

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

OUR STRONGHOLD.

A Sermon

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“The name of the Lord is a strong tower : the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.”—Proverbs xviii. 10.

STRONG towers were a greater security in a bygone age than they are now. Then when troops of marauders invaded the land, strong castles were set upon the various hill-tops, and the inhabitants gathered up their little wealth and fled thither at once. Castles were looked upon as being very difficult places for attack; and ancient troops would rather fight a hundred battles than endure a single siege. Towns which would be taken by modern artillery in twelve hours, held out for twelve years against the most potent forces of the ancient times. He that possessed a castle was lord of all the region round about, and made their inhabitants either his clients who sought his protection, or his dependants whom he ruled at will. He who owned a strong tower, felt however potent might be his adversary, his walls and bulwarks would be his sure salvation. Generous rulers provided strongholds for their people; mountain fastnesses where the peasantry might be sheltered from marauders. Transfer your thoughts to a thousand years ago, and picture a people, who after ploughing and sowing, have gathered in their harvest, but when they are about to make merry with the harvest festival, a startling signal banishes their joy. A trumpet is blown from yonder mountain, the tocsin answers it from the village tower, hordes of ferocious robbers are approaching, their corn will be devoured by strangers; burying their corn and furniture, and gathering up the little portable wealth they have, they hasten with all their might to their tower of defence which stands on yonder ridge. The gates are shut; the drawbridge is pulled up; the portcullis is let down; the warders are on the battlements, and the inhabitants within feel that they are safe. The enemy will rifle their deserted farms, and search for hidden treasure, and finding that the inhabitants are quite beyond their reach, they will betake themselves to some other place. Such is the figure which is in the text. “The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.”

I. Of course we all know that by the name of God is meant the character of the Most High, so that our first lesson is that **THE CHARACTER OF GOD FURNISHES THE RIGHTEOUS WITH AN ABUNDANT SECURITY.**

The character of God is the refuge of the Christian, *in opposition to other refuges* which godless men have chosen. Solomon suggestively puts the following words in the next verse—"The rich man's *wealth* is his strong city, and as an high wall in his own conceit." The rich man feels that his wealth may afford him comfort. Should he be attacked in law, his wealth can procure him an advocate; should he be insulted in the streets, the dignity of a full purse will avenge him; should he be sick, he can fee the best physicians; should he need ministers to his pleasures, or helpers of his infirmities, they will be at his call; should famine stalk through the land, it will avoid his door; should war itself break forth he can purchase an escape from the sword, for his wealth is his strong tower. In contra-distinction to this, the righteous man finds in his God all that the wealthy man finds in his substance, and a vast deal more. "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I trust in him." God is our treasure; he is to us better than the fullest purse, or the most magnificent income; broad acres yield not such peace as a well attested interest in the love and faithfulness of our heavenly Father. Provinces under our sway could not bring to us greater revenues than we possess in him who makes us heirs of all things by Christ Jesus. Other men who trust not in their wealth, nevertheless make *their own names* a strong tower. To say the truth, a man's good name is no mean defence against the attacks of his fellow-men. To wrap one's self about in the garment of integrity is to defy the chill blast of calumny, and to be mailed against the arrows of slander. If we can appeal to God, and say, "Lord, thou knowest that in this thing I am not wicked," then let the mouth of the liar pour forth his slanders, let him scatter his venom where he may, we bear an antidote within before which his poison yields its power. But this is only true in a very limited sense; death soon proves to men that their own good name can afford them no consolation, and under conviction of sin a good repute is no shelter. When conscience is awake, when the judgment is unbiassed, when we come to know something of the law of God and of the justice of his character, we soon discover that self-righteousness is no hiding-place for us, a crumbling battlement which will fall on the neck of him that hides behind it—a pasteboard fortification yielding to the first shock of the law—a refuge of lies to be beaten down with the great hailstones of eternal vengeance—such is the righteousness of man. The righteous trusteth not in this; not *his* own name, but the name of his God, not his own character, but the character of the Most High is his strong tower. Numberless are those castles in the air to which men hasten in the hour of peril: ceremonies lift their towers into the clouds; professions pile their walls high as mountains; and works of the flesh paint their delusions till they seem substantial bulwarks; but all, all shall melt like snow, and vanish like a mist. Happy is he who leaves the sand for the rock, the phantom for the substance.

