

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

JESUS MEETING HIS WARRIORS.

A Sermon

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“And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the Most High God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth: and blessed be the Most High God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.”—
Genesis xiv. 18—20.

WHAT a splendid type is Abram, in the narrative before us, of our Lord Jesus Christ! Let us read this story of Abram in connection with our Saviour, and see how full of meaning it is. Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the abundance of his love, had taken us to be his brothers; but we, through our sin, had removed into the land of Sodom, and Jesus Christ dwelt alone in his safety and his happiness, enjoying the presence of God. The hosts of our enemies, with terrible force and cruel fury, carried us away captives. We were violently borne away with all the goods which we possessed, into a land of forgetfulness and captivity for ever. Christ, who had lost nothing by this, nevertheless being a “brother born for adversity,” pursued our haughty foes. He overtook them; he smote them with his mighty hand—he took their spoil, and returned with crimsoned vesture, leading captivity captive. He restored that which he took not away. Methinks as I see Abram returning from the slaughter of the four kings, I see in him a picture of a greater than Abram, returning “from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, travelling in the greatness of his strength.” Who answers to my enquiry who he is? “I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.” Abram was that righteous man raised up in the East, to whom God gave his enemies as driven stubble to his bow; and so the Lord Jesus has driven our enemies like chaff over to the wind, for they fled at the presence of Jehovah Jesus; and by the valour of the atoning Lamb they have been utterly broken in pieces for ever. Let that thought dwell with you, it may furnish you with matter for meditation at your leisure.

We shall this morning rather consider Abram as the type and picture
No. 589.

of all the faithful. He was the father of the faithful; and in his history you have condensed—as I think—the history of all faithful men. You will scarcely find a trial which will befall you, which has not in some respect happened unto Abraham. I will not say that he was tempted in all points like as we are, but he was tempted in so many points that he well deserves to be called the father of the faithful, being partaker of flesh and blood even as all the children *are* who belong to his faithful family.

Observe then, in handling our subject in this manner, *that believers are frequently engaged in warfare.* Notice, secondly, *that when they are thus engaged, they may expect to be met by their Lord, the great Melchizedek;* and remember, thirdly, *that when they are favoured with an interview with him, and are refreshed by him as with bread and wine, then, like Abram, they consecrate themselves anew, and, as Abram gave tithes of all, even so do they.*

I. We mention then, what you must all know right well by experience—you who are God's people—**THAT THE BELIEVER IS OFTEN ENGAGED IN WARFARE.**

This warfare will be both within and without—within with the innumerable natural corruptions which remain, with the temptations of Satan, with the suggestions of his own wicked heart; and without, he will frequently be engaged in warfare, wrestling “not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” The peculiar case of Abram leads me to remark that sometimes the believer will be engaged in warfare, not so much on his own account as on the account of erring brethren, who, having gone into ill company, are by-and-by carried away captive. It was no quarrel of Abram's, it was Lot's matter. Lot had gone to Sodom. Instead of standing in the separated path of the true believer, he had joined himself unto the world, and when evil days came, Lot was carried away captive with the rest. Abram cared little enough for the king of Sodom: I do not suppose he would have taken his sword from the sheath for all the men who dwelt in Admah or Zeboiim; but for Lot's sake, seeing him in ill company and in danger, he draws the sword. And sometimes, brethren, when we see those who are God's servants putting themselves into alliance with evil systems, we find them carried away captive, and taken where we believe their hearts would never go, and we feel compelled to come out and draw the sword against the common enemy of Christ and of all his people; and though they may heartily wish that we would let them alone in their sin, and let them be quiet in their evil union, we see into what spiritual capacity it leadeth them, and we cannot be silent, but must draw the sword when conscience and when God demand it, and never sheath it until God's work is done. However, this rarely occurs; for the most part the Christian spends his sword's edge upon his own spiritual foes: and truly we have enough of these. What with pride, sloth, lust; what with the arch enemy of souls, and his insinuations and blasphemies; what with the lust of the eye, the pleasures of this world, and the pride of life; what with enemies who come upon us even from providence in the shape of temptations, arising out of our trials and our vocations,

