, so much so, that the poor penitent can sometimes hardly believe it. Then let him apply the *oath* to it for his consolation: “By myself have I sworn,” saith the Lord. If the penitent has “fled to the hope set before him,” as one who knows he must perish without Christ as his Saviour, he is entitled to, and may take to himself, the “strong consolation” of the “oath” *confirming* the “promise.”—“By myself have I sworn,” saith the Lord. This being the case, no wonder that the most forcible expression was used which the apostle could find, to set forth the value of such a “good hope through grace:” he calls it “an *anchor* of the soul.” The word which he

signifies, the *object* of hope, or that which is *hoped in*, as it often does in other places, particularly in Acts xxviii. 20, and 1 Timothy i. 1; and this object of it most directly means *Christ*, who is the “hope” which is said to have “entered into that within the veil;” and yet the promises, and God through him, spoken of in the foregoing context, may be considered as included together with Christ, as the object of our hope; but we cannot be said to lay hold, and cast anchor on him, without an exercise of the *grace* of hope in him.—Guyse in loc.

uses brings to our minds several ideas in connexion with it, as applicable to our state in this world. We cannot think of “an anchor” for the believer, without being reminded that his soul is like a *ship* that is beaten about and tempest-tost, on a sea full of tumultuous billows, with a lading of precious things, and stores of infinite value;—all its immortal powers, and all its capacities of enjoyment. It is sailing to the eternal world, bound to the heavenly shores in desire and expectation, and urging its course to the haven of everlasting rest. In its passage, it is exposed to the winds and waves of affliction, the storms of persecution and temptation; in short, to all the evils and calamities which sin has occasioned. The Christian's bark, therefore, is in danger of being cast away, and never reaching the haven where he would be. “They that go down to the sea in ships,” says the psalmist, (Psalm 107) “and occupy their business in great waters, these men see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep. For at his word the stormy wind ariseth, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They are carried up to the heavens, and down again to the deep; their soul melteth away, because of the trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end.” This language is not more accurately descriptive of a storm at sea, than of the various calamities which beset the Christian's life. In such a state, the soul, like the ship, wants an *anchor*; and how great the mercy which provides it! Let me observe here, that no appellation is more frequent in scripture, and certainly none more expressive, to designate our blessed Lord as the Church's stay, and help, and sure dependence, than that which is here used to explain this figurative term: I mean the word “hope.” He was the “hope” of ancient Israel, as He is now of the Gentiles: “Blessed is the man whose *hope* the Lord is,” says Isaiah. The Apostle Paul, when suffering for His sake, said, “For the *hope* of Israel I am bound with this chain.” Writing to Timothy, he delights to call the Saviour by the same name: “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, which is our *hope*.” He is recommended to us here by the same name: He is “the *hope* set

before us in the gospel.” It is when by grace this Saviour becomes known and valued, that the words of our text are found to apply: “which hope we *have*,” i.e. *lay hold of*, and *hold fast by*, “as an anchor of the soul.” Let us enter a little into the meaning of this emblem—Christ the “anchor” of the soul. This we may do by showing what is necessary to render an anchor useful to a ship. 1st. It must be *strong in itself*. This seems intended by St. Paul, when he says it is “sure.” Without this sureness, this strength in itself, the vessel cannot ride out the storm. If the anchor break, the ship is in danger of wreck. Need I say that *this* anchor is “sure?” “In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily,” says St. Paul; and therefore it is declared in prophecy, that God hath “laid help on one that is mighty:” yes, for “in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Has he not *proved* his sufficiency for the work entrusted to him? Yes, He is “the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.” The “anchor” never broke. Who ever trusted in the Lord, and was confounded? Who ever trusted in *anything else*, and was *not*? See the worldly-minded man making *gold* his confidence! See the careless lover of pleasure holding on by some fair show of *earthly good*! Suppose it to be *youth or health*. Fever or sudden *accident* can snap the anchor, or *consumption* can rust it out, and wear it away. Oh, how true the emblem! How often have we seen this exemplified in adversity, in sickness, and in death! The poor vessel has indeed been tempest-tost, and with nothing sufficient to *rely on*, nothing strong enough to *hold by*. Not that there was *no* “anchor,” but a *bad* one; it snapt asunder just when it was most needful that its strength and power should be felt. You seldom see a man entirely *without* hope; but he has a *bad* hope, one which “maketh ashamed” in “the dark and stormy day.” It *is* a “hope;” but not “a good hope through grace,” not “a hope full of immortality;” and the reason is this, it is a hope that has not *Christ* in it. No wonder, then, that when the “anchor” is let down to keep the poor vessel firm, it should betray its trust, and give up the

