

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

CHARIOTS OF IRON.

A Sermon

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“And the Lord was with Judah; and he drave out the inhabitants of the mountain; but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron. And they gave Hebron unto Caleb, as Moses said: and he expelled thence the three sons of Anak.”—Judges i. 19, 20.

WE frequently use Canaan as a type of heaven, and the Jordan, through which Israel passed, as a symbol of death. Dr. Watts has taught us to sing,—

“Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood
Stand dress’d in living green;
So to the Jews old Canaan stood,
While Jordan roll’d between.

“Could we but climb where Moses stood,
And view the landscape o’er,
Not Jordan’s stream, nor death’s cold flood,
Should fright us from the shore!”

This is thoroughly poetical, and may be made exceedingly instructive; but it is not quite accurate, if we undertake a careful consideration of the whole matter. If the New Testament is to expound the Old, then there is another lesson to be learned from the land which flowed with milk and honey. “We that have believed do enter into rest;” that is to say, all believers in Christ have crossed the Jordan, and have come into the promised rest. The covenant is fulfilled to them already in a great measure; they are living under Messiah’s sway within the bounds of his kingdom, and every precious thing which God promised them is theirs. They dwell in the “land which the Lord thinketh upon”: “Thy land, O Immanuel!” The type, therefore, may best set forth the case of the instructed and advanced believer who has passed through the first or wilderness stage of his life, and has now come into a higher condition, actually enjoying spiritual privileges and sitting together with Christ in the heavenly places. To him, however, this condition of exalted privilege is not a state of undisturbed repose: on the contrary, he wars a constant warfare, wrestling with spiritual wickednesses. The Canaanite is in possession, and the Canaanite is to be driven out. Our natural tendencies and corruptions, our sinful habits and lustings, and

the warping and bending of our spirit towards evil—all this has to be overcome; and we shall not possess the land, so as to enjoy undivided tranquillity until sin is utterly exterminated. What Joshua could not do our Lord Jesus shall fully accomplish; the enemy within shall be rooted out, and then shall dawn the day of our joy and peace, when we shall sit every man under his own vine and fig-tree, and none shall make us afraid. That perfect victory shall be ours; but not yet.

Taking this as the truth which we shall illustrate by our text, we notice that the work of Israel was to drive out and utterly to exterminate those condemned races which were in possession of Canaan. One tribe was chosen to lead the van in the fierce campaign. Joshua, their heroic leader, was gone: who should lead the way? The power of the Canaanites in his day had been broken, but now that he was dead the old races began to look up again, even as we oftentimes find our sins which we thought were all dead suddenly finding fresh courage, and attempting to set up their empire once more. Then Israel went to God and enquired, "Who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first, to fight against them? And the Lord said, Judah shall go up: behold, I have delivered the land into his hand."

The tribe of Judah, then, was commissioned to lead the way, and we see three things in its conduct of the enterprise. First, *the Lord's power was trusted and magnified*, for "the Lord was with Judah, and Judah drove out the inhabitants of the mountain." Secondly, by this very tribe, this right royal tribe, *the Lord's power was distrusted, and therefore restrained*; for "Judah could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron." Yet, as if to rebuke them, they had a singular incident set before them for the vindication of God's power, and of that we read in the twentieth verse. Caleb, that grand old man, who still lived on, the sole survivor of all who came out of Egypt, had obtained Hebron as his portion, and he went up in his old age, when his bones were sore and set, and slew the three sons of Anak, even three mighty giants, and took possession of their city. In this way *the Lord's power was trusted and vindicated* from the slur which Judah had brought upon it.

I. Let us think upon our first head, which is, that by the tribe of Judah **THE LORD'S POWER WAS TRUSTED AND MAGNIFIED**. "The Lord was with Judah." Oh that the Holy Ghost may be with us!