we ought to carry our sword always drawn; and, above all, we should ever carry the shield of faith and take the weapon of all-prayer. The Christian is never to feel himself at ease so long as he is on this side Jordan. This is an enemy's land. Expect a foe behind every bush, look to hear the shot come whistling by, and each night adore almighty grace that you have not fallen a prey to your cruel and remorseless foes. The Christian is engaged throughout his whole life as a soldier—he is so called in Scripture—"A good soldier of Jesus Christ;" and if any of you take the trouble to write out the passages of Scripture in which the Christian is described as a soldier, and provision is made for his being armed, and directions given for his warfare, you will be surprised to find there are more of this character than concerning any other metaphor by which the Christian is described in the Word of God. His chief and main business seems to be, like his Master, to bear witness for the truth; "For this purpose was I born and sent into the world;" and though in himself a man of peace, yet he can say with his Master, "I came not to send peace but a sword;" for wherever he goes, he finds that his presence is the signal for war—war within him and war without him: he is a man of peace, and yet a man of war because a man of peace. The Christian is engaged in warfare with sin, Satan, error, and falsehood, and sometimes he is called to fight for erring friends.

Observe that this war is one *against powerful odds*. The four kings mentioned in this chapter were all great sovereigns. From what little we can glean from profane history, they appear to have been very mighty monarchs, and they must have been assisted by very valiant armies to have smitten the giants whose names are mentioned in the opening verses. They appear to have carried away the five kings of the plain with the greatest possible ease; yet here is Abram, who has little more than three hundred of his own armed servants at his call, and yet he ventures against the embattled thousands of the kings of nations. Such is the warfare of the Christian: he has to contend against foes far too many for him—he is like the worm that is to arise and thrash the mountain. He is little and despised, and if he measures his own strength he will find it to be perfect weakness; and yet, for all this, he anticipates a victory, and like Abram, hastens to the holy war.

Carefully notice, that as it is a battle of fearful odds, it is one *which is carried on in faith*. Abram did not venture to this fight with confidence in his own strength, or reliance upon his own bow, but he went in the name of the Lord of Hosts. Faith was Abram's continual comfort. Sometimes his faith failed, as it will in the best, but still the spirit of the man's life was a simple confidence upon God, whom he had not seen, but whose voice he cheerfully obeyed. The Christian is to carry on his warfare in faith. You will be vanquished, indeed, if you attempt it by any other method. Brethren, there is not a sin in your heart which will not master you if you seek to fight it by resolutions of your own; faith in the precious blood of Christ must win you the victory, and the world will laugh you to scorn if you assail it with any other weapons than such as Calvary will furnish you. "This is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith;" and if you ask faith what weapon she uses, her reply is, "They overcame through the

blood of the Lamb." Live near to Jesus Christ, rest upon the power of his atonement and the prevalence of his plea, and then go forward against every enemy without and every foe within, and you shall be more than a conqueror.

In this great battle, carried on by faith, Abram *had a right given him from God*, and the promise of God's presence virtually in that right. What business had Chedorlaomer to come unto Canaan? Had not Jehovah said to Abram, "All this land will I give unto thee?" Therefore he and his confederate monarchs were neither more nor less than intruders. For thirteen years they might have exercised sovereignty over the cities of the plain, but those cities and everything around them belonged virtually to Abram. It is true they would have laughed at the very idea of Abram's claiming the whole land of Canaan, but that claim was nevertheless valid in the court of heaven, and the patriarch by right divine was heir of all the land. Christian, you are, by virtue of a covenant made with you to drive out every sin, as an intruder. "Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." You are to drive out every error, for you are a servant of the truth and the truth alone has a right to live and a right to exist; and in fighting this lawful warfare, you may expect that the right arm of the Most High God, the possessor of heaven and earth will be bared that he may show himself strong on behalf of all those who are valiant for his truth and for his name. Fear not; the battle is not yours, but God's. You go not a warfare at your own charges; and though hell may roar as it will, and earth be all in arms, and your own heart may fail you, and your flesh when you take counsel with it may make you feel a coward, yet say, "In the name of God will I destroy them," go forward and conquer. "They compass me about like bees," said David, "yea, like bees they compass me about: but in the name of God will I destroy them;" and what David did you shall do through David's God.