The name of the Lord is a strong tower to the Christian, not only in

opposition to other men's refuges, but *as a matter of fact* and reality. Even when he is not able to perceive it by experience, yet God's character is the refuge of the saint. If we come to the bottom of things, we shall find that the basis of the security of the believer lies in the character of God. I know you will tell me it is the covenant; but what is the covenant worth, if God were changeable, unjust, untrue? I know you will tell me that the confidence of the believer is in the blood of Christ; but what were the blood of Christ if God were false; if after Christ had paid the ransom the Lord should deny him the ransomed, if after Christ had stood the substitute, the Judge of Men should yet visit upon our heads, for whom he suffered, our own guilt; if Jehovah could be unrighteous; if he could violate his promise and become faithless as we are, then I say that even the blood of Christ would afford us no security. You tell me that there is his promise, but again I remind you that the value of a man's promise must depend on his character. If God were not such that he cannot lie, if he were not so faithful that he cannot repent, if he were not so mighty that he cannot be frustrated when he intends to perform, then his promise were but waste paper; his words like our words, would be but wind, and afford no satisfactory shelter for a soul distressed and anxious. But you will tell me he has sworn with an oath. Brethren, I know he has. He has given us two immutable things in which it is impossible for him to lie, that we may have strong consolation. But still what is a man's oath worth irrespective of his character? Is it not after all what a man is, that makes his asseveration to be eminently mistrusted or profoundly believed. And it is because our God cannot by any means forswear himself but must be true, that his oath becomes of value to you and to me. Brethren, after all, let us remember that the purpose of God in our salvation is the glorifying of his own character, and this it is that makes our salvation positively sure, if everyone that trusts in Christ be not saved then is God dishonoured, the Lord of Hosts hath hung up his escutcheon, and if in the face of the whole earth he accomplisheth not that which he declares he will perform in this book, then is his escutcheon stained. I say it, he hath flung down the gauntlet to sin, and death, and hell, and if he be not the conqueror over all these in the heart of every soul that trusteth in him, then he is no more the God of Victories, nor can we shout his everlasting praise as the Lord mighty in battle. His character then, you see, when we come to the basis of all, is the great granite formation upon which must rest all the pillars of the covenant of grace and the sure mercies thereof. His wisdom, truth, mercy, justice, power, eternity, and immutability, are the seven pillars of the house of sure salvation. If we would have comfort, we can surely find it in the character of God. This is our strong tower, we run into it and we are safe.

Mark you, beloved, not only is this true as a matter of fact, but it is true *as a matter of experience*. I hope I shall now speak the feelings of your hearts, while I say, we have found the character of God to be an abundant safeguard to us. We have known full well the trials of life! thank God we have, for what would any of us be worth, if we had no troubles? Troubles, like files, take away our rust; like

furnaces, they consume our dross; like winnowing-fans they drive away the chaff, and we should have had but little value, we should have had but little usefulness, if we had not been made to pass through the furnace. But in all our troubles we have found the character of God a comfort. You have been poor—very poor: I know some of you here have been out of work a long time, and you have wondered where your bread would come from, even for the next meal. Now what has been your comfort? Have you not said, “God is too good to let me starve; he is too bountiful to let me want.” And so, you see, you have found his character to be your strong tower. Or else you have had personal sickness; you have long lain on the bed of weariness, tossing to and fro, and then the temptation has come into your heart to be impatient: “God has dealt hardly with you,” so the Evil One whispers; but how do you escape? Why you say, “No, he is no tyrant, I know him to be a sympathising God.” “In all their afflictions he was afflicted, the angel of his presence saved them.” Or else you have had losses—many losses, and you have been apt to ask, “How can these things be? How is it I have to work so long and plod so hard, and have to look about me with all my wits to earn but little, and yet when I have made money it melts? I see my wealth, like a flock of birds upon the fields, here one moment and gone the next, for a passer by claps his hand, and everything takes to itself wings and flies away.” Then we are apt to think that God is unwise to let us toil for naught; but, lo, we run into our strong tower, and we feel it cannot be. No; the God who sent this affliction could not have acted in a thoughtless, reckless, wisdomless manner; there must be something here that shall work for my good. You know, brethren, it is useless for me to attempt to describe the various ways in which your trials come; but I am sure they that know Jehovah’s name will put their trust in him. Perhaps your trial has been want, and then you have said, “His name is Jehovah-Jireh, the Lord will provide;” or else you have been banished from friends, perhaps from country, but you have said, “Ah! his name is Jehovah-Shammah, the Lord is there;” or else you have had a disturbance in your family; there has been war within, and war without, but you have run into your strong tower, for you have said, “His name is Jehovah-Shalom, the Lord send peace;” or else the world has slandered you, and you yourself have been conscious of sin, but you have said, “His name is Jehovah-Tsidkenu, the Lord our righteousness,” and so you have gone there, and been safe; or else many have been your enemies, then his name has been “Jehovah-Nissi, the Lord my banner;” and so he has been a strong tower to you. Defy, then, brethren—defy, in God’s strength, tribulations of every sort and size. Say, with the poet,