desponding mariner to all the fury of the storm. 2nd. An anchor, in order to be of service, must not only be strong in itself, but *strongly fastened to the ship*. It matters not how good the anchor is, if not *attached* to the vessel. So, it matters not to my soul or yours, how powerful the Saviour is, nor how able to save all that trust in him, unless there is a *union* between him and us, a *conneviion* between his power and our souls. Now, in order to show this, he is represented as *joined* to his church and people. So close is this union, that they are said to be “one spirit with him;” and so indissoluble, that it is said by him, “I will never leave thee,” and by them, “what shall separate us?” This union is *love*, *covenant love*, *unchangeable love*, *everlasting love*: “Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness have I *drawn* thee,” as ships are drawn to the place where their anchors are fixed. The union, too, is faith,-active, vigorous, operative, self-appropriating faith, which *applies* all the power and grace of Christ, and which is therefore called *saving* faith. The *love* on *his* part, and the *faith* on *theirs*, show the firm fastening by which the anchor holds the ship. The love of Christ takes hold of the believer, and the faith of the believer takes hold of Christ. These two intertwined, if I may use the expression, make a cord which is not to be broken, a *cable* which keeps the ship to its anchor: “which hope we have as an anchor;” that is, we lay hold of it, and we hold fast by it. Hence the steady position of the *ship* in the *storm*, and of the *soul* in *adversity*: “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee.” “The end of righteousness is peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever!” See, then, what real faith *is*, and what it can *do*. If it can so fasten on Christ as to keep the soul steady, fixed, and firm, in the storms of life; if it can bring “quietness and assurance” in the hour of death; then let no man tell us it is a *fancy* or a *speculation*. Rather let him ask what he is to do when the storm shall blow, if he has it not. “What will he do in the swellings of Jordan?” He can satisfy himself *now*, perhaps, that Christ is an anchor

for the soul; but he will find it necessary *then* to have it as *his*. What will *his* ship be the better for the anchor that is on board *another*? “We have it,” says St. Paul : in other words, we have, each of us for ourselves individually, the unspeakable happiness of “hope” in Christ, as the present and eternal security of our souls, amidst all the sufferings and adversities of life, all the gloomy terrors of death. 3rd. But supposing the “anchor” to be sufficiently strong in itself, and firmly attached to the vessel, still something more is wanted to ensure safety in the storm. It must take sure hold of the *ground*. It must not hang at the ship's side then, nor be let down merely a little way in the water; it must pierce through the waters, it must sink to the bottom; and not only touch the ground, but take fast hold of it, or it will not keep the ship immovable. This seems to be meant by the word “stedfast :” Christ, as the “anchor of the soul,” is said to “enter into that within the veil.” An allusion is made to the veil of the Jewish Temple, which divided the “holy of holies,” which was typical of heaven, from the other part of the building. What was “within the veil” was intended to describe the glory of the eternal world, and especially the glorious throne of a covenant God of grace. When our Lord is called, therefore, the “anchor of the soul,” the idea seems to be, that as the anchor of a ship passes through the waters which conceal the ground beneath from the mariner, in order to fix itself in its anchorage; so Christ has passed through all that conceals heaven from our view, like the thick veil of the Temple, and has entered into the “holy of holies,” even into heaven itself; and remains fixed, for his people's safety, fast on the very throne of God. Faith knows him thus to be “an anchor for the soul.” It is not necessary for the bodily eyes to *discern* him in the heavenly place: faith is “the evidence of things not seen;” and therefore, “whom having not seen,” says an apostle, “ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” The mariner does not require to *see* the anchor fastened into the ground at the bottom of the waters: the ship is *steady*, and that is enough;

