

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

FEAR NOT.

A Sermon

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CONGREGATION OF PASTOR W. CUFF.

“Fear not.”—Revelation i. 17.

“FEAR not” is a plant which grows very plentifully in God’s garden. If you look through the lily beds of Scripture you will continually find by the side of other flowers the sweet “Fear nots” peering out from among doctrines and precepts, even as violets look up from their hiding-places of green leaves. “Fear nots” bloomed in the old time, at the feet of Abraham, when he returned from fighting with the kings. Melchisedek blessed him, and the Lord comforted him. The patriarch might have been half afraid that he would always lead a troubled life, now that he had once drawn the sword; but the Lord came to him in vision, and said, “Fear not, Abram. I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.” If he had to undergo a soldier’s toils, he should have a soldier’s shield and a soldier’s pay, and both should be exceeding great, for he should find them both in God. After you have been fighting battles for Christ you may feel weary and worried, and then your great Melchisedek will refresh you with bread and wine, and whisper in your ear “Fear not.”

A “Fear not” was spoken to Isaac when he had dug wells, and the Philistines strove for them, and he, like the meek soul that he was, gave them up one by one to avoid a conflict. At last he settled down at Beersheba, and there the Lord appeared unto him, and said, “Fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee.” He was a feeble man, and therefore the Lord dealt tenderly with him. If any of you are meek and quiet spirits, and rather apt to tremble exceedingly, may the Lord often give you a blessed “Fear not” to wear in your bosoms, that its fragrance may comfort your hearts. Then there was Jacob. You know how troubled his life was, but when he heard that his beloved son whom he thought was dead was alive in Egypt, and was clothed with glory, and that he had sent for him to go down to see him, he was afraid to go till the Lord said to him, “Fear not to go down into Egypt,” and gave him this encouraging promise, “I will go down with thee into Egypt.” If any of you are making a great change in life and moving, perhaps, to the very ends of the earth, “fear not to go down into Egypt.” Should God command you to go to the utmost verge of the green earth, to

rivers unknown to song, yet if he bids you go, fear not to go down into Egypt, for certainly he will be with you.

The Israelites at the Red Sea were afraid of Pharaoh, and then the Lord said to them, "Fear not, stand still and see the salvation of God." If you are brought to a pass to-night, and know not what to do, take the advice of Holy Scripture, and "Fear not"; but "stand still and see the salvation of God." As we observe the Scriptures we perceive that "Fear nots" are scattered throughout the Bible as the stars are sprinkled over the whole of the sky, but when we come to Isaiah we find constellations of them. When I was a boy I learnt Dr. Watts's catechism, and I am glad I did. One of its questions runs thus, "Who was Isaiah?" And the answer is, "He was that prophet who spake more of Jesus Christ than all the rest." Very well, and for that very reason—that he spoke more of Jesus Christ than all the rest—he is richest in comfort to the people of God, and continually he is saying, "Fear not." Here are a few of his antidotes for the fever of fear: "Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not." "Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God." "Fear not, I will help thee." "Fear not, thou worm Jacob." "Fear not, I have redeemed thee." "Fear not, for thou shalt not be ashamed; neither be thou confounded, for thou shalt not be put to shame"; and so on, I was going to say, "world without end." So abundant are these "Fear nots" that they grow like the king-cups and the daisies, and other sweet flowers of the meadows, among which the little children in the spring-time delight themselves. As to gathering them all, no one would attempt the task. The bank that is fullest of these beautiful flowers is that which Isaiah has cast up; go there and pluck them for yourselves.

Now I gather from the plentifulness of "Fear nots," even in the Old Testament, that the Lord does not wish his people to be afraid, that he is glad to see his people full of courage, and especially that he does not love them to be *afraid of him*. He would have his children treat him with confidence. Slavish fear may be thought to be congenial to the Old Testament, and yet it is not so, for there the Lord cries to his chosen, "Fear not."

When we come into the New Testament, there we see God coming more familiarly to men than ever before; not descending upon Paran with ten thousand flaming chariots, setting the mountain on a blaze, but coming down to Bethlehem in an infant's form, with angels chanting the joyful lay, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men." The genius of the New Testament is drawing near to God: ceasing to tremble and beginning to trust, ceasing to be the slave and learning to be the child. Though in the precise form of it the words of my text were not very often spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ, yet his whole life was one long proclamation of "Fear not." I think I shall give you to-night most of the instances in which our Lord himself expressly said "Fear not," and as each one I shall give you will either come from the lip of Christ, or else from Christ's own angel, sent to comfort one of his servants, I pray that it may come fresh from God to every tried and troubled believer, and that all of us together may receive for our different fears this one same solace from the mouth of the Eternal, "Thus saith the Lord unto thee, fear not."

