

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

THE PERPETUITY OF THE GOSPEL.

A Sermon

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DELIVERED BY

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"Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away."—Luke xxi. 33.

LAST Lord's-day morning,* I preached upon the perpetuity of the law of God, basing my remarks upon our Lord's words, "For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." To-night, I am not going to speak of the law, but of the gospel; and, by the term, "the gospel," I mean the summary of all that our Lord Jesus Christ spoke when he was here below. Of that gospel it may be said, as he himself said of the law, that not one jot or tittle of it shall pass away till all be fulfilled. The gospel of Christ is not merely the gospel of yesterday; but, like Christ himself, it is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." It is not a gospel simply for this age, or for some other age, a gospel which shall, by-and-by, be worn out and cast aside; but when yon blue heavens shall be folded up, like a worn-out vestment, still shall the gospel be as powerful as ever. "Heaven and earth shall pass away," says our Lord, "but my words shall not pass away."

I. Without further preface, I remark, first, that THE WORDS OF JESUS MUST STAND, COME WHAT MAY. If you accept the testimony of Christ concerning his own words,—and you who are his followers will not question anything that he says,—then this is certain, that the words of Jesus must stand for ever, come what may.

The major change, of heaven and earth passing away, includes all lesser changes; but whatever alteration may come before the last great change, Christ's words shall still stand. The world gets more civilized;—so I am told, though, when I read the newspapers, I am not quite sure of it. The world gets more intelligent;—so I am told, though, when I read the magazines,—I mean, the first-class quarterlies,—I am not certain that it is so, for, in that direction, the

* See *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, No. 1,660, "The Perpetuity of the Law of God."

ignorance appears to me to become greater every day, I mean, the ignorance among the learned and scientific men, who seem to me, in their discoveries, continually to wander further and further, not only from that which is revealed and infallible, but also from that which is rational and truthful. But, still, the world does alter; and, according to its own notion, it is getting wonderfully near perfection. Was there ever such a century as the nineteenth? Was there ever such a period of time since the world began? What is there that we are not doing? Lighting ourselves by electricity, speaking by means of the lightning, travelling by steam,—what a wonderful people we are! Yes, yes; and we are going to do much greater things than these, no doubt; and many matters, which are now reckoned as mere dreams, will probably become accomplished facts in a few generations; but after these marvels have all come and gone, the words of our Lord Jesus Christ will still abide, they will not pass away. Fashion follows fashion; systems succeed systems; everything beneath the moon is like the moon, it waxes and wanes, and is ever on the change; but come whatever change there may, even if the human race should reach that wonderful development which some prophesy for it, yet still, the words of our Lord Jesus Christ shall not pass away. And when the greatest alteration of all shall take place, and this present dispensation shall come to an end, and all material things shall be consumed with fire, and be destroyed, yet, even then, there shall remain, above the ashes of the world, and all that is therein, the imperishable revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ, for, as Peter says, “The word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”

Why is it that Christ's words will last in this way? I answer, first, *because they are divine*. That which is divine will endure; all God's works will not last for ever, but his words will; he will never retract anything that he has said. Even Baalam had light enough to declare, “God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?” God has never had, as our common saying puts it, to “eat his own words,” nor will he; and Christ has never had to retract anything that he has uttered. All his life long, he had not even once to make an apology, and say, “I spoke too fast, or too warmly, or somewhat inaccurately;” but everything that he said has stood, and shall stand, because the divinity that is in it makes it everlasting.

Again, the words of Christ must stand *because they are the revelation of the innermost heart of God*. This great world, and the sun, and moon, and stars, reveal God; but not as fully and as clearly as the Son of God reveals him. The incarnate Word is the grandest manifestation of Deity, and the words of that eternal Word are the revelation of the purpose of God which he formed in his infinite mind before he made the world. That which, in the secret counsels of eternity was planned,—that which—

“Ere sin was born, or Satan fell,”—

was devised in the heart of the Most High,—is revealed to us, as far

as it may be revealed, in the words of the Lord Jesus Christ. God's essential purposes cannot be altered; they must all be fulfilled. His eternal plan was formed in the foresight of all generations that shall exist, so it must stand unchanged; and, inasmuch as those purposes and that plan are closely connected with the words of Christ, and indeed are made known to us by his words, therefore the words of Christ must stand for ever.