“There is a safe and secret place
 Beneath the wings divine,
 Reserved for all the heirs of grace;
That refuge now is mine.
 The least and feeblest here may hide
 Uninjured and unawed;
 While thousands fall on every side,
 I rest secure in God.”

But, beloved, besides the trials of this life, we have *the sins of the flesh*, and what a tribulation these are; but the name of our God is our strong tower then. At certain seasons we are more than ordinarily conscious of our guilt; and I would give little for your piety, if you do not sometimes creep into a corner with the poor publican and say, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Broken hearts and humble walkers, these are dear in Jesu's eyes. There will be times with all of us when our saintship is not very clear, but our sinnership is very apparent; well, then, the name of our God must be our defence: "He is very merciful"—"For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." Yea, in the person of Christ we even dare to look at his justice with confidence, since "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Possibly it is not so much the guilt of sin that troubles you, as the power of sin. You feel as if you must one day fall by the hand of this enemy within. You have been striving and struggling, but the old Adam is too much for you. It is a stern conflict, and you fear that the sons of Anak will never be driven out. You feel you carry a bombshell within your heart; your passions are like a powder magazine; you are walking where the flakes of fire are flying, and you are afraid a spark may fall and then there will be a terrible destruction of everything. Ah! then there is the power of God, there is the truth of God, there is the faithfulness of God, and, despite all the desperate power of sin, we find a shelter here in the character of the Most High. Sin sometimes cometh with all the terrors of the law; then, if thou knowest not how to hide thyself behind thy God, thou wilt be in an evil plight. It will come at times with all the fury of the flesh, and if thou canst not perceive that thy flesh was crucified in Christ, and that thy life is a life in him, and not in thyself, then wilt thou soon be put to the rout. But he who lives in his God, and not in himself, and he who wraps Christ's righteousness about him, and is righteous in Christ, such a man may defy all the attacks of the flesh and all the temptations of the world; he shall overcome through the blood of the Lamb. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

Then, beloved, there are the temptations of the devil, and these are very dreadful; but how sweet it is still to feel that the character of God is our strong tower. Without walls of grace and bulwarks of mercy, how can a tempted soul escape the clutches of the arch-destroyer? But where the soul lies in the entrenchments of divine promise all the devils in hell cannot carry it by storm. I saw this week, one whom many of you greatly respect—the former pastor of this Church, Mr. James Smith, of Cheltenham*—a name well-known by his innumerable little works which are scattered everywhere, and cannot fail to do good. You will remember that about a year ago, he was struck with paralysis, and one half of his body is dead. But yet, when I saw him on the bed, I had not seen a more cheerful man in the full heyday

* Since departed "to be with Christ, which is far better."