I. Our first text you will kindly look for if you have your Bibles with you. I hope you all have them, for I love to hear the rustling of Bible-leaves as we do in Scotland, but not often in England. Turn to the Book of the Revelation, the first chapter, and the seventeenth verse, and there you will read that John beheld the Saviour in his glorious array, and he says,

"When I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last."

Our first "Fear not" MEETS THE DREAD OCCASIONED BY THE MAJESTY OF OUR SAVIOUR'S PERSON. You that know him hold him in deepest reverence, even as John did when at the sight of his divine Lord he fell at his feet as dead. Did you ever think of Jesus as divine, and try to form some idea of his grandeur, his triumph, and his exaltation above the thrones and principalities of heaven? As your soul has extolled him, and your mind has been expanded with high thoughts of the all-glorious Son of God, has it not occurred to you to say within yourself, "How dare I think that he is my Beloved, and that I am his? Could such majesty meet such misery? Could such glory bring itself into union with such insignificance as mine?" I know you must have experienced that feeling; and yet you must not yield to it, for our Lord Jesus, although he loves to see your holy awe, would not have that reverence freeze into a chill reserve or a slavish trembling. No, though he be divine, he invites you to approach him without dread. Great as he is, you may dare to be free with him.

"Let us be simple with him then—

Not backward, stiff, or cold,

As though our Bethlehem could be

What Sinai was of old."

Let your Lord be glorious to you, but still let him be near you. Exalt him on his throne, but remember that you sit there with him. However glorious he may be, he has desired that you may behold his glory, and be with him where he is. To you hath he given to overcome, and to sit upon his throne even as he has overcome, and has sat down with the Father upon his throne.

If you have studied the matchless purity of his character with adoring admiration, you must have been amazed at the absolute perfection of his manhood, and the glory of his moral and spiritual character. At such times, if you have had a true sense of your own position, you have been ready to sink into the dust, and you have exclaimed, "Shall *he* wash my feet? Shall *he* give himself for me? Can it be that he could have loved one so stained and polluted, so mean and so beggarly, so altogether unworthy even to live, much less to be loved by such an altogether lovely one?" But I pray you always to remember, when you think of his perfection, that he has perfection of mercy as well as of holiness, and perfection of love to sinners as well as perfection of hatred of sin; and that, guilty as you are, you must never doubt his affection, for he has pledged you in his heart's blood, and proved his love by his death. Albeit that you are conscious of being less than nothing and vanity, and know that Jesus is absolute perfection, yet regard him not with timorous dread, but draw near to him as confidently

as a child to its parent, or a wife to her husband. It is one of Satan's temptations to make us afraid of Christ. Let us not be ignorant of his devices. Why should you be afraid of Jesus when he tells you not to be? Why dread the Lamb of God? *He* says, "Fear not." It is not the preacher who cries "Fear not," but it is Jesus himself who whispers to his poor servant, fallen as dead at his feet, "Fear not: fear not." It will be disobedience, then, to be afraid. When those lips, which are as lilies, dropping sweet-smelling myrrh, say to me, "Child of mine, fear not," how can I be afraid? Your safety lies, remember, dear friend, in trusting Jesus, and not in being afraid of him. There was never a soul yet saved by being afraid of Christ: there was never a prodigal that found forgiveness yet by being afraid of his Father. This kind of fear wants casting out, for it hath torment. Jesus, our Lord, is great and good, but then he has chosen to become the Saviour of sinners, and we need not fear to approach him, for "this man receiveth sinners." A host that entertains at his table the poorest of the poor and the lowest of the low, and bids them welcome, is not one to be feared. Remember that if you are honestly afraid of Jesus, you should be afraid of grieving him by being afraid of him. When the physician sees the patient shrinking from his knife he does not wonder, but when Jesus sees you shrinking from that hand which does not wound, but cures by its own wound, he looks with eyes of sorrow upon such fear. Why shrink from him? The little children ran into his arms. Why shrink from him? Nothing cuts him to the quick more than the unkind, ungenerous thought that he is unwilling to receive the guilty. If he meant to keep you at a distance he would have stopped in heaven; his coming here cannot mean anything else than love to the perishing: therefore do not grieve him by being afraid of him. Remember that his truthfulness forbids the rejection of any that ever come to him, since he has pledged his word that he will in no wise cast them out. You need not therefore be afraid that *you* especially may not come. I had a letter but this week, in which one poor soul says, "I believe that I am the worst person that ever lived: though not in outward appearance, yet in heart. I believe that all other sorts of people feel more than I do, or have some one point in which they are better than I am, but I am the worst of all, and I fear that Jesus will never look on me." Downcast soul, there is no true ground for such a suspicion. If you had a devil in you, you might still come to Christ; and if there were a legion of devils in you—and I do not quite know how many made up a legion; but if there were so many that you could not count them—yet you might come with all the devils in hell in you and he still would not frown upon you, but he would cast the devils out of you. Oh, be not afraid to come to him whose wounds invite you. The blessed Saviour who receiveth sinners loves not that you should stay away through fear.