Yet more, the Christian is engaged in a conflict in which he walks by faith and leans upon God; but yet it is a conflict in which *he uses all means*, calls in all lawful assistance, and exerts himself with all vigour and speed. Abram did not sit still and say, "Well, God will deliver Lot; he has promised to keep his servants as the apple of his eye"—Oh! no, that is not faith; that is foolish presumption. Abram did not take his time about it, and go marching leisurely after the foe, nor did he go without the assistance of his friends, Aner, and Eshcol, and Mamre. So the Christian, if he sees any method by which he may be assisted in overcoming sin or promoting truth, uses it with wisdom and discretion. He trusts in God as though he did nothing himself, and yet he does everything as if all depended upon him. He knows that good works cannot save him, and he equally knows that he is not saved unless there be some fruits of good works. He understands that the means of grace cannot of themselves convey grace to him, and yet at the same time he never despises them, but looks to find a blessing in the use of them. He understands that the ministry, and private prayer, and the searching of the Scriptures cannot save him, but he also understands that thus using helps which God has given him, and diligently pressing forward and setting a bold face before the foe, he is in the path of God's ordinances, and may expect to have God's help.

And do observe, dear friends, yet again, that Abram marching on thus with activity, and using discretion, by attacking his enemies at night rather than by day, *did not cease until he had gained a complete victory over them.* It was not enough to smite them at one corner of their host, nor merely to deliver Lot, but now he is come out against them he will win a sure and decisive victory. O beloved, you and I are never to sit still and say, "It is enough." Have I smitten my drunkenness? Have I overcome my blaspheming habits? Am I delivered from Sabbath breaking? Have I become honest and chaste? Yet this is not where I should stop. Have I sought to bring down my self-conceit, my pride, my sloth? It is well and good, but let me never be satisfied with any attainment short of absolute perfection. We do not believe we shall be perfect in this life, but we will never be satisfied until we are. "Onward," is the Christian's motto. As long as there is one sin which is not removed we will fight, and cry, and groan, and go to the cross concerning it. As long as there is one soul in this world unsaved, we will wrestle with the mighty One of Jacob to stretch out his hand to save it. So long as there remains one error upon earth, so long as we have a tongue to speak and God gives us grace, we will bear our witness against it. In this battle there is no holding our hand till the victory is wholly won; we must bring back the goods, and the men, and the women, and Lot, and the whole company; for the victory must be complete. More than conquerors must we be through him who hath loved us. Let us anticipate the time when it shall be so. O brethren, methinks I see the victors ascending in triumphal state the starry steeps, Christ at their head rides gloriously; he who loved them leads the van; the gates open to him as the great Conqueror who has led their captivity captive. Methinks I see the glad faces of all those soldiers of the cross as they enter the portals of eternal peace.

"I ask them whence their vict'ry came—
 They with united breath,
 Ascribe their conquest to the Lamb,
 Their triumph to his death."

See then, beloved, here you are this morning soldiers; you are to fight by faith in God. However tremendous the power of your adversaries, you are not to fear since God is with you. You are to fight, using discretion as your armour-bearer, but you are also to couple this with perseverance, continuing faithful to the end, for only those who overcome shall sit upon the throne of God for ever.

We have thus perhaps said enough concerning this first point, and now, may the Holy Spirit bedew with his holy influences while we talk of the second, for otherwise it will be only talk.

II. While engaged in such earnest spiritual contention, the believer may expect to SEE HIS LORD.

When Shadrach, Meshech, and Abed-nego, were fighting Christ's battles in the fiery furnace, then the Son of Man appeared unto them. As in the building of Jerusalem in troublous times, they had the sword in one hand and the trowel in the other; so our Lord Jesus Christ, while he teaches us to use the sword, takes care to edify and build us up in the faith at the same time. He understands that warriors require strengthen-