The people had wisely consulted their God, and it fell to Judah's lot, by divine appointment, to lead the van. In that work the tribe prospered. Read the chapter when you are at home, and you will observe a series of *great victories*. "Judah went up; and the Lord delivered the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand: and they slew of them in Bezek ten thousand men. And they found Adoni-bezek in Bezek: and they fought against him, and they slew the Canaanites and the Perizzites. But Adoni-bezek fled; and they pursued after him, and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and his great toes. And Adoni-bezek said, Threescore and ten kings, having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table: as I have done, so God hath requited me." Thus they overcame the monarch who had domineered over the land, and had been a terror to all the little kings. Next, the tribe attacked Jerusalem, and Hebron, and Debir, and Hormah. Soon

afterwards they fell upon the Philistines, who were men of war, and they took Gaza, Askelon, and Ekron with the coasts thereof. The Lord God in this way had proved to Judah, and to all Israel, what he could do, and it would have been wise on their part to have put unlimited trust in him; then had they gone forward conquering and to conquer. Has not the Lord done the same with those of us who have believed in him? What has your experience been, my brother? I speak not to men of the world, nor to those who have just begun the divine life; but I speak to those of you who have experience of the things of God, and who have lived the life of faith for years. Has not God revealed his power in you? Do you not possess infallible proofs of it which you would scarcely like to tell, for they are as secret as they are sacred? Though you would never mention them in a mixed audience, lest you should cast your pearls where they would not be appreciated, yet they are laid up in your memories in the form of remarkable deliverances, special comforts, and singular mercies, for which to this day you cannot account upon any other theory than that the Lord God omnipotent put forth his hand and specially helped you in your hour of need. Do not forget these things. If the Lord's power be proved to your own soul by God himself, then it is proved indeed. I care very little for those evidences of the existence of a God which are fashioned for us by learned men—the *à priori* argument, the argument from analogy, and all the rest. I have seen an end to them in my own doubts and fears. The most convincing evidence is found in another kind of reasoning, such as that which conquers all doubt by actual experience. When God has come to our soul, and drawn nigh to us in the hour of our distress, we have needed no further argument. When he has said "Peace" to our troubled spirit, and stilled its raging, then have we received conclusive evidence of his power. When he has lifted us up into ecstasy, and filled us with joy unspeakable and full of glory, we have laid up these evidences in our record-house, and our assurance has grown doubly sure. If we have not tied a bit of red tape round these briefs, and hidden them away in our pigeon-holes, we have taken better care of them than that; for we have locked them up in the inner chambers of our heart. Mary pondered these things in her heart, and we have done the same. God's goodness was thus proved to Judah, even as it has been to many of us in our degree: proven as clearly as if it had been worked out mathematically, like a problem in Euclid.

But the Lord had also proved his power to Judah in *numerous victories*. The victories which he gave to them were singular and remarkable, even when not miraculous; and there were many of them. They had gone from city to city, and smitten all their foes. It seemed as if God had said to Judah, as he said to Joshua, "No man shall be able to stand against thee all the days of thy life." Now, repeated facts go to strengthen the inference drawn from former fact. According to the best practical philosophy, which is the inductive, you note a fact, and then the inference from it is probable: you note another fact, and the inference is more probable. You get six, seven, eight, ten, twenty similar facts, and your deduction becomes more and more nearly certain. But when these facts come thick as hailstones, when they become as many as the drops of dew, or the beams of light, then the inference

may be regarded as absolutely sure. When your life is crowded with displays of God's power, with you, for you, and in you, then that power cannot be doubted. It is impossible to argue a Christian out of the grounds of his faith when he has had long dealings with God. There! You cavillers may boast that you can disprove a doctrine, if you like. I care nothing for your sophisms. You cannot disprove it to me. You can carp against the Old Testament or the New, if you like. I am sorry for you, for it is all clear enough to me; but I am not going to get into a great heat over it in order to combat you. It is not so very important what you prove, or do not prove, about the Books, because the matter of fact still remains untouched. Those of us who have lived in the light of God's countenance, and have spoken with him as a man speaks with his friend, and have had replies from him, not once, nor twice, nor in years gone by alone, but daily and continually; we, I say, are not to be moved from our belief. We have another life into which a stranger cannot intrude, and a converse with God which seems ridiculous only to those who never knew it, for it is sublime as sublimity itself, to those who every day enjoy it; and having such a life, it furnishes us with evidence which does not go to be debated: we believe, and are sure. Disprove our sanity, and you have done something; only let me tell you that even then we shall remain sane enough to hold to what we do hold, and shall not be so mad as to join the infidel ranks. We are satisfied to be fools if to be fools means to see God. We are satisfied to know nothing about the "culture" and the "thought" of this grand century, if that involves being far off from the Eternal Lord, and ceasing to see his hand in nature, in providence, and in grace. We are content if we may but know him, whom to know is life eternal.