I know what some of you are doing: you are trying to get to heaven by a roundabout road. The late Emperor of Russia, when the railway was to be made between Moscow and St. Petersburg, employed a great number of engineers in making plans. He looked over many of their maps, and at last, like the practical man that he was, he said, "Here, bring me a ruler." They brought him a ruler: he took a pencil, and

drawing a straight line he said, "That is the way to engineer it: we want no other plan than one straight line." There are a great many ways of engineering souls to heaven; but the only one that is worth considering is this:—Draw a straight line to Christ at once. Did I hear one awakened soul say, "I should like to talk to Mr. Cuff"? By all means talk to him, but do not stop *at* that, nor stop *for* that. Go to Christ first. "Oh, but I should like to talk with a good woman—a dear Christian lady." I recommend you to go to Jesus Christ at once, and see the lady afterwards. It is all very well to have an enquiry-room, and I have not a word to say against it, but the best enquiry-room in the world is your own bedroom. Go and enquire of Christ straight away. We may make our Christian workers and leaders into little priests if we do not mind what we are at. There must be nobody between a soul and Christ. Blind souls will never get their eyes opened by all the kind hands of all the good people in Shoreditch, or in all London. Christ's hands can give sight, and only his; and you may get to Christ to-night. "Which way?" say you. By no movement of your body, but by a motion of your mind. Turn your thoughts towards him, your desires towards him, your trust towards him. Look to him and live. May the Holy Ghost lead you to trust him now, and he will save you.

Thus have I tried very briefly to set forth the fear which arises from the majesty of the divine person of Christ, for which he prescribes this cure: "Fear not, I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore." Do not be afraid of Jesus because of his glory, nor stand back because of your unfitness. You *do* want a Mediator between your soul and God; but you do *not* want a mediator between your souls and Christ. You may come to him straight away just as you are.

"Come needy, and guilty, come loathsome and bare;
You can't come too filthy, come just as you are."

Draw a straight line,—remember that, a straight line from your lost condition to Christ, and let your resolve be: I, being lost, trust Jesus to save me, and I am saved.

II. The second "Fear not" is equally precious. Turn to Luke, the eighth chapter and the fiftieth verse, the chapter we were reading just now, and there you will find that Jairus had a little daughter, who was dead, and they said—

"Trouble not the Master. But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole."

THIS MEETS THE FEAR ARISING OUT OF THE DESPERATENESS OF THE CASE IN HAND. The little girl was actually dead; and yet Jesus said, "Fear not." Here is comfort *as to others*. Dear friend, if you have been praying for a long time about anyone who is near and dear to you, and you have been longing for that person's salvation, and your prayer has not been answered, and that person has even gone from bad to worse, I want you not to give up praying. "Oh, but," you say, "I am getting very downcast, for they are plunging into deeper sin." Well, there is cause for fear, but not while Jesus lives, for he can reach a soul so long as it remains this side the gates of death. Jesus can