he wants no other proof. "So," says the believer, "if I am 'kept, it is 'by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation. Let the *actual sight* of Christ be reserved for me, as a bliss belonging to *heaven*. "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another. But Christ is my 'anchor *now*; I can commit the keeping of my soul to him *now*. There is not a promise of grace or glory which is not 'yea and amen' in him; there is not a heavenly thing that he has not fastened upon, not a single joy on the other side of the "veil" which he has not taken hold of; and he has done all this for the sake of my poor tempest-tossed soul; that he may hold it fast, and keep it firm, unto eternal life. I *see not* my anchor; but I *know* and am persuaded that it is '*fast*,' within the veil. I can *trust* the anchor of my soul. "I live by *faith*, not by sight.'" The believer, then, as we have seen, has a blessed confidence in the firmness and stability of his Saviour Christ, as the anchor of his soul. He can say with St. Paul, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to *keep* that which I have committed unto him against that day." Let me affectionately ask you, my dear hearers, is this your case? Have you this blessed hope, this glorious confidence in Christ, as the "anchor" of the soul? O, it is sad to see how treacherous are the dependencies of those who make not God their trust. Men tell us that they have a comfort, a hope, a stay, an anchor, against times of adversity. But when examined, what does it consist of? It is a trusting to *man*, or a looking to *temporal* things; a mere holding on by "goods laid up for many years." Do they call this "an anchor?" Why it will not do even for the *body*; how can it keep the *soul*? I know the carnally-minded will tell us that they have, in such things, a *tangible* good; and they will sometimes taunt the believer as a visionary, because his is *out of sight*. We grant all this. They *have* "an anchor," but where is it? It is hanging by the side of their ship, when it should be fastened in

the ground, in order to do them service. They can *see* it, they say. Better it were out of sight, and that they could *trust* it. The fact is, that while a man is making any earthly good his confidence, he and his ship and his anchor are all drifting away together; yonder are the shoals and the breakers! and what shall preserve him from shipwreck? Eternal shipwreck! Christ is the “anchor.” Try it ! use it! trust it! It has never failed yet, and never shall. It can stand all the storms of life, and the last storm of death. Let us pray that the Saviour's love to us, and our faith in him, may so unite and bind us to him, that we may say, in the last awful hour, “What shall separate us from the love of Christ shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that hath loved us. For we are persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

SERMON XII. MESSIAH DRINKING OF THE BROOK IN THE WAY.

PSALM CX. 7.

“He shall drink of the brook in the way, therefore shall he lift up the head.”

THERE are many Psalms which have an application to our Lord, only as he is represented by David, the type, to whom they more immediately refer. This Psalm, however, wholly and solely applies to Christ, as the promised Messiah. It was by quoting the first verse of this Psalm, that our Lord put to silence the cavilling and disputatious Pharisees. “What think ye of Christ?” said he to them; “whose son is he?” They answered, “The son of David.” Then said Jesus unto them, “How then doth David, in spirit, call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. If David then call him Lord, how is he his son ? ” We are told that “no man was able to answer him a word; neither durst any man, from that day forth, ask him any more questions.” It was to set forth the same glorious doctrine of the godhead of the Lord Jesus, that St. Peter, in his sermon on the day of Pentecost (Acts xi. 34) adverted to this Psalm; and St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, (Heb. i. 13,) does the same, in order to prove the eternal priesthood of Christ. Indeed, if you read the whole Psalm, with this key and interpretation, furnished by our Lord and his apostles, you will find that it exhibits Christ as the prophet, priest, and king of his people; and that, in thus depicting him, it sets forth the whole scheme of salvation. The

last verse of the Psalm, which constitutes our text, will give us a figurative, but a full and apt, illustration of our Saviour's sufferings in the flesh, and his consequent exaltation to glory.