of strength. I had been told that he was the subject of very fearful conflicts at times; so after I had shaken hands with him, I said, "Friend Smith, I hear you have many doubts and fears!" "Who told you that?" said he, "for I have none." "Never have any? why, I understood you had many conflicts." "Yes," he said, "I have many conflicts, but I have no doubts; I have many wars within, but I have no fears. Who could have told you that? I hope I have not led any one to think that. It is a hard battle, but I know the victory is sure. After I have had an ill night's rest—of course, through physical debility—my mind is troubled, and then that old coward, Satan, who would be afraid to meddle with me perhaps if I were strong, attacks me when I am weak; but I am not afraid of him; don't you go away with that opinion; he does throw many fiery darts at me, but I have no doubt as to my final victory." Then, he said, in his own way, "I am just like a packet that is all ready to go by train, packed, corded, labelled, paid for, and on the platform, waiting for the express to come by and take me to glory. I wish I could hear the whistle now," said he, "I had hoped I should have been carried to heaven long ago; but still I am right." "And then," he said, "I have been telling your George Moore, over there, that I am not only *on* the rock, but that I am cemented *to* the rock, and that the cement is as hard as the rock, so there is no fear of my perishing; unless the rock falls, I cannot; unless the gospel perishes, I cannot perish." Now, here was a man attacked by Satan; he did not tell me of the bitter conflicts he had within, I know they were severe enough; he was anxious to bear a good testimony to the faithfulness of his gracious Lord; but you see, it was his God that was his stronghold; he ran to this—the immutability, the faithfulness, the truthfulness, the mightiness of that God upon whose arm he leaned. If you and I will do the same, we can always find an attribute of God to oppose to each suggestion of the Evil One. "God will leave thee," says the Evil One. "Thou old liar, he cannot, for he is a faithful God." "But thou wilt perish after all." "O thou vile deceiver, that can never be, for he is a mighty God and strong to deliver." "But one of these times he will abhor thee." "No; thou false accuser and father of lies, that cannot be, for he is a God of love." "The time shall happen when he shall forget thee." "No, traitor; that cannot be, for he is a God omniscient, and knows and sees all things." I say, thus we may rebut every mischievous slander of Satan, running still into the character of God as our strong tower.

Brethren, even when the Lord himself chastens us, it is most blessed to appeal against God to God. Do you understand what I mean? He smites us with his rod, but then to look up and say, "Father, if I could believe what thy rod seems to say, I should say thou lovest me not; but I know thou art a God of love, and my faith tells me that thou lovest me none the less because of that hard blow." See here, brethren, I will put myself in the case a moment—Lo, He spurns me as though he hated me; drives me from his presence; gives me no caresses; denies me sweet promises; shuts me up in prison, and gives me the water of affliction and the bread of distress; but my faith declares, "He is such a God that I cannot think hardly of him; he has been so good to me that

I know he is good now, and in the teeth of all his providences, even when he puts a black mask over his face, I still believe that

“Behind a frowning providence,
He hides a smiling face.”

But, friends, I hope you know, I hope each of us may know by experience, the blessed art of running into the bosom of God and hiding therein. This word to the sinner who has not yet found peace. Do not you see, man, the Christian is not saved by what he is, but by what his God is; and this is the groundwork of our comfort—that God is perfect, not that we are perfect. When I preached last Thursday night about the snuffers of the temple, and the golden snuffer trays, and the necessity there was for the lamps in the sanctuary to be trimmed, one foolish woman said, “Ah, you see, according to the minister’s own confession, these Christians are as bad as the rest of us, they have many faults; oh!” said she, “I dare say I shall be as well off at the last as they will.” Poor soul! she did not see that the Christian’s hope does not lie in what *he* is, but in what Christ is; our trust is not in what we suffer, but in what Jesus suffered; not in what *we* do, but in what *He* has done. It is not our name, I say again, that is a strong tower to us, it is not even our prayer, it is not our good works; it is the name, the promise, the truth, the work, the finished righteousness of our God in Christ Jesus. Here the believer finds his defence, and nowhere besides. Run sinner, run, for the castle gate is free to all who seek a shelter, be they who they may.

II. By your leave I shall turn to the second point. How THE RIGHTEOUS AVAIL THEMSELVES OF THIS STRONG TOWER. They run into it. Now, running seems to me to imply that *they do not stop* to make any preparation. You will remember our Lord Jesus Christ said to his disciples, that when the Romans surrounded Jerusalem, he that was on the house-top was not to come down into his house, but to run down the outer staircase, and escape. So the Christian, when he is attacked by his enemies, should not stop for anything, but just run into his God and be safe. There is no need for thee to tarry until thou hast prepared thy mind, until thou hast performed sundry ablutions, but run man straight away at once. When the pigeons are attacked by the hawk, their better plan is not to parley, nor to stay, but swift as they can cut the air fly to the dove-cot. So be it with you. Leave fools who will to parley with the fiend of hell; but as for you, fly to your God, and enter into his secret places till the tempest be over, past. A gracious hint this to you anxious souls who are seeking to fit yourselves for Jesus. Away with such legal rubbish, run at once: you are safe in following the good example of the righteous. This running appears to me to imply, that *they have nothing to carry*. A man who has a load, the heavier the load may be, the more will he be impeded in his flight. But the righteous run, like racers in the games, who have thrown off everything, their sins they leave to mercy, and their righteousnets to the moles and bats. If I had any righteousness I would not carry it, but run to the righteousness of Christ without it; for my own righteousness must be a drag upon me which I could not bear. Sinners I know, when they