still save a man while he is yet out of hell. Continue to pray, and fear not. No case is absolutely hopeless while Jesus lives. Love will still prevail. We meet sometimes with amazing instances where prayer is heard at last. I have read of a woman who prayed long for her husband. She used to attend a certain meeting-house in the north of England, but her husband never went with her. He was a drinking, swearing man, and she had much anguish of heart about him. She never ceased to pray, and yet she never saw any result. She went to the meeting-house quite alone, with this exception, that a dog always went with her, and this faithful animal would curl himself up under the seat, and lie quiet during the service. When she was dead, her husband was still unsaved, but doggie went to the meeting-house. His master wondered whatever the faithful animal did at the service. Curiosity made him follow the good creature. The dog led him down the aisle to his dear old mistress's seat. The man sat on that seat, and the dog curled himself up as usual. God guided the minister that day; the word came with power, and that man wept till he found the Saviour. Never give up your husbands, good women, for the Lord may even use a dog to bring them to Christ when you are dead and gone. Never give up praying, hoping, and expecting. Fear not; believe only, and you shall have your heart's desire. Pray for them as long as there is breath in your body and theirs. It is of no use praying for them when they are dead, but as long as they are here never cease to plead with God on their account. Persons have been converted to God under very extraordinary circumstances. Two base fellows thought to rob the house of a godly man, the vicar of the parish, who was accustomed on Sunday evening to gather his poor people together in his parlour and preach the gospel to them. This was a little extra work after the day's services. The thieves thought that if they could get into the house with the people during the evening, and hide themselves away, they could rob the house easily during the night; and so they got into the next room to that in which the Word was preached. But they never robbed that house, for through the godly vicar's address the Lord Jesus Christ stole away their hearts, and they came forth to confess their sin, and to become followers of the Saviour. You do not know how far the arrows of the conquering Saviour may fly. Never despair. Jesus Christ comforts you in reference to the souls of those for whom you are anxious, by saying "Fear not; believe only, and they shall be made whole." Labour for them, pray for them, and believe that Jesus Christ can save them.

Let the same truth be fully believed *as to yourselves*. O my dear hearer, you may think you are too far gone for salvation, but you are not. You may imagine that your case is altogether a lot out of the catalogue; but you are just the sort of person that Jesus Christ saves. If he never saved odd people he would never have saved me, for many men judge me to be a singular being. If you are another oddity, come along with me, and let us trust in him. If you are the one man that is a little over the line of mercy, you are the very man that Jesus Christ chooses to bless, for he loves to save extraordinary sinners. He is a very extraordinary Saviour; there never was another like him, and when he meets a sinner that is extraordinary, and never another

like him, he often takes him, and makes him one of his captains, as he did Saul of Tarsus, who became Paul the apostle. I do pray you "fear not" on account of the greatness of your sin. Be humbled on account of it, but do not despair about it. Are you old in iniquity? Are you deeply ingrained in transgression by long practice in it? Still doubt not the Redeemer's power. If your salvation rested on yourself you might despair, but the Lord has laid help on one that is mighty, even on his only-begotten Son, and he is able to save to the uttermost them that come to God by him. O poor condemned sinner, look up and hope. O thou who hast heard the clang of the iron gate, thou who art shut up in despair, have hope, have brave hope, for Jesus saith to thee, "Fear not, believe only, and thou shalt be made whole." God grant that this gracious "Fear not" may be a comfort to some seeker here.

III. Our third "Fear not" is taken from Luke fifth, and the seventh verse, and perhaps what I am about to say will suit Mr. Cuff and other successful ministers :

"They came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken: And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men."

THIS MEETS THE FEAR WHICH ARISES OUT OF THE GREATNESS OF HIS GOODNESS. If the Lord has made any one of you successful in his service, if you are made of the same stuff as I am, your success lays you low before his throne. Time was when everybody was abusing me, and then I rejoiced and gloried in God: I had happy days when my name was cast out as evil. But when the Lord in his great mercy gave me souls for my hire, and began to build up the church at the Tabernacle, I became subject thereupon to such sinking of spirits that I can scarcely tell you how crushed I have been under the weight of divine mercy. I should not wonder if my dear brother Cuff has gone home, after seeing a crowd at the Town Hall, and after seeing this great house full, and has said, "Lord, why hast thou been pleased to use *me* and to favour *me*?" If any of you are blessed in your work, as I trust you may be, you may also be made to feel the mysterious depression which takes the place of self-exaltation in those who know that every good gift comes from God alone.