Beloved brethren, I may say of many here present that God has proven his power and goodness to you by such overwhelming proofs that doubt, in your case, would be a grievous piece of folly and sin. God had especially favoured Judah with remarkable assistance in what I may call "*brotherly action*." "Judah said unto Simeon his brother, Come up with me into my lot, that we may fight against the Canaanites; and I likewise will go with thee into thy lot. So Simeon went with him." (See verse 3.) In communion with each other these tribes had further proof of God's power, for he gave them the necks of their enemies. We also can narrate wonderful displays of God's power and grace when we have had fellowship one with another in holy service. Our choicest experiences have been enjoyed in Christian society. When the disciples were met together, the doors being shut, then Jesus came into the midst of them, and said unto them, "Peace be unto you." The Lord is gracious to us when we are having sympathy with his poor and struggling people, and entering into a mutual covenant that we will stand by each other and help each other in the midst of an ungodly world. The Lord is pleased with brotherly love, and there he commands the blessing to rest as the dews on Hermon. If I could forget the major part of my own personal experience at home, yet can I never forget the heavenly seasons spent in the Tabernacle with my beloved ones. In the prayer-meetings, have not our hearts burned within us? At the banqueting-table of celestial love, at the Lord's Supper, to which

we delight to come every Lord's-day, have we not attained a nether heaven? Have we not passed into the vestibule of God's own house in glory, and felt that it needed scarce the rending of the thinnest piece of tissue to let us actually stand in the unveiled presence of God? Yes, God has been with us, and then we have had proofs enough of his power and love. When together we have gone forth to battle, to struggle against the sin of the age, to bear testimony for neglected truth, to bring our wandering brethren back, or to reclaim fallen sisters to the faith of Jesus, have we not obtained in that fraternal action grand proofs of the Master's power to bless and save? I know that we have. There let it stand, and let it witness against us if we in future yield to unbelief.

Yet further, brethren, it so happened that to Judah God gave great proofs of his presence and power by raising up, here and there, a man in their midst who performed *heroic deeds*. I will not speak of Caleb, for you will tell me, "Ah, he was an old, old man, and belonged to another generation. He was just going off the scene; we do not wonder that he did great things." Ay, but he had a nephew, one Othniel, a young man as yet unmarried, and when Caleb said, "He that smiteth Kirjath-sepher, and taketh it, to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife," his nephew Othniel was the man for the city and the bride. The young hero stood forward, and went up to the fortress, and took the city, and passed it over to his uncle's hands, and received the promised reward. Oh yes, and we have seen raised up—and shall see it more and more—young heroes who have been self-denying, self-distrustful, inconsiderate of themselves, who have been willing for Christ's sake to be anything or nothing, and God has been with them, and the power of the Most High has rested upon them. Has not unbelief been rebuked when we have been compelled to say, "Instead of the fathers shall be the children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth"? This has been a blessed token of God's presence and power. I know how it is with those who have been long in the church: they wonder what is to become of it when the old folks die. "When the pastor is gone, what shall we do then?" Wait till it happens, brothers: wait till it happens; and then you shall see that he who could find one servant can find another. The Lord was never short of instruments yet, and he never will be. You and I, you know, if we wear out one tool, must wait till we send to the shop for a second; but the Lord grows new tools out of old ones. New springs are born out of the decays of the old year's autumn. I have seen a young tree growing out of the roots of the old one, and fresh leaves unfold where those of last year had once been. In our advancing years we become better recruiting-sergeants, and so enlist our own successors. You who are now getting grey once wondered what would become of the cause of God when the guide of your youth fell asleep in Jesus; but the immortal cause has survived the death of the standard-bearer. We never hear of that good man now: indeed, he does not seem to have been so important as you thought. God will find messengers as long as he has errands. When certain of us have gone home, you young people will be leading in our stead, and you will say, "I recollect the old gentleman. We did value his ministry, and we could not think what we

should do without him; but we have done a deal better without him than ever we did with him, for God in his infinite mercy has raised up a worthy successor." Wherefore be of good courage, and let what you have seen as to the past be to you a prophecy of God's goodness in the future. Caleb shall be gathered to his fathers, but Othniel shall follow him, who shall be as brave as he.