ing meat, and that especially when they are under stern conflict they need extraordinary comforts that their souls may be stayed and refreshed. *Why does Jesus Christ, as set forth here under the type of Melchizedek, appear unto his children in times of conflict?* Answer—He comes to them first, because they are weary. In every conflict which the child of God has to wage, it is not the private person who goeth to the warfare, it virtually is Christ fighting—Christ contending. It is a member of Christ's body labouring against Christ's enemy for the glory of the Head. Christ the Head has an intense feeling of sympathy with every member, no matter how humble. Since there is a vital union between Christ and every member, there is also an undying sympathy; and whenever, brother, thou contendest for the faith till thou growest weary, Jesus Christ will be sure to give thee some proof of his close communion with thee. The martyrs protest that they never had such communion with God anywhere as among the caverns of the hills, or the swamps of the woods, to which they were exiled for Christ; and that even on the rack, in extremity of torture, or even upon the gridiron in the heat of the fire—even there the sweet presence of Christ has been overpoweringly delightful to them, so that they almost lost the sense of pain. Thou, Lord, dost send a plenteous rain, whereby thou dost refresh thine heritage when it is weary! Spend your strength for God, brother, for when fainting seems inevitable, then shall come such a sweet renewing of your strength, that, like an eagle, you shall stretch your wings and mount aloft to commune with God in solitary joys. Christ, your Melchizedek, will meet you in your conflicts, if he never did before.

The King of Peace met the returning warrior for another reason. *Abram was probably flushed with victory*, and this is a very dangerous feeling to any child of God. When the seventy disciples returned to Christ they said, with evident exultation, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us;" but Jesus Christ sweetly and gently rebuked them by saying, "Nevertheless, rejoice not in this, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven." The true secret of a Christian's joy is not to be his conquest over sin or over error, but the person of his Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord knows that his people, if they are successful, even in spiritual warfare, when they have used the best of means and felt the best of motives, are nevertheless very liable to the intoxication of pride, and therefore he either sends "a thorn in the flesh," or else, what is better still, he comes himself. I am persuaded, beloved, that the best cure for pride is a sight of Christ. Oh! when your eyes see *him*, then your own loathsomeness, blackness, and deformity, are clearly revealed. I am fair until the sun ariseth—then am I black indeed. I think myself pure until I see *him* whiter than any fuller could make him, and then I fall down and cry, "Unclean, unclean, unclean!" "Now mine eye seeth thee," said Job, "wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Down go your flaunting pennons and your lofty plumes, when you have a sight of Christ. No humbler man than George Herbert—no humbler man than Samuel Rutherford—and these were men who lived close to Christ. Christ's presence is a cure-all. When Melchizedek comes, every spiritual disease flies before him. The Church at Laodicea was very far gone, but how did the Master propose to cure it? Here it is—"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my

voice, and open the door, I will come into him, and will sup with him." What, Lord, is this thy delightful treatment of thy sick Church? "Yes, my communion with thee, poor lukewarm Laodicea, will revive thee." Truly that is a most suggestive figure by which John describes the countenance of Christ; he says "His countenance was as the sun shining in his strength." So, Lord, it does not matter how dark I am, the moment thou dost show thy face, all must be light. This, I think, was the reason why the King of Righteousness met Abram, to turn away his thoughts from the tempting joys of victory, to his sure portion in the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth.

Yet again, was not this visit bestowed because Abram was *about to be tried in a yet more subtle manner than he had been before*? It is easier to fight Chedorlaomer, than to resist the King of Sodom. Joshua down in the plain never grew weary when he was fighting the Amalekites, but Moses on the mountain felt his hands grow heavy. Why? Because the more spiritual the exercise, the more aptness is there in us to grow weary in it; and so the more spiritual the temptation the more likelihood of our becoming a prey to it, and the more strength do we need to overcome it. That was a very subtle temptation to Lot, by the King of Sodom. Why it looked so right—perfectly right. Abram has brought back these captives: he has a right to the spoil; he ought, therefore, to take it. If he had done so, no one could blame him on ordinary rules, but then there is a higher rule for believers than for other men. Brethren, I contend that the common rules of morality are binding upon all, but that a supernaturally high rule of morality should regulate the Christian; that the Christian is not allowed to wink at an evil because he has educated his conscience not to think it so, but he shall so act that there shall not be any wrong in the action, upon the common judgment of any unbiassed spectator. He who is of the King's Council, must walk very daintily, lest he offend his Master. I tell you, from experience, that the nearer you come to Christ, and the more you have of communion with him, the more jealous you must be of yourself, or else, if other men escape the rod, you will not: you will have to smart for it behind the door, where another may not see nor understand your grief. Beloved, it is well to have communion with Christ, to prepare us against subtle temptations, for to feed us upon Melchizedek's bread and wine, is to make us more than a match for the King of Sodom. O Jesus! when I have seen thy face, my soul beholds not the dazzling beauties of earthly excellence. Brother, if ever thou hast seen Christ's face, that painted harlot, the world, will never win thy love again. Didst thou ever eat the pure white bread of heaven? Then the brown, gritty bread of earth will never suit you, but will break your teeth with gravel stones. You will never care to drink earth's sour and watery wine, if you have once been made to drink of the wines on the lees well refined—the spiced wine of Christ's pomegranate. If you want to be strengthened against the most subtle worldly temptations, cry, "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth: for thy love is better than wine;" and you may go forth to conflicts of every kind, more than a conqueror, through him that hath loved you.