Fear because of the Lord's great goodness also comes in another shape: a person says, "I believe that I am saved for I have looked to Christ, and I am lightened. And yet can it be?" The thought suggests itself, "It is too good to be true." Now, look you, sirs, if it were not supremely good it would not be true. It is because it is so excessively good that it is true. As one said of God's mercy when his friend was astonished at it, "I ~~am~~ astonished too; but still it is just like him." It is just the way of God, you know, to bless a poor sinner beyond all that he can ask or think. It is the way with God to astonish us with his grace. When the Lord sends his mercy it never rains, but it pours. He deluges the desert. He not only gives enough to moisten,

but enough to drench the furrows. He makes the wilderness a standing pool of water, and the thirsty land springs of water. Do not, therefore, doubt the genuineness of his mercy because of its greatness.

But some timorous professors say, "This is a great work which God is doing here, but it is too great to last." Yes, that too I have heard, and the gathering of many to hear the gospel has been sneered at as "a nine days' wonder." Alas! our unbelief has said, "It cannot last"; and yet it has lasted. The path of faith to my mind is very like that of a man walking on a tight-rope high up in the air, and you always seem half afraid that he will fall; yet if the Lord placed us on a spider's web as high as the Alps he would not let us slip. The walk of faith is like going up an invisible staircase. When you have climbed and climbed, you sometimes cannot see one single step before you. Each step seems to be upon the air, and yet when you put your foot down it is solid granite firmer than the earth itself. There are times when Satan whispers, "God will leave you. God will forsake you. He has done all this for you, and yet he will leave you." Ah, but he never will, for his faithfulness never fails. We must not be like the countryman who, when he had to cross the river, said that he would wait till the stream was dry, for it could not run so fast as that long, but must all run away. We have feared that we should live till the river of God's mercy had run dry; but it never has, and it never will. Some professors say when a great number of sinners are converted, "Oh, well, you see there are so many, they cannot be all genuine." That is why I think the work to be real. When I see a little peddling work of one every now and then, I am far more inclined to say, "Well, I do not know. It may be of God, but it is not a very great affair, and he generally does great things when his Spirit is poured out." But when I see him calling three thousand in one day, I say, "This is the finger of God. I am sure of it." I would be the last to despise the day of small things, but I must also speak up for the day of great things. I have noticed that those who are added to the church at times of revival are people that hold on quite as well as others, and I think better than others. That is my experience; because at other times we are apt to say, "there are so few coming forward; we must not be quite so strict in examining them;" but when there is a great number we feel that we can afford to be particular, and we are naturally more strict. I do not justify this, but I am sure that the tendency exists. I believe in a great work; and when I see our Lord filling the net, I think I hear him saying to me, "Do not be afraid because the fish make the boat sink down to the water's edge. Fear not. You shall get many more than these. Let down your net again."

Let us not doubt because it seems too wonderful that God should bless us to a great extent. It is wonderful, but let us have no doubt about it. Can the Lord use such poor worms as we are? He does use us. Do not ask how he can do it if he does do it. He is a God of sovereignty, and he uses whom he wills, and if he blesses you, give him the glory of it: but do not let the greatness of his grace cause you to mistrust. You have seen a painter with his palette on his finger, and he has ugly little daubs of paint upon the palette.

What can he do with those spots? Go in and see his picture. What splendid painting! What lights! What shades! Where are those daubs of paint? They have been used up upon the picture. What! Did he make that picture out of those ugly spots of paint? Yes, that picture was made out of those little daubs of colour! That is the way with painters. In even a wiser way does Jesus act towards us. He takes us, poor smudges of paint, and he makes the blessed pictures of his grace out of us; for it is neither the brush he uses, nor the paint he uses, but it is the skill of his own hand which does it all, and unto his name be the praise. Now, poor worker, do not be afraid. The great Artist will take you in hand, and make something of you. I forget how much can be made out of a pennyworth of iron, but I do know that there are methods by which a pennyworth of iron can be so moulded, and wrought, and fashioned, that it can become worth a hundred times what it was before it came under the manufacturer's hand. What the Lord can make of such poor creatures as we are, who shall tell? He says, "Fear not"; and I pray you do not fear. You who make up the church in Shoreditch, do not be afraid because the Lord fills this great house. Beckon to your partners that are in the other ships to come and help you. Help those round about to fill their boats, and may God send you a long and continued revival of religion in this whole region. Let not the old folks get frightened at the Lord's glorious working: believe in it and rejoice! Why, if the Lord were to convert three thousand in one day in any place, there are numbers who would say, "I do not believe in it, for I never saw anything like it." Many churches would say, "We do not think that we ought to take them in just yet." At Pentecost they baptized the converts the same day. You see, the church was ready to baptize them: we have no church in England that would do that: I fear not one, and we have no Christian people who would approve of it if it were done, but they would as a rule murmur that it was rash enthusiasm, and an ill-advised haste. "*I believe in the Holy Ghost.*" We say that, but do we practically believe it? God grant we may.