come to Christ, want to bring tons of good works, waggon loads of good feelings, and fitnesses, and repentings, and such like; but the righteous do no such thing; they just foreswear every thing they have of their own, and count it but dross and dung, that they may run to Christ and be found in him. Gospel righteousness lies in all in Jesus, not in the believer.

It seems to me too, that this expression not only implies a want of preparation, and having nothing to carry, but it imports that *fear quickens them*. Men do not *run* to a castle unless they are afraid. But when the avenger of death is close behind, then swiftly they fly. It is marvellous how godly fear helps faith. There is a man sinking there in the river; he cannot swim, he *must* be drowned! See! see he is going down! We push him a plank; with what a clutch he grasps it; and the more he is convinced that he has no power to float, the more firmly doth he grip at this one hope. Fear may even drive a man, I say, to faith, and lend him wings to fly, where else he might have crept with laggard feet. The flight is the flight of fear, but the refuge is the refuge of faith. O, sinner, if the righteous fly, what ought thy pace to be? Again, it seems to me that *there is great eagerness here*, as if the Christian did not feel safe till he had entered into his God. And therefore, as the stag pursued by the hounds quickens its flight by reason of the baying of the dogs, as the clamour grows louder, and louder, see how the stag leaps from crag to crag, dashes through the stream, flies over yonder hill, is lost in yonder brake, and anon springs through the valley; so the Christian flies to his dear God for safety, when the hounds of hell, and the dogs of temptation are let loose against him. Eagerness! Where indeed shall the like be found? "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?" O convinced sinner, what should thine eagerness be if thus the righteous pant for God? Brethren, I may add here, that there is *an absence of all hesitation*. He runs. You know, if we want somebody to help us, we put our hand to our brow, and consider, "Let us see, where shall we go? I am in great straits, to whom shall I fly? Who will be the best friend to me?" The righteous never ask that question, at least when they are in a right mind they never do; but the moment their trouble comes they run at once to their God, for they feel that they have full permission to repair to him; and again they feel they have nowhere else to fly. "To whom, or whither should I go, if I could turn from thee," is a question which is its own answer. Then understand, in our text there is eagerness, the absence of all hesitation, there is fear, and yet there is courage; there is no preparation, there is the flinging aside every burden. "The righteous runneth into his high tower, and is safe."

Beloved, I will leave that point, when I have just said, please to remember that when a man gets into a castle, he is safe because of the impregnability of the castle; he is not safe because of the way in which he entered into the castle. You hear some man inside saying, "I shall never be hurt, because I came into the castle the right way." You will tell him, "No, no, no, it is not the way you came into the castle but the castle itself is

your defence." So some of you may be thinking, "I do come to Christ, but I am afraid that I do not come aright." But it is not *your coming*, it is Christ that saves you. If you are in Christ, I do not care a pin how you got in, for I am sure you could not get in except by the door; if you are once in, he will never throw you out; he will never drive away a soul that cometh unto him, for any reason whatsoever. Your safety does not lie in how you came, for in very truth, your safety is in Him. If a man should run into a castle and carry all the jewels of a kingdom with him, he would not be safer because of the jewels; and if another man should run in with hardly a fresh suit of clothes with him, he would not be any the more in danger because of his raggedness. It is the castle, it is the castle, not the man. The solid walls, the strong bastions, the frowning ramparts, the mighty munitions, these make up the defence, not the man, nor yet the man's wealth, nor yet the way the man came. Beloved, it is most true that salvation is of the Lord, and whosoever shall look out of self to-night, whosoever shall look to Christ only, shall find him to be a strong tower, he may run into his Lord and be safe.