Thus we have spoken upon the fact that Melchizedek met Abram,

and the reasons. Now, let us look a little more closely at what he did. *In what character did he meet Abram?* The reply is easy—he met him as one possessed of a royal priesthood.

Christ meets us, brethren, as a priest and as a king in all our battles. What a mercy it is that Christ visits us as *a priest*, for we never fight against sin without being in some measure partakers of it. I do not believe there ever was a controversy for truth upon which any gracious man, though engaged upon the right side, could look back without some regrets and some tears. I much believe that even Martin Luther or John Knox, when upon their dying beds, though never regretting that they contended earnestly for the faith, yet felt that while they were in the flesh, something of flesh mingled with all that they did. Thus it will be to the end, and even, when contending against our own sins and lusts, yet, beloved, our very repentance has something in it to be repented of, and our very flying to the cross has something in it of a lingering *from* the cross, and therefore something of evil. Jesus, all hail! How much I need to meet thee as a priest! And you, beloved, do you not feel that you need him too? Do you not, as you look upon Calvary and the flowing blood, confess that you need, in all spiritual conflicts, to meet Christ?

But Melchizedek was also *a king*, and truly thus we want to view our Lord whenever we are fighting his battles. “The Lord reigneth,” is perhaps one of the most comforting texts in the compass of God’s word to the contending Christian. “Ah!” says the poor soul, “I am trodden under foot of Satan, but rejoice not over me, O mine enemy: though I fall, yet shall I rise again, for the Lord reigneth.” Oh! that is our consolation when at any time we think we are routed, when we see our Church dismayed and our banner trailed in the mire, then we remember Jesus, for him hath God the Father exalted, “and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.” Hail! King of Righteousness and Peace, much do we need to meet thee! Come, mount thy glorious chariot, ride forth conquering and to conquer drawn by thy three white horses, meekness, truth and righteousness! Heaven adores thee, earth obeys thee, hell trembles at thy presence, gates of brass must burst at thy touch, and bars of iron snap at thy word! O king immortal, ride gloriously and let thy people behold thee and rejoice in thee. But we must *see* Christ, see him, by close communion with him. You cannot see him by my description. Melchizedek met Abram, and Jesus Christ must meet you; he must stop you on a sudden, when you least expect it, and reveal himself unto you as he doth not unto the world. Jacob before wrestling was met by hosts of angels at Mahanaim, but what are these when compared with the Lord himself? There is a high blessing in being met by angels—do not mistake me there—but oh! to be met by *the angel* of the covenant, the Michael the archangel, to be met by him, ah! what comfort is here! And will he meet *me*? Will he meet *you*? Yes, we can answer, he will, for we *have* met with him. “Mine eyes have seen the King in his beauty,” many of us can say, and our souls are exceedingly comforted and full of holy joy because we have beheld him as Priest and King.