We will consider—

I. Our Lord's *sufferings* : “He shall drink of the brook in the way.”

I am aware that it is the opinion of some, that the expression here used, “drink of the brook,” may be taken to imply the spiritual and divine refreshments which the Saviour received from his heavenly Father, when undergoing all his agony, and by which he was strengthened for the mighty work which he had undertaken, when he suffered and died for us. I believe, however, that the best and ablest commentators give a different interpretation to the words; and Bishop Horne may be considered as offering their opinion, when he gives his own, which is this, “that our Lord, in his way to glory, was to drink deep of the waters of affliction.” A close examination of the Psalm will, I think, show that this is the best interpretation of the words; and according to this interpretation, therefore, I shall proceed to comment on them. I conceive, then, that the “brook” here spoken of was not intended to give us the idea of a clear brook of refreshing water, which was to afford the Redeemer strength to endure the amazing conflict; as the drinking of the water enabled Gideon's chosen band of men to go forth to battle against the Midianites. No ; in our Lord's case it was a polluted and turbid stream. Like the water at *Marah*, which the Israelites could not drink, it was bitter; for sin had made it so. It bore along with it, as it flowed, the curse of the broken Law, and the vengeance of offended Justice, and the wrath of the eternal God. It was pain, sorrow, suffering, death. *This* was the “brook” of which he drank. The “cup” which his Father gave him to drink was filled with the bitter water of this “brook;” and he may be said to have first put his lips to it, when he declared to his disciples, in his way to Gethsemane,

“My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.” But it is stated in the text that this “brook” was “in the way.” It is described here as running by the path in which the Redeemer was going, in order to the accomplishment of his work, his great work, of man's salvation; that work which he had engaged, in the everlasting covenant, to perform; and by the performance of which, man could alone be accepted of God. The sin of man was the *source* from whence this water issued; and it flowed along in the Saviour's “way,” through the wilderness of this world, to his kingdom of glory in the next; as the brook *Kidron*, red with the blood of the typical sacrifices, flowed in his way to *Calvary*. He drank of *this* “brook in the way.” Let us pause here, to consider the amazing condescension of our Lord, in taking our nature upon him, and thus stooping down, if I may so speak, to “drink of the brook in the way.” How astonishing it appears! See the struggle which it cost him ! See the conflict between his suffering manhood and his essential godhead ! “Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.” See the victory gained ! “f this cup may not pass by me, except I drink it, thy will be done.” Oh, if that cup *had* passed him by, then *mercy* would have passed *us* by ; the curse of the violated law would have been thundering now over our heads, without any to silence it; and the fire of God's anger would have been burning against us still, and none could have quenched it. But he remembered us in our low estate; he thought upon his covenant, and pitied us; he called to mind his engagement from everlasting, “Lo, I come.” Therefore it is said, “He set his face stedfastly to go up to Jerusalem,” though it was there that the bitter cup awaited him; and he himself was heard to declare, “I have a baptism of blood to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished !”. So anxious was he to fulfil all that he had undertaken for his people, and so determined to drink to the dregs this cup of trembling. There is an expression used by St. Paul, respecting our Lord's death, which may be noticed here, in connexion with our text. He says, in his Epistle