The reason why the men of Judah were successful was because they had *full confidence in God*. Up to a certain point Judah relied upon God. Jehovah had bidden them to lead the way, and they led the way. He had conducted them from city to city, and they went, not doubting that God would be with them; and so success attended them, for they leaned upon the Lord. Thus shall it be with us, for it is written—"According to your faith be it unto you." The Lord will not fall short of the measure: let us not make the measure short. Yet this is where we too frequently fail; for our faith is such a poor piece of business. We scarcely trust God as well as we trust a generous man; and when God does a great thing for his people they say one to another, "Is it not surprising? Is it not wonderful?" Many are amazed that God should keep his word; so that, when he answers prayer, they exclaim, "What a marvellous thing!" Is it, then, a marvel for God to be true? for God to keep his promise? I grant you that there is a side of it which for ever must be marvellous; but still I fear that with the allowable marvel there is often mixed such a degree of unbelief that the wonderment is not so much of admiring gratitude as astonished unbelief. For God to hear prayer is as natural as for a cause to produce an effect. There is as much, and as certain, and as infallible a connection between prayer that is wrought in us by the Holy Ghost and the result of that prayer as there is between force in the steam engine and the motion of the train. Instead of the power of prayer being a mere fiction, it is the most practical and certain of all the forces that are extant this side of the eternal throne. God works more by prayer than by anything else, and if we would but enlarge the channel through which his mighty power would flow, by having more faith and more confidence in prayer, we should see greater things than these.

II. Now I come to the painful but important subject of **THE LORD'S POWER RESTRAINED BECAUSE DISTRUSTED**.

The men of Judah could drive out the inhabitants of the mountain, but they could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron. Some of our more flippant infidels have asserted that this verse says that *the Lord* could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley; yet the antecedent is not God at all, but Judah. It is Judah that could not drive them out. "Well," say they, "but God was with Judah, and they did drive out the people of the mountain: why could they not drive out the people of the plain by the same power?" This is the hinge of the matter. They did not conquer the men of the iron chariots, because God in that business was not with them. As far as their faith went, so far God kept touch with them, and they could do anything and everything; but when they despondingly thought that they could not drive out the inhabitants of the wide valleys, then they failed utterly. They were afraid because of the

chariots, which had poles between the horses armed with lances which cut their way through the crowd, and the axles of the wheels were fitted with great scythes: these inventions were novel, and caused a panic, and therefore the men of Judah lost their faith in God, and so became weak and cowardly. They said, "It is of no use; we cannot meet these terrible machines"; and therefore they did not pray, or make an attempt to meet the foe. They could not drive out the people. Of course they could not. If they had exhibited the same faith about the chariots of iron as about the hill-men, the chariots of iron would have been no better than chariots of straw, for the Lord "breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder, and burneth the chariot in the fire." If they had believed in God, and gone forth in his name, the horses would soon have fled, as indeed they did when God gave his people faith. When Barak led the way with Deborah, then they smote Jabin, who had nine hundred chariots of iron. They fled; they fled; they hasted away, for the Lord was with Barak, and gave them up to him as chaff to the whirlwind. God would have been with Judah if Judah had displayed faith; but, having no faith, they could not rout the chariots of iron.

Their faith was imperfect. *They retained too much confidence in themselves*, mark that; for, if their confidence had been in God alone, these chariots of iron would have been ciphers in the calculation. If God has to give the victory, then chariots of iron or chariots of fire are no item at all against an omnipotent God. They evidently thought that there was somewhat in themselves; for their power went as far as smiting the men of the hills, but not so far as attacking the cavalry in the open plain where there was room for them to rush to and fro. Now, that is your weakness and mine. We tacitly imply that God can help us up to a certain point. Does not that mean that we can help ourselves up to that point? Being interpreted, the belief conceals a measure of self-trust; and the next akin to self-trust is distrust. If you have passed out of yourself, where have you entered now? Into the infinite. The man who has reached the infinite needs not to reckon any longer. It was of no use for Noah to keep a log of his vessel when there remained no shore: when it was all sea, it did not matter to him where he drifted. And so when you once get right away from self there are no limits. God is unbounded: therefore trust him without stint. Act like Samson, the strong, because the childlike, hero. If there is a Philistine to meet, he is ready for him. There are two of them: he is quite ready for both. There are twenty of them: it makes no difference. A thousand of them are before him. All right, there are only the more for the hero to kill, for he will slay every mother's son of them, and pile up their carcasses heaps upon heaps. Numbers do not matter. "But, Samson, if you are to do this deed, you must wield a good Damascus blade." "Yes," says he, "if I am to do it, of course I must; but if the Lord is to do it, the jawbone of an ass will suffice." It made no difference to him when he had thrown himself simply and nakedly upon God whether foes were few or many, whether weapons were fit or feeble. Herein is the failure of our faith, if it rests not in God's bare arm. See this round world, how steadily it turns! how smoothly it moves along in its predestinated course! Why? Because

God has hung it upon nothing, and God's own will directs it. Suppose it were hung on a chain: would it be any the more secure? The strength of the chain would come from God, and it is better to have the power without the chain. Though a saint is sustained by nothing but the power of God, all the devils in hell cannot stir him. The bare arm of God is the source of all power.