The next enquiry is, *what did he do for him?* He brought him bread and wine, precisely setting forth what Jesus does, who brings us his flesh and his blood. Carnal people say, in order to understand Christ's words, that when you eat bread and drink wine at the Lord's table, there is his flesh in the bread, or that the bread is transubstantiated into flesh, and the same with the wine; but the spiritual mind understands that these emblems awaken the spiritual powers, and that then the spiritual powers—not the lips and the stomach, but the spiritual powers—do really and spiritually feed upon the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ, and so the Word is fulfilled: "Except ye eat my flesh and drink my blood, there is no life in you." I do not know that Christian people feed altogether on doctrine. I know that the truth of God is food, but believers get richer nourishment than even this affords. When I am very gloomy, I like to take down some work upon the high doctrines, God's sovereignty, election, perseverance, and I get comforted; but there are other times when I am brought very low, and that kind of food will not suit me. I am obliged then to turn to my Lord himself. There is, I believe, in times of conflict no food which can be the stay of an immortal soul except the Master himself—communion with him, a putting of the fingers into the print of the nails, and a thrusting of the hand into the side—this is the sovereign remedy for unbelief, and the best food for faith. His manifest presence is our noblest nutriment. When Christ reveals himself, then all grows calm and peaceful; but until we can get *him*, we still abide in darkness, and we see no light. The worshipper who came up to the temple could not live upon the brazen laver, nor the golden snuffers, nor even upon the cherubic emblems, he must needs partake with the priests of the lamb offered in sacrifice; and so the true food of the child of God is Jesus Christ himself—not so much ordinances and doctrines, which are only the utensils and the vestments, but Christ himself, the very Christ, made flesh for us, received with joy into our soul, and fed upon until, like Abram, we go on our way rejoicing. That is what the royal priest did for the patriarch.

Bear with me patiently while I remark *what Melchizedek said to him*. First he blessed him, and then he blessed God, and that is just what we need our Lord to do for us. We want our Lord Jesus Christ first *to bless us*. "Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth." We need a blessing upon our own persons and especially upon our own works. What are our works when we have done them all but futile vanity, until God comes to strengthen us? Beloved, you and I may contend for Christ until we are dumb, but not a soul that will see the light or know the truth by our witness of itself; we may go with tender hearts and seek to bring sinners to the cross of Christ, but we shall never bring a sinner unless God's own arm is revealed. We shall come back like the prophet, saying, "Who hath believed our report," and feeling that the arm of God hath not been revealed unto men. But when, on the other hand, the possessor of heaven and earth has blessed us, then our earthly substance is blessed and our earthly words are blessed, and then we get a heavenly blessing; heaven's rest and peace, heaven's omnipotence rests upon us, and in the glory of a heaven-given strength we go forth confident of victory. We

want a blessing from Christ. Ask it now, beloved, ask it now you who are weary with last week's fighting, you who can scarcely endure any longer by reason of your trials and troubles, say to him now, "Melchizedek, bless me! O Jesus, bless me now." Possessor of heaven and earth, forget not one of us, thy beloved ones, but give us a blessing.

Beloved brethren, Melchizedek did not stop there, but he fulfilled another part of his priestly office—*he blessed God*. Whenever we are singing here, when I am in right order, my soul takes wing and wants to fly to heaven; when we all sing with power and force there is a sweetness and grandeur about the song which we do not often meet with; yet I am always conscious that we cannot praise God as he deserves to be, and herein I bless the great Melchizedek that though *we* cannot bless God as he should be blessed, yet *he* can. Jesus Christ presents the praises of his saints before God as well as their prayers. He is the Intercessor, and while he has the vials full of odours sweet to present, he also presents the music of our harps; both our offerings come up accepted in the beloved. Now what say you, brethren, have you done anything this week that is of good repute? Has God given you any success? Dear sister, have you won any souls for Christ? I know you have. Dear brother, has God blessed you in any witness-bearing? Have you felt that God has been with you? Well now, come and lay your honours down at his feet; whatever they may be, put them *there*, and pray the great Melchizedek to take out of your heart every particle of self-glory and every atom of self-exaltation, and ask him to say for you in a higher sense than ever you can say it, "Blessed be the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth, who hath delivered mine enemies into mine hand." Thus you shall be glad that the great Melchizedek has met you.

I have talked thus, but truly one word from the lip of Christ will be worth ten thousand of mine; and if you have ever seen him, you will think me a very dauber when I try to paint him. If you get this day so much as ten minutes real fellowship with Jesus, you will wonder how it is, that I, if I know anything about him, could talk in this cold way. Go your way, brethren, and pray Melchizedek to meet you.