Further, the words of Christ must abide, even when heaven and earth have passed away, *because they are pure truth*. Everything that is absolutely and purely true must be abiding and enduring. See how long solid silver lasts. You may buy plated goods for use in your house; but, after a time, you begin to see the baser metal underneath, in the process of wearing; but if you have real silver, hall-marked, it will last your lifetime. David truly said, "The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times." Their surface does not wear off, and reveal the dross beneath, for there is none; all is pure throughout. Impurity breeds decay; error is corruption; every evil thing carries within it the seeds of its own death; but God's truth has no corruption in it; it is the living and incorruptible seed which, therefore, liveth and abideth for ever. That which is perfectly pure will not ferment, because it contains within itself no germs of decay, nor shall it pass away, but it shall abide for ever. Our Lord Jesus Christ spoke nothing but pure, unalloyed truth,—the very truth of God; and, therefore, it shall stand fast for ever.

And that Christ's words shall abide eternally, we do believe, again, *because no power can prevent it*. What power is there that can prevent Christ's words from being triumphant? Do you hear the roar from the pit of hell as that question is asked? The devil and his legions of fallen spirits say that they will prevent the triumph of the words of Christ; and, whereas he has declared that his kingdom shall come, they conspire to prevent its coming. But Christ has already broken the head of the dragon, he has trampled the old serpent beneath his feet, and his omnipotency is greater than Satan's potency. The devil may be mighty, but Christ is almighty, and hell shall suffer dire defeat at the hand of the crucified Saviour. As for the wicked men upon this earth, they often league themselves together, and take counsel "against the Lord, and against his Anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." You know how futile are all their efforts; for the psalmist says, "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion." Yes; there is no power that can effectually resist the words of Christ. "Where the word of a king is, there is power;" but where the word of a God is, there is infinite power. What he says, must be done. Before he said, "Let there be light," there was not a spark, amid all earth's gloom, that could help to make the day; there was nothing lying here that could have created the light, and yet the darkness fled before that fiat of God. And so, to-day, if there be nothing on earth to help the fulfilment of Christ's word, he

has said to this poor dark world, "Let there be light," and that light, which he has kindled, is growing brighter and brighter, and shall increase unto the perfect day. O devils in hell, can ye blot out that light? Impossible! Christ's word must stand.

And yet once more, Christ's word must stand, *because his honour is involved in its permanence*. If he had to alter anything he said, it would be manifest that he had made mistakes which he must rectify. I often get books, in which there is a slip of paper, containing *errata*, fastened at the beginning. They are said to be printers' blunders, but I should not wonder if they are also the mistakes of the writer; but there they are, and I have to take a pencil, and make these emendations in the volume. There are no *errata* in the words of Christ, nor can there be any emendations in anything that he has said. David's declaration applies to all the words of Jesus: "The law of the Lord is perfect." Christ's words are all they should be, no less and no more; and cursed shall that man be who shall add to or take from them. There cannot be any alteration in them, for that would be to dishonour Christ's wisdom. Alteration indeed! That would make it appear that Christ trifled while he was here, or that he said what he must needs unsay, and that he was, after all, but an experimenter as to truth, getting as near it as he could, and afterwards correcting his mistakes, like a physician who does not understand a disease, and who gives a medicine which drives his patient too far one way, and then gives him another drug which brings him back again, but never completely cures him. Christ never has to act in that fashion. He knew what he meant, and he said what he meant; and that which he said, and that which he meant, shall stand even when, like withered figs that drop from the tree, the stars shall fall from their places, the sun shall be turned into blood, and the moon shall become black as sackcloth of hair. It must be so; therefore, all ye who believe in Jesus, believe firmly in this double declaration that he has made, "Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away."

II. Now, secondly, THIS DECLARATION APPLIES TO ALL CHRIST'S WORDS;—not merely to some of them, but to all, for it is left with an intentional indefiniteness which makes it refer to all that he said: "My words shall not pass away."