III. And now for our third and closing remark. You that have Bibles with margins, just look at them. You will find that the second part of the text is put in the margin thus—"The righteous runneth into it, and is set aloft." Our first rendering is, "The righteous runneth into it, and is safe"—there is the matter of fact. The other rendering is, "He is set aloft"—there is the matter of joyous experience.

1. Now first let us see to the *matter of fact*. The man that is sheltered in his God—a man that dwells in the secret places of the tabernacle of the Most High, who is hidden in his pavillion, and is set upon a rock, he is safe; for, first, *who can hurt him?* The Devil? Christ has broken his head. Life? Christ has taken his life up to heaven; for we are dead, and "our life is hid with Christ in God." Death? No; the last enemy *that shall be destroyed* is death. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" The law? That is satisfied, and it is dead to the believer, and he is not under its curse. Sin? No; that cannot hurt the believer, for Christ has slain it. Christ took the believer's sins upon himself, and therefore they are not on the believer any more. Christ took the believer's sins, and threw them into the Red Sea of his atoning blood; the depths have covered them, not one of them is left. All the sin the believer hath ever committed is now blotted out, and a debt that is cancelled can never put a man in prison; a debt that is paid, let it be never so heavy, can never make a man an insolvent—it is discharged, it has ceased to be. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Who can harm us? Let him have permission to do what he will; what is there that he can do? *Who again has power to reach us?* We are in the hand of Christ. What arrow shall penetrate his hand to reach our souls? We are under the skirts of Deity. What strength shall tear away the mantle of God to reach his beloved? Our names are written on the hands of Jesus, who can erase those everlasting lines?

We are jewels in Immanuel's crown. What thievish fingers shall steal away those jewels? We are in Christ. Who shall be able to rend us from his innermost heart? We are members of his body. Who shall mutilate the Saviour? "I bare you," saith God, "as on eagles' wings." Who shall smite through the breast of the Eternal One, heaven's great eagle? he must first do it ere he can reach the eaglets, the young sons of God, begotten unto a lively hope. Who can reach us? God interposes; Christ stands in the way; and the Holy Spirit guards us as a garrison. Who shall stand against the Omnipotent? Tens of thousands of created puissances must fall before him for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength. *What weapon is there that can be used against us?* Shall they kill us? Then we begin to live. Shall they banish us? Then we are but nearer to our home. Shall they strip us? How can they rend away the garment of imputed righteousness? Shall they seize our property? How can they touch our treasure since it is all in heaven? Shall they scourge us? Sweet shall be the smart when Christ is present with us? Shall they cast us into a dungeon? Where shall the free spirit find a prison? What fetters can bind the man who is free in Christ? Shall the tongue attack us? Every tongue that riseth against us in judgment we shall condemn. I know not what new weapon can be formed, for certain it is that the anvil of the Church has broken all the hammers that were ever used to smite it, and remains uninjured still. The believer is—he must be safe. I said this morning, that if the believer in Christ be not saved for ever, then, beloved, there is no meaning whatever in God's Word; and I say it once again, and I say it without any word of apology for so doing, I could never receive that book as the book of God at all, if it could be proved to me that it did not teach the doctrine of the safety of those that trust in Christ. I could never believe that God would speak in such a manner as to make tens of thousands of us, yea millions of us, believe that He would keep us, and yet after all he should cast us away. Nor do I believe that he would use words which, to say the very least, seem to teach final perseverance if he had not intended to teach us the doctrine. All the Arminian divines that ever lived cannot prove the total apostacy of believers; they can attack some other points of the Calvinistic doctrine; there are some points of our form of doctrine which apparently are far more vulnerable. God forbid we should be so foolish as to deny that there are difficulties about every system of theology, but about the perseverance of the saint there is no difficulty. It is as easy to overthrow an opponent here as it would be to pierce with a spear through a shield of pasteboard. Be ye confident, believer, that this is God's truth, that they who trust in God shall be as Mount Zion which shall never be removed, but abideth for ever.