IV. But now I turn to a fourth "Fear not," which we find in the tenth of Matthew, the twenty-eighth verse. I will not turn to it, but I will just tell you of it because there are many of you here who need its comfort.

"Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

THIS IS MEANT TO REMOVE THE FEAR ARISING OUT OF SHARP PERSECUTION. In a region like this, when a working man is converted to Jesus Christ, his friends and his neighbours soon find it out, and I am sorry to say that working-men, as a rule, do not treat Christian men fairly. They used to say in America, "It is a free country; every man may whip his own nigger," and so it is here: it is a free country, every man may swear at his fellow-workman for worshipping God. It is a fearful piece of meanness that men should molest their fellows for being godly. If you have a right to swear, I have a right to sing psalms; and if you have a right to break the Sabbath, I have a right to keep it, and I have a right to go in and out of the workshop without being called

ill-names because I live in the fear of God. But the right is not always recognized. Some have to run the gauntlet from morning to night because they serve the Lord. Now, my dear brothers and sisters in Christ, do not be afraid, though you are nothing but poor sheep, and you are sent out into the midst of wolves. Does it not seem as if our Lord could hardly have known what he was at when he said, "Behold, I send you forth as sheep among wolves." Yet he made no mistake. Just think for a minute :—how many wolves are there in the world now? They have been eating up the sheep ever since they had a chance; but are there more wolves or more sheep alive at this day? Why, the wolves get fewer and fewer every day, till when a wolf comes down into the inhabited lands in France we have it reported in the paper, and we have not one animal of the kind in this country wild, though they used to abound here. The fact is, the sheep have driven out the wolves. It looked as if they would eat the sheep up, but the sheep have exterminated them. So it will be in the end with defenceless believers and raging persecutors; patient weakness will overcome passionate strength. Only be patient. You have an anvil in the shop: and you know how hard the hammer comes down on it. What does the anvil do? Why, bears it. You never saw the anvil get up and fight the hammer. Never. It stands still and takes the blows. Down comes the hammer. But now listen. How many hammers have been worn out to one anvil? Where it has stood for years, the old block of iron remains, ready to bear more strokes. The hammers will break, but not the anvil. Be you an anvil, brother. Be you the sheep, brother, still; for heavenly submission shall win the victory, and patient non-resistance shall come off more than a conqueror.

Do not fear, I pray you, so as to conceal your testimony. Tell out for Jesus Christ what he has done for you, and the more they blaspheme and persecute you, be you the more determined by God's grace that they shall not be able to find fault in your character, and that they shall know that you are a Christian man. Climb up the mast and nail the colours to it. Drive another nail to-night. Fix the colours to the mast-head. Say, "No, never by God's grace will I be ashamed of being a Christian. I might be ashamed if I were a drunkard. I might be ashamed if I were a swearer; but I never will be ashamed that I am a follower of the crucified Son of God."

O poor men and women, who have for the most part to bear the brunt of the world's assaults, God grant that you may not fear. Do not fall into doubt about your religion either. Do not be so afraid as to fall into questioning and unbelief. True religion never was in the majority, and never will be for many a year to come. You may rest assured that if we were to poll the world for any opinion, and if that opinion should be decided by a majority, it would be necessarily wrong. Now and then in one country the right prevails, but all the world over the seed of the serpent outnumber the seed of the woman. Blessed is he who can stand in a minority of one with God; for a minority of one for God is in the judgment of truth a majority. Count God with you, and you have more with you than all they that be against you.

V. I must not keep you much longer, for the heat grows great, and I fear some of you are fainting. Therefore I want to say another word which I should like you all to hear. This is the fifth "Fear

not." You will find it in Luke xii. verse 32. Christ preaching to his disciples said,—

"Fear not, little flock: for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

THIS IS MEANT TO PREVENT FEAR AS TO TEMPORAL THINGS. Now, I know that this is a time in which many of God's people are much tried, and they tremble lest they should not be provided for. Harken to this, —Did you escape from poverty by being frightened about it? Did your fears ever make you any the richer? Have you not found it to be vain to rise up early and to sit up late, and to eat the bread of carefulness when you have had no faith in God? Have you not learned that? And do you not know that if you are a child of God he will certainly give you your food and raiment? Ah, I hear a heavy sigh from one,—*"It has been a hard winter."* It is true, my friend, it has been a hard winter. I dare say that the birds have found it so, and yet on Sunday morning I noticed when I opened my window early that they were singing very sweetly; and this morning, too, they broke forth in a chorus of harmonious song. You know what the little bird sings when he sits on a bare bough with the snow all around him? He chirps out—

"Mortal, cease from toil and sorrow,
God provideth for the morrow."