Next, the imperfection of their faith lay in this, as it may do in yours, my brethren,—that *they believed one promise of God and did not believe another*. There is a kind of faith which is strong in one direction, but utter weakness if tried in other ways. It is curious that persons generally pick out the easiest promises to believe, while those which are greater, and therefore are the more godlike, they cannot believe. Judah believed in smiting the hill-men, because he thought such warfare easy; but as to overcoming the cavalry with their chariots of iron, that was difficult, and so he did not believe up to that mark. Beware of being pickers and choosers of God's promises. You who are traders know that customers will turn all your stock over, and keep on picking over packet after packet, and never buy anything at the end. Does this please you? When people pick the promises over they say—"That one? No, I cannot receive that." When they do believe a promise, it is the smallest in the book. Oh! for a faith that takes the promises in the bulk, and knows nothing of choosing or refusing. Whatsoever God has promised he is able also to perform; and if the promise be but suitable to my case, I am to grasp it and expect to see it fulfilled. Some believe God at one time and not at another. Do you not find that you believe the Lord a good deal on Thursday nights after a sermon? How about Friday night? Ah! that is rather different. I have known friends who are wonderful believers on Sunday. They go home singing—

"Let the earth's old pillars shake
And all the wheels of nature break;
Our steady souls shall fear no more
Than solid rocks when billows roar."

You make a bad debt on Monday: how do you feel over it? Not quite so much like a pillar, I daresay, but rather more like the thistle-down that is blown with the wind. Much faith is temporary. It is not unlike the faith mentioned in *Æsop's* fable when the stag stood looking into the water at his branching antlers, and tossing his head with defiance. "Why," said he, "am I afraid of the hounds? A dog come near me? Impossible! If the hound does but see my horns he will fear death. I shall rip him up or dash him in pieces. I will let the pack see what I am made of." Just then there was heard a bark, and away went the stag like lightning, as terrified as ever. How like to us. We appear to be so grandly strong, so quietly believing; yet the first trouble that comes scatters our courage. That is the reason why Judah could not drive out the dwellers in the plain: he heard the rushing of those chariots of iron, and his heart failed him.

There was a further reason for failure arising out of this imperfection of their faith: they could not conquer the chariots of iron, because, first, *they did not try*. The Hebrew does not say that they *could not* drive them out. What the Hebrew says is that they *did not* drive

them out. Some things we cannot do because we never make the attempt. I wish we had among Christian workers the spirit of the Suffolk lad who was brought up in court to be examined by an overbearing lawyer. The lawyer roughly said to him, "Hodge, can you read Greek?" "I don't know, sir," said he. "Well, fetch a Greek book," said the lawyer, and showing the lad a passage he said to him, "Can you read that?" "No." "Then why did you not say that you could not?" "Because I never say I cannot do a thing till I have tried it." If that spirit were in Christian people we should achieve great things; but we set down such and such a thing as manifestly beyond our power, and, silently, we whisper to ourselves, "therefore beyond God's power," and so we let it alone. No chariots of iron will be driven out if we dare not make the attempt.

Next, I suspect that they did not drive them out because *they were idle*. If cavalry were to be dealt with, Judah must bestir himself. If chariots of iron were to be defeated they must enter upon an arduous campaign; and so, taking counsel of their fears and their idleness, they said, "Let us not venture on the conflict." There are many things that Christ's church is unable to do because it is too lazy. "What," say you, "do you call us lazy?" No, brethren, I will not do anything of the sort. If any of you should happen to call yourselves so it will spare me the trouble. I am afraid that I should have to upbraid certain ministers for being indolent in God's work, and I fear that many others of God's servants are none too diligent. Idleness refuses to sound the trumpet for the battle, and the fight never comes on, and therefore the enemy is not driven out.