2. But now we conclude by noticing that our text not only teaches us our safety, but *our experience of it*. "He shall set him up aloft." The believer in his high-days, and they ought to be every day, is like an eagle perched aloft on a towering crag. Yonder is a hunter, down below, who would fain strike the royal bird; he has his rifle with him; but his rifle would not reach one third of the way; so the royal bird looks down upon him; sees him load and prime, and aim; and looks in

quiet contempt on him, not intending even to take the trouble to stretch one of his wings ; he sees him load again, hears the bullet down below, but he is quite safe, for he is up aloft. Such is the faithful Christian's state before God. He can look down upon every trial and temptation ; upon every adversary and every malicious attack, for God is his strong tower, and "he is set up aloft." When some people go to the newspaper and write a very sharp, bitter, and cutting letter against the minister, oh, think they, "How he will feel that ; how that will cut him to the quick !" And yet, if they had seen the man read it through, double it up, and throw it into the fire, saying, "What a mercy it is to have somebody taking notice of me ;" if they could see the man go to bed and sleep all the better because he thinks he has had a high honour conferred on him, for being allowed to be abused for Christ, surely they would see that their efforts are only "hate's labour lost." I do not think our enemies would take so much trouble to make us happy, if they knew how blessed we are under their malice. "Thou hast prepared a table before me in the presence of mine enemies," said David. Some soldiers never eat so well as when their enemies are looking on ; for there is a sort of gusto about every mouthful which they eat, as they seem to say, "snatched from the jaw of the lion, and from the paw of the bear, and in defiance of you all, in the name of the Most High God I feast to the full, and then set up my banner." The Lord sets his people up aloft. There are many who do not appear to be much up aloft. You meet them on the corn market, and they say, "Wheats do not pay as they used to ; farming is no good to anybody." Hear others, after those gales, those equinoctial gales, when so many ships have gone down, say, "Ah ! you may well pity us poor fellows that have to do with shipping, dreadful times these, we are all sure to be ruined." See many of our tradesmen—"This Exhibition has given us a little spurt, but as soon as this is over there will be nothing doing ; trade never was so dull." Trade has been dull ever since I have been in London, and that is nine years ! I do not know how it is, but our friends are always losing money, yet they get on pretty comfortably too. Some I know begun with nothing ; and they are getting pretty rich now, but, it is all with losing money, if I am to believe what they tell me. Surely this is not sitting up aloft ; surely this is not living up on high. This is a low kind of life for a child of God. We should not have liked to see the Prince of Wales in his boyhood playing with the children in the street, and I do not suppose you would like to see him now among coal-heavers at a hustling match. Nor should the child of God be seen pushing and grasping as if this world were all, always using that muck-rake to scrape together the things of this world ; instead of in full satisfaction, being content with such things as he has, for God has said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." I am not a little ashamed of myself that I do not live more on high, for I know when we get depressed in spirits and downcast, and doubting, we say many unbelieving and God-dishonouring words. It is all wrong. We ought not to stay here in these marshes of fleshly doubts. We ought never to doubt our God. Let the heathen doubt his God, for well he may, but our God made the heavens. What a happy people we ought to be ! When we are not, we are not true to

our principles. There are ten thousand arguments in Scripture for happiness in the Christian; but I do not know that there is one logical argument for misery. Those people who draw their faces down, and like the hypocrites pretend to be of a sad countenance, these, I say, cry, "Lord, what a wretched land is this, that yields us no supplies." I should think they do not belong to the children of Israel; for the children of Israel find in the wilderness a rock following them with its streams of water, and manna dropping every day, and when they want them there are the quails, and so the wretched land is filled with good supplies. Let us rather rejoice in our God. I should not like to have a serving man who always went about with a dreary countenance, because do you know people would say, "What a bad master that man has." And when we see Christians looking so sad, we are apt to think they cannot have a good God to trust to. Come, beloved, let us change our notes, for we have a strong tower and are safe. Let us take a walk upon the ramparts, I do not see any reason for always being down in the dungeon, let us go up to the very top of the ramparts, where the banner waves in the fresh air, and let us sound the clarion of defiance to our foes again, and let it ring across the plain, where yonder pale white-horsed rider comes, bearing the lance of death; let us defy even him. Ring out the note again; salute the evening, and make the outgoings of the morning to rejoice. Warder, upon the castle-top, shout to thy companion yonder, and let every tower and every turret of the grand old battlements be vocal with the praise of him who has said—

"Munitions of stupendous rock,
Thy dwelling-place shall be;
There shall thy soul without a shock
The wreck of nature see."

Sinner, again I say the door is open; run to the mercy of God in Christ and be safe.