This declaration applies, then, to *the doctrinal teaching of Christ*. Whatever doctrine Christ taught, either himself personally, or by his apostles guided by the Spirit of God, is definite, distinct, immovable truth. There are many ministers, nowadays, who think that they must shift their doctrinal landmarks, and there are others who have no landmarks at all. They believe something, or everything, or nothing,—it is difficult to tell which; and their common cry is, "We must be charitable." I have known many people who were willing to be charitable with other people's money, and I have known others who are charitable with doctrines that are not theirs to give away, for they are Christ's doctrines; but these supposed custodians of them care so little for them that they offer to give them away in any quantity. But a faithful steward of Christ's gospel will not do so; he who loves Christ, and wishes to honour him, keeps Christ's words, and

treasures them up. I have heard of this body of divinity and that; but the body of divinity that I believe in is the body of Jesus Christ; and the true divinity, the real theology, is that wondrous Logos, the incarnate Word of God, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. If we will take Jesus, and him only, to be our Leader, there are a great many ways that we shall never go, and there are a great many things, which are done by different sects of professing Christians, which we shall not do, as we cannot see that Christ ever did anything of the sort; and if he did not, neither will we. That is a good rule for all Christians which I saw in one of our Orphanage schoolrooms,—“What would Jesus do?” There cannot be a better guide than that for believers, for our text is true with regard to doctrine, “Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.” I am often said to be a very old-fashioned, narrow-minded sort of person, and I have not the slightest objection to the accusation. I certainly am not new-fashioned, and do not intend to be, for “the old is better”; and, in theology, there is nothing new that is true, and nothing true that is new. The truth is as old as the everlasting hills, and to that I desire to keep even to the end, and I trust that you also will be of the same mind.

Next, we have the words of Jesus, not only about doctrine, but *he has given us plain practical commands*. The Master taught a wonderful system of ethics, and to that system we are to cling with the same tenacity that should characterize our hold on the doctrines that Christ taught. Brethren, let us never get away from such a divine teaching as this: “I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.” Let us not only love one another, but let us seek to do good unto all men as we have opportunity, especially to such as are of the household of faith. Be it our daily delight to cast out all malice and unkindness from our hearts, that the law of love may be fulfilled in us, “who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” You may depend upon it that there will never be any improvement upon the teaching of Christ; there have been some persons who have tried to improve upon it, but they have made a signal failure of all their attempts. His ethical teaching—his teaching of morals—has impressed even some of those who have not accepted his doctrines, or even believed in his Divinity; they have been astonished at the purity, the holiness, the love which Jesus Christ inculcated in the laws which he laid down for the guidance of his disciples.

But I must press on, and remind you that *the promises of Christ shall stand for ever*. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but his promises shall not pass away. Is not that a blessed truth? For he said, “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Come along with you, then, poor labouring and heavy laden souls, for he will give you rest; heaven and earth shall pass away, but he will give you rest if you come unto him. And he has said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” Come along with you, then. Obey both his commands; first believe, and then be baptized, for, though heaven and earth shall pass away, you

shall be saved. There are many things which may be but fictions; like the phantom visions of a night they may dissolve, but you shall be saved, that is a sure thing, that is certain, beyond all question. The Lord Jesus has promised such great things to his people that I should keep you here all night if I were to try to repeat those gracious words of promise which streamed out of his lips. Here is one of the sweetest of them: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." If you come to him, then he will not in any wise cast you out; he must, he will receive you; heaven and earth may pass away, and they shall pass away in due time, but never shall a soul that comes to Jesus be rejected by him. Oh, that many of you would avail yourselves of that promise this very hour! Dear aged friend, you are getting very feeble, and you have passed through a great many changes, but that promise has not been altered all the while. Do you recollect when your mother told you about Christ when you were a curly-headed boy? "Ah!" you say, "it is too late now." No, my dear friend, no; heaven and earth have not passed away yet, and that promise has not passed away; you may still come to Christ, so come and welcome, for still it is written, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." Trust his promise even now; bow your head in the pew, and silently seek the ever-blessed One, and he will be found of you, for his word is as sure to you as it was to me, as sure to you as it has been to tens of thousands who, in different times, have tried it, and found that promise true.

But remember, also, that as every word of promise from Christ shall stand, so shall *every word of prophecy*. There is a whole Book of Revelation which I do not understand, but which I fully believe. I am very glad to find something in the Bible which I cannot comprehend, but which I may believe, for I do not call that faith which limits its belief to what it can understand. If you have any little children, you delight to see the way in which they trust you when they cannot make out what you are doing, though they are sure that you are doing right. I want you, dear friends, to have just that kind of faith in the Book of Revelation; it is all true, although you cannot interpret all its mysteries; and it will all come true—every word of it—in God's good time. The Lord shall come, the Lord shall reign, the Lord shall judge, the Lord shall justify and glorify his people, and the Lord shall bid the ungodly depart from him under the curse. I pray that we may all be helped to believe every word of it. When I read the Bible, I like to read it in the spirit of the little boy whose mother told him something, but his schoolmates laughed at him for believing it. They asked him how he knew that it was true, and he said that his mother told him so, and his mother never told a lie. They tried to prove that it could not be so, but he said, "Look you here, my mother said so, and it is so if it isn't so." And if I find anything in the Word of God, and somebody with wonderful wisdom tells me that it cannot be so, he is quite sure of it, I laugh his "cannots" into oblivion, and reply, "It is so if it isn't so; your supposed proof is

nothing to me. If God has said it, and all the tongues that ever wagged should deny it, I would still say, 'Let God be true, and every man a liar.'" Hold you then, dear friends, to the words of Christ even though you do not always understand them.

I must also remind you that *every word of threatening, that Jesus Christ has spoken, is true.* Oh, that we could have seen his face, and heard the very tones of his voice! There must have been an inexpressible sweetness, and an ineffable tenderness, about the speech of Jesus Christ. All those who heard him speak knew that he loved them; and the publicans and sinners, the poor pariahs, the off-casts, those who were scouted by everybody else, drew near to hear him, because they felt that there was sympathy towards them in that great heart of his. Yet, did you ever notice—you must have noticed it,—that never man spake such terrible words of threatening to the ungodly as this Man spake? It was Jesus who spoke of the worm that never dies, and of the fire that never shall be quenched; it was Jesus who spoke of destroying both body and soul in hell; it was he who said many of the most terrible things about future punishment that ever were uttered, such as that parable of the rich man who "died, and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame." When you hear men trying to soften down the threatenings of the Scriptures, do not believe that love to souls suggests such a course of action; it often is the proof of true love that it can speak harsh things. If a man comes, and tells you very pleasant things about yourself, beware of him; he is not your friend; but the man who can warn you,—who can point out your fault and your folly,—who can run the risk of losing your esteem by indicating your danger,—that is the one who has a sincere affection for you, and a wise man will choose such a friend as that. Whatever anyone may think or say, there is not a terrible word, that ever fell from the Saviour's lips, which will not stand. Though you do not like it, you cannot alter it; it will not be affected by your likes or dislikes. "He that believeth not shall be damned." You call that a hard saying; it is true, however, or Christ would not have said it. It must have cost him much inward anguish to utter such a sentence as that; it must have been a sort of mental crucifixion to him to speak as he did about the terrors of the world to come; and be ye sure that they are not less awful than he described, not less horrible than he depicted them; so, whatever any may say by way of toning down his threatenings, reject their falsehoods, for heaven and earth shall pass away, but the words of Christ shall not pass away.

III. Thirdly, and lastly, I want to show you that THIS TRUTH HAS A BEARING UPON US ALL.

First, I am sure that *it has a relation to the preacher.* My text intimately concerns me and all who are called to be ministers of the gospel. Dear brethren, we have to preach the same gospel that our Lord Jesus Christ preached, and no other. I am thankful that I do

not know any other gospel. Long ago, I came to Paul's resolve, and "I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." I stick to that, and that is what all of us must do if we would please our Master. There is no progression in the truth itself; we progress in our knowledge of what Christ said, and in our understanding of it; but the truths that he uttered remain just the same as they were in his days. You know that, when your little children go down to the sea-side, they build tiny castles and houses, and make gardens in the sand; but they are all washed away when the tide rolls over them. I should not like to preach a theology of the kind that is being constantly washed away, leaving me to start afresh with some more sand. The Eddystone lighthouse has stood gloriously, and the reason why another has to be built is because the rock has given way under it,—the lighthouse itself is all right. We thank God that, when we build upon what Christ says, we build on a rock that will not give way under us; and if we are as steadfast as the old lighthouse, and not a stone of us will stir, we shall be perfectly justified by the equal steadfastness of that truth upon which we build. There is no stirring that rock which is formed of what Christ said. The earth may not only quake, but melt