Then, again, they were not at all anxious to meet the men who manned those chariots, for *they were afraid*. These men of Judah were cowards in the presence of chariots of iron, and what can a coward do? He is great at running away. They say that he "may live to fight another day." Not he: he will live, but he will not live to fight, depend upon it, any more another day than he does to-day. His heart is in his heels, and he will show his foeman his back whenever the fight is hot. We must cry mightily to God to deliver us from cowardice, and then we shall accomplish what now we think impossible.

Dear friends, *there was no excuse for this* on the part of Judah, as there is really no excuse for us when we think any part of God's work to be too difficult for us,—for, recollect, there was a *special promise* made about this very case. Kindly look at the twentieth chapter of the Book of Deuteronomy, at the first verse, and you will see how the Lord says, "When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses, and chariots, be not afraid of them: for the Lord thy God is with thee." If there be a special promise made to meet an emergency, who are we that we should be cast down by the difficulty? Besides that, they received a *special commission*. Read the second verse of the chapter from which our text is taken—"The Lord said, Judah shall go up: behold, I have delivered the land into his hand." Iron chariots or no chariots, God had delivered the country into their hand. Besides that, their God had done greater deeds than this: he had divided the Red Sea, and drowned the chivalry of Egypt; he had divided the Jordan into halves and led his people through the river dry-shod; and he

had made the walls of Jericho to fall flat to the ground. Why then was he distrusted because of those wretched chariots of iron?

Come then, brothers and sisters, have you got into a cleft stick in the matter of your personal affairs; and are you saying to-night, "I cannot pray about it: I cannot trust God about it"? Is that right? Look your Bibles up, and see whether there be not a promise exactly suited to your singular condition. Look back upon your own experience and see whether God has not done already for you and others of his people a greater thing than your present trial requires. Why will you say that you cannot drive out the chariots of iron? Be of good courage, and go forward. God is able to deliver you; therefore fear not. He will supply your need; be not dismayed. Perhaps some holy work for God is your difficulty. You have done something already for which you praise God, and now a new work is laid at your door, of which you say, "No, I cannot undertake it: I do not feel at all equal to it." What! Not if the Almighty Lord has said, "I will be with thee"? Do you answer, "I could do almost anything, but not that"? Are you sure, my brother, that you could do almost anything? Do you not think that, if another task were set before you, it would be equally hard to you? If God commands, is it right to reason why, or even to ask a question? Let us get at the work, my brethren; and the greater the danger, the greater the labour, the greater the difficulty, so much the more fully let us cast ourselves upon our God, and give to him the glory of the deed when the work is done. You know not what you can do; you are omnipotent if girt about with God's omnipotence; you are wise if God teaches you, strong if God upholds you. The capacities which lie within a man are greater than he knows, and the capacities with which God can endow a man are greater than he dreams. Therefore forward, in the name of the Most High!

An unconverted person is here who has been thinking of coming to Christ, but he says: "I cannot give up all my sins. One of them I must retain: all the rest I can leave, but that one is invincible, for it has chariots of iron. I cannot drive it out." That sin must die, or you will perish by it. Depend upon it, that sin which you would save from slaughter will slaughter you. "But I am in such a strange connection, and there are so many peculiar circumstances about my case." Yes, I know; peculiar circumstances surround all men that go to hell, but they do not quench the fire for them. "But, sir, we must live." Must you? I see no necessity for that in my own case. I know that I must serve God; but whether I live or not is a secondary matter. It is infinitely better that we should die than do wrong. This necessity of living is not quite so clear as people suppose. Why must you live? The martyrs did not. They felt that they must testify for Christ and his truth, and they gloried to die sooner than to do aught that was wrong. You will not perhaps be brought to that, but you ought to be ready for it. Do not be in such a fever about this poor life. Is not the soul better than the body? "Yes, sir, but I cannot explain my difficulty." No; and do not try. Turn the sin out. That is the only thing to do with it; and the more you love it, the more speedily should you turn it out, for it evidently lies near your heart, where it can do you great mischief. "Well, it is not one of the grosser sins." No; it