to the Hebrews, that the Saviour “*tasted* death for every man.” Now, when, in common parlance, we say a man has tasted anything, as for instance a cup of water, we mean that his lips have been applied to it for a moment, and then removed. But when this expression is referred to *death*, it does not, it cannot, mean a slight perception of it, or the enduring of a small portion of it; for it is not possible thus to divide or parcel it out. He that *tastes* of death, therefore, takes *the whole*; he has, in dying, all that is essential to death, and undergoes all that constitutes death. There may be less pain, less mental or bodily suffering, in one case than in another; but still, as it regards the article of death itself, his portion is necessarily *the whole*; his tasting death is the drinking all the contents of the cup. Now, apply this to the death of our Lord. He “tasted death for *every man*,” that is, he suffered, in his own body on the tree, when he died the accursed death of the cross, what every man's sins have merited at the hand of a just and holy God; he suffered what was due to sinners, and he suffered in their stead; so that, by his death, a way is open to everlasting life, for all those who come to God by him. There was a virtue in his death to do away all sin, as it regards the guilt and pollution of it, the power and dominion of it, and the curse and damnation of it. What a “tasting of death” was this! His portion was the whole portion of every sinner on earth. When, therefore, it is said that our Lord “drank of the brook in the way,” or that he “tasted death for every man,” there is the idea presented to us of a continued application of the sacred lips of Jesus to the cup filled with the bitter waters of sorrow, suffering, and death. And because of this, the believer in Jesus has the inexpressible enjoyment of three inestimable privileges. The first is this, viz. ;—his sufferings throughout life are never of an unmixed kind; they are never wholly and entirely bitter; there is always in the cup of his affliction somewhat to make it endurable; and it is this, the sanctifying and comforting *presence* of his Father which is in heaven, during all his suffering. His divine Redeemer had it not; he could not have it; it was of necessity

that he should be without it, in order that his people might always enjoy it; and therefore, superadded to his “agony and bloody sweat, his cross and passion,” was the mental horror described in those words, —Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani— “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” The second privilege enjoyed by the believer, in consequence of his Lord's thus “drinking of the brook in the way,” is this, viz.;—that he may go down to the grave with the comfortable assurance, that all has been completed which could be necessary for his dying in peace, and for his rising in triumph. All doubts and fears, all cavils and objections, all charges and accusations, are answered fully and satisfactorily by this one triumphant declaration, “It is Christ that died !” Apply these glorious words to the state of a departing believer, and what do they signify ? They signify that he who believeth in Jesus shall never die. As it regards the sting of death, and the victory of death, that is, sin and the punishment of sin, the believer dies not, because Christ died for him ; and therefore he goes to his grave, saying, “O Death, where is thy sting ? O Grave, where is thy victory?” There is a third privilege which he enjoys; it is this;—he goes up to the bar of eternal justice, pleading the same astonishing fact, for his pardon and justification: “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died :” It is He that tasted death for me, when he loved me, and gave himself for me; and therefore it is not death to me. “There is no *condemnation* to them that are in Christ Jesus,” and therefore there is no *death*. No; “the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, which giveth me the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.” We come now to the next portion of our text, viz. II. Our Lord's *evaluation*. “Therefore shall he lift up the head.” In other words, Christ entered not into his glory till he had suffered, as he himself declared: “Ought not Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into his glory?” The best illustration of this poetical description of our Lord's humiliation and exaltation, may be found in the

2nd chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians, where, in the first place, the apostle shows our Lord's primeval glory, in order that we may better conceive the depth of humiliation to which he condescended: "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God;—but made himself of no reputation, took upon him the form of a servant, was made in the likeness of men; and, being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself." I beg you to mark the variety of expressions used, to designate the humiliation of the God-man Mediator, — "He *humbled* himself—he became *obedient, -obedient* unto *death, -the death of the cross, —even the death of the cross.*" Here you seem to see the very steps by which the blessed Redeemer descended, when he bowed down his sacred head, to drink of the bitter waters of the "brook" of sorrow, suffering, and death. But now see the splendid description of "the lifting up of his head :—" "Wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,-of things in heaven," for all the angels of God worship him; " of things in earth," for there is no other name given among men, whereby they must be saved; and "of things under the earth," for in hell they know him, who he is, the holy one of God;—the devils believe and tremble; "and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." The contrast here drawn between the suffering manhood and the glorious godhead of Christ, is inexpressibly beautiful. The Redeemer's head was indeed bowed down, when in Gethsemane He prostrated himself in prayer; and when, "being in an agony, his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground." His head was indeed bowed down, when he hung upon the cross on Calvary, and with his dying lips cried, "It is finished " St. John says, "when he had spoken these words, he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost." And his head was indeed bowed down, when Joseph of Arimathea laid the sacred body in the tomb. But when the angel came and rolled away the stone from the door of the