III. Lastly, and very briefly indeed, since our time is gone, when a wrestling believer is favoured with a sight of the great Melchizedek, voluntarily and yet necessarily he makes a new dedication of himself to God. You see Abram does not appear to delay a moment, but he gives to Melchizedek a tithe of all, by which he seemed to say, "I own the authority of my superior liege lord, to all that I am, and all that I have." There is one of our hymns which says—

"Hail, Melchizedek divine;
Thou, great High-Priest, shalt be mine;
All my powers before thee fall—
Take not tithe, but take them all."

And truly our holy faith deserves of us that we should give all to Christ. I would that some Christians, however, practised the rule of giving a tenth of their substance to the Lord's cause. The Lord's Church need never lack if you had a bag in which you stored up for Christ: when you gave anything, you would not feel it was giving of your own; your left hand would not know what your right hand did, for you would be taking out of the Lord's stock which you had already consecrated to the Lord's cause. Not less than one-tenth should be the Lord's portion, especially with those who have a competence; and more than this, methinks, should be expected of those who have wealth. But there is no *rule* binding with iron force upon you, for we are not under *law* in Christ's Church, but under *grace*, and grace will prompt you to do more than law might suggest; but certainly the Christian should reckon himself to be not his own, and that he has nothing to retain for his own private account. I pray God if I have a drop of blood in my body which is not his, to let it bleed away; and if there be one hair in my head which is not consecrated to him, I would have it plucked out, for it must be the devil's drop of blood and the devil's hair. It belongs to either one or the other: if not to God, then to Satan. No, we must, brethren, have no division of ourselves, no living unto this world and unto God too. Mark Anthony yoked two lions together, and drove them through the streets of Rome: they do strange things at Rome, and there are many people who can yoke two lions together, and drive towards Rome; but you will never be able to yoke the lion of the tribe of Judah and the lion of the pit together—they are at deadly antagonism, and Christ will not have you for his servants if you seek to serve two masters. I know that any talk of mine here will be in vain, but if, beloved, you should see Christ, and have communion with him, your consecration to him will be a matter of course. I will suppose that this afternoon one of you should sit down in your arm chair, and, as you are sitting there, you will be thinking, "How little I have been giving of late to the cause of Christ! How seldom I have opened my mouth for him!" Perhaps you will think, "I have got on in the world too, but I really cannot afford it! My expenses are so great!" Suppose the Lord Jesus Christ should come into the room with those pierced hands and bleeding feet—suppose he were to remind you of what he has done for you, how he visited you in your low estate, when your heart was breaking under a sense of sin, you would not then tell him you could not afford to give to his cause. Suppose our Lord Jesus Christ should look you in the face and say to you, "I have done all this for you. What wilt thou do for me?" What would be your answer? Why you would say, "Take it all, my Master,

take it all, all that I am, and all that I have shall be for ever thine." Or, if you felt niggardly—supposing he should say to you, "If you will never ask anything of me, I will never take anything from you." Would you agree to that? No, but as you still will have immense demands to make upon his liberality, cease not still to give your whole spirit, soul and body, as a whole burnt-offering unto God. As Abram did before Melchizedek so do you in the presence of Christ, own that you are his, and give yourself to him.

My dear brethren, I pray God that this may stir you up to seek a high grade of piety and to live in daily communion with a living Saviour, and he will bless and keep you.

But there are some of you who are not like Abram. You need not hope yet to see Melchizedek. There are some of you strangers, far off. Ah! I may rather compare you to the men of Sodom. Christ has done something for you as Abram did for Sodom. You know it was only for the sake of Lot that he brought them back, but he did bring them all back, and for the sake of Lot gave a respite to them all; although a few years after they had grown so wicked that they were all destroyed. My Master has given a respite to free you all. While his great work was the salvation of his own chosen, yet he has spared you all in the land of the living. Take heed lest you do as did the men of Sodom, for then a hail more fiery, a destruction more terrible must come upon you, seeing that you turn not aside from your evil ways, nor seek his face. Trust Christ, and you are saved; believe in him, and your sins are forgiven; but if you refuse, beware, lest that come upon you which is written in the prophets, "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish!" The Master now send us away with his benediction. Amen.