Learn the sparrow's song, and try, if you can, to catch the spirit of the bird which has no barn or storehouse, and yet is fed. There is this to comfort you: "Your heavenly Father knoweth what things ye have need of." He understands your wants. Is it not enough for a child that his father knows his needs? Rest in that, and be confident that verily you shall be fed. You will not have much in this world, perhaps; but you shall have the kingdom. Be of good cheer about that. Your inheritance is yet to come; you shall have the kingdom. You have even now a reversionary interest in eternal glory, and this involves present supplies: he who promises the end will provide for the way. Some of the Lord's best people are those that have to suffer most, but it is because they can here glorify him most by suffering. I think the angels in heaven must almost envy a child of God who has the power and the privilege to suffer for Christ's sake; for doubtless angels render perfect service to the heavenly King, yet not by suffering. Theirs is active and not passive obedience to the will of God. Methinks they will cluster round some of you in heaven, and say, "You lived down at Bethnal Green, or Shoreditch. Ah, yes." The angels will say, "What sort of a place did you live in? One dark room? You were very poor: you were out of work: and did you trust God?" The angels will be pleased as you tell them, "Oh yes, we went to the heavenly Father still, and we said, 'Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.'" That is the grandest thing that a man ever did say; at least, I think it is. Mr. Cuff says some fine things, but he never uttered a nobler sentence than that,—*"Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."* The expression is sublime! When Job had lost everything, after being immensely rich, he sat on a dunghill, and scraped his sores, and he said, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither." He was reduced to the most abject want, and yet he added—"The Lord gave, and the

Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Ye cherubim and seraphim, in all your songs no stanza excels that heroic verse. Angels cannot rise to such a height of sublime devotion to the Invisible One as Job did when in his misery he glorified his God by abiding confidence. Oh, you that are brought very low, you have grand opportunities for honouring God if you will but trust him. "Fear not." "Fear not."

"Fear not the loss of outward good,
He will for his provide,
Give them supplies of daily food,
And all they want beside."

And he will give you spiritual food too. When God saves his people he gives them spiritual food to live upon till they get to heaven. God does not give us treatment like that which the Duke of Alva measured out to a city which had surrendered. He agreed to give the inhabitants their lives, but when they complained that they were dying of hunger he maliciously replied, "I granted you your lives, but I did not promise you food." Our God does not talk so. He includes in the promise of salvation all that goes with it; and you shall have all you really want between here and heaven, wherefore fear not.

VI. Lastly, time fails me: but I was going to close with that word in the twenty-seventh of Acts, the twenty-fourth verse, where the Lord sent his angel to his servant Paul in the time of the shipwreck, and said to him,

"Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Cæsar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee."

So I pray God that all perils in the future—all imminent ills and dangers which surround you now—may not cause you to fear, for the Lord will not suffer a hair of your head to perish, but he that has made you will bear you through, and make you more than conquerors too.

Tried people of God, rest in the Lord, and your confidence shall be your strength. You have often heard of the boy on board ship in time of storm who was the only person that was not afraid. When they asked him why he did not fear, he said "Because my father is at the helm." We have still better cause for casting away all fear, for not only is our Father at the helm but our Father is everywhere, holding the winds and the waves in the hollow of his hand. No trouble can happen to you or to me but what he ordains or permits. No trial can come but what he will restrain and overrule. No evil can happen but what shall certainly work for good to them that love God. Therefore be not afraid. What though the howling tempest yell, and the ship creak and groan as she labours among the waves, and you think that nothing but destruction awaits you, fear not! Let not fear linger for a single moment in the presence of the eternal Christ who says, "It is I. Be not afraid." May God grant that his own "Fear not" may go home to the heart of every one here present in some form or other; and unto his name be glory, world without end. Amen.

N.B.—For the convenience of those who wish to purchase this sermon separately, it will be published as a little book. Price One Penny.