is one of those respectable sins which are so hard to get rid of. You must drive it out. I notice that if anybody picks my pocket it is sure to be a respectable-looking person. If a man is a rogue he is sure to look like an honest man, to lead people to trust him. Sin must be driven out, even though it has a chariot of iron. Certain Christians make up their minds that certain sins must be tolerated in their cases. I know one who has constitutionally a fiery temper, and so, whenever he gets into a towering passion, he cries, "I cannot help it: I am so constituted." Instead of weeping before God, and vowing, "I will master this passion: God is omnipotent, and he can make my temper a reasonable one"—instead of that, he says that everything else can be conquered in him, but not this sin, for it is constitutional. So have I known persons to be miserly and mean. The grace of God has done everything for them except making them give away a shilling, and they suppose that they are to go to heaven with their covetous nature, as if the Lord would let such people in there. Selfishness is put down by them as being one of the sins that have chariots of iron, which they cannot overcome. "You know that we all have our besetments," says one. What do you mean by that? Some sin that you often fall into? Do you call that a besetting sin? If I were to walk to-night across Clapham Common, and half-a-dozen men stopped me, I should say that I was beset; but if at an appointed place a party met me regularly, I should not say that I was beset. And so, the sin which a man often indulges in is not his besetting sin: it is his favourite sin, a sin that will be his ruin. A besetting sin is one which forces itself upon a man, and ere he can be on his guard it seizes him by the throat and throws him down. We must be watchful, so that the next time the temptation comes we may escape from it. Let us make war on the evil, and say, "It is no use your attacking me: I will attack and overcome *you* by faith in Jesus Christ." The fact is, brothers and sisters, we must tolerate no sin in ourselves; if we make excuses for it in our brethren, well and good; but let us never make or accept an excuse for ourselves. Sin in us is ten times worse sin than in others. If an unconverted man sins it is bad enough; but when a man has tasted of the good word of grace, and has leaned his head on Christ's bosom, and then falls into sin, what excuse can be offered for him? None. Let us weep tears of blood because we thus offend. We will yet vanquish the chariots of iron. We will throw down the gauntlet to-night, and in the name of God we will destroy them.

III. To close. Let us see THE LORD'S POWER VINDICATED. Just at that time brave old Caleb, leaning on his staff, went up to Hebron. When he was a younger man Moses sent him as a spy, and when he was upon that business he happened to come near to Hebron, and there he saw three tremendous fellows of the race of the giants; I suppose they were from eight to ten or twelve feet high. He saw them, and those that were with him were afraid. They said, "We were as grasshoppers in their sight." But Caleb was not a bit afraid. He said, "God is not with them, and they will be easily overthrown." When they came into the land forty years after, Caleb did not ask for his city; but as an unselfish man, he fought to win cities for others. When that was done he said, "Hebron was given to me. I must go and conquer it; and

the giants that I saw years ago, I dare say, have not grown much shorter; I must cut them down." Away he went, and it proved as he had said; in his hale old age he was able to slay those three sons of Anak, and to take possession of their city.

I could tell you of holy women, sick and infirm, scarcely able to leave their beds, who are doing work which, to some strong Christians, seems too hard to attempt. Have I not seen old men doing for the Lord in their feebleness that which young men have declined? Could I not tell you of some with one talent—certainly no more—who are bringing in a splendid revenue of glory to their Lord and Master, while you fine young fellows with ten talents have wrapped them all in a napkin and hid them in the earth? I wish that I could shame myself, and shame every worker here, into enterprises that would astonish unbelievers. God help us to do that which seems impossible. Let men be provoked to charge us with fanaticism. God bless the fanaticism which, being translated, means nothing but a true faith in the living God.

May we be helped to trust the Lord as he ought to be trusted, and march on till we drive out all his enemies despite their chariots of iron, that unto God may be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—Psalm lxxviii. 10—59.

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK,"—63 (Song III.);
106 (Part II.); 37 (Song II.)

Mentone, November 18.

DEAR READERS OF THE SERMONS,

The preacher is resting awhile; but he hopes the sermons will be none the less acceptable from week to week, for they are as carefully prepared for the press as if they were just delivered. May repose give to my mind renewed force, and may the Spirit of God sanctify that force to the noblest ends. Brethren, pray for me. I live as I am loved of the people of God. My life is dedicated to the proclamation of the everlasting gospel of the grace of God: pray that the truth may be mighty and prevail among all classes of the community. Puritanism has been spoken of with a sneer; may we live to see it the leading power in Christendom. The doctrines of grace shall come to the front again if only we exhibit the grace of the doctrine.

I should be very grateful if friends who value the sermons would introduce them to others. The more widely the seed is scattered the greater harvest we may hope to reap. To God I commend all my helpers.

Yours to serve,

C. H. SPURGEON.