sepulchre, the head of the Saviour was "lifted up." "Fear not; for I know that ye seek Jesus which was crucified. He is not here; he is risen, as he said." And when the Saviour led his disciples out as far as Bethany, and, having blessed them, ascended up into heaven, how gloriously was his head "lifted up!" Then it was, that, as "King of kings, and Lord of lords," he was hailed by the angels and archangels, and all the company of heaven; then it was that they burst forth in shouts of triumph, saying, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, that the King of glory may come in." And, oh let it be ever borne in mind by the believer, that he is interested as well in the exaltation as in the humiliation of his Lord. Why has the Redeemer ascended up on high, but to show himself strong in behalf of his Church and people, leading captivity captive: Why has he taken to himself his great glory, but that he may admit every penitent believer to share it with him? Why has he taken possession of those heavenly mansions in his Father's house, but that he may "prepare a place" for his followers? And why has he taken his station at the right-hand of the Majesty on high, but that he may be the Mediator, the Advocate, and the Intercessor of his people? Yes, there "he ever liveth to make intercession;" there he pleads for them; and presenting, on their behalf, before the eternal throne, his justifying righteousness, his precious bloodshedding, his meritorious cross and passion, he intercedes, and he prevails: "Father, *I will* that those whom thou hast given me may be with me, where I am, that they may behold my glory." Observe the words used in that prayer of our Lord. They cannot, I think, be considered as the ordinary language of prayer. Our Lord does not say, "I pray," or "I beseech," but "I will;" implying, as I conceive, a *claim* grounded on the covenant, of which he was the surety on the part of his people. It seems the language of authority, -of that authority which belonged to him as one with the Father. But whether it be so or not, whether the words imply authority, or only fervent importunity, it is worthy of observation how they differ from

the language used when praying for *himself*. When, in an agony, he prayed that the cup might, if possible, pass from him, he said, “Nevertheless, *not as I will*, but as thou wilt.” When he intercedes for his church and people, he says, “Father, *I will* that they whom thou hast given me may be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.” Thus we have seen, that our blessed Lord drank of the “brook” of sorrow, suffering, and death, which flowed in the “way” of his covenant engagement to become the Saviour and Redeemer of lost and helpless sinners; and that therefore he “lifted up his head” in glory, where he is now, at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ever living to make intercession for his people, as their Advocate and Mediator. We will now close the subject with a few practical remarks, in the way of personal application. I would say, then— 1st. While we are looking at our Lord thus suffering for us, let us be reminded, that if we are his followers, *we must expect to suffer too*. And oh, how blessed a portion is ours, if we can say that we suffer *with* our Lord ' This is *sanctified* affliction. It distinguishes the disciples of Christ from all others. The distinction is not that they do *not* suffer, while others *do*; but that their sufferings are *sanctified*, while those of others are not. They know that the cup of affliction is not to pass by them, because their Master drank it; no, the cup of wrath and damnation will pass them by, but not the cup of affliction. The righteous are made to drink more deeply than others frequently, and they are sometimes the more afflicted *because* they are righteous: “Many are the afflictions of the righteous.” Read the history of the church of God, and see how constantly this has been the lot of the followers of Jesus. But “if we *suffer* with him,” they said, “we shall also *reign* with him.” Accordingly, they went on suffering; till, having drunk the portion assigned them, they “lifted up their heads” in glory, as their Lord had done; and they are now pointed out to us, as the happy ones who are “before the throne.” “What are these that are arrayed in white robes, and whence came they? These are they which came out of great

tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; therefore they are before the throne.” Are you afflicted, then, believer? Hear these holy ones who are “before the throne.” They cry to you from their lofty dwelling-place, and say to you, “Suffer on; patiently endure; your affliction is but *light* affliction, and but for a *moment*, and not worthy to be compared with the exceeding and eternal weight of glory which we are now enjoying. Soon, very soon, you shall be where we are, and join us in singing the song of Moses and the Lamb.” Listen, believer, to those heavenly accents of sweet encouragement. While they are sounding in your ears, lift up your head, for your redemption draweth nigh. Remember, that your Lord, by drinking of that “brook” which flowed in the way of his covenant engagement for the salvation of his people, has procured, for your eternal enjoyment, the water of that river of life, clear as crystal, which proceedeth out of the throne of God and the Lamb. It is that river, the streams of which make glad the city of God, the heavenly Jerusalem. Your citizenship is there already; your heart's affections are there already; and soon you shall be there in body, soul, and spirit. In the midst of sorrow and suffering, then, lift up your head, for your redemption draweth nigh.

2nd. Our subject suggests that there is something to be borne in mind, of another and an opposite kind.

The bitter waters of affliction are not the only portion we are liable to taste in this world. There are *the sweet waters of sin*. And while our heavenly Father offers us the “bitter,” because they are salutary, and will do us good; our adversary the devil offers us the sweet, because they are poisonous, and will destroy our souls. None lift up their heads in glory, who have drunk only of such a stream as that.

Now, as I said that the sufferings of our Lord have not prevented the penitent believer from receiving his needful portion of affliction; so I say also, that the death of our Lord

has not prevented the impenitent transgressor from perishing everlastingly. Our Redeemer did not suffer and die, in order that we might drink in iniquity like water, and, notwithstanding the poison, lift up our head in eternal joy; but that by turning from sin, and following him in faith and holiness, we might escape the bitter pains of eternal death. He died to save us *from* our sins, not *in* them. Here lies the great distinction. "God, having raised up his son Jesus, sent him to *bless* you," said St. Peter to the Jews. But how ! "In turning every one of you from his iniquities." *That* is the blessing. Not to see it, is to make shipwreck of the faith, and to split on the very rock of salvation. 3rd. The subject puts before us the Apostle Paul's words, and tells us the importance of acting up to them: "If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right-hand of God." Can a real disciple of this suffering and glorified Saviour bow down, and drink of the polluted stream of this world's *folly* and *vanity*; and be content therewith, instead of seeking higher and better things? Impossible. The real disciple of Christ is not "carnally-minded," which is "death;" but "spiritually-minded," which is "life and peace." When the apostle says, "*If* ye be risen," he implies much : "If ye be *not* risen with Christ," then these "beggary elements" will satisfy you; you will show the low and grovelling character which belongs to you, by being content, and satisfied, and pleased with them; and as children are delighted with trifles, so will you be with the follies and vanities of a wicked world. But if you *are* risen with Christ, then you will show it by "lifting up your heads" above these things, and craving something more permanent, more spiritual, more heavenly. "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I thought as a child, I understood as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things." So it is with the believer. So may it be with us! We shall then have not only our afflictions sanctified, but our pleasures, our joys, our comforts, sanctified; we shall so use them as not abusing them; and when they fail us, as soon they must, we shall not be driven to

melancholy and despair, as the worldly-minded are; but shall “lift up our head” with joy, in the prospect of some better thing, reserved for us in heaven. We shall live happily; for we shall enjoy our God in all things, and all things in our God. We shall die happily; for we shall exchange the joys and pleasures which “perish in the using,” for those joys which are “at God’s right hand,” and those pleasures which are “for evermore.”

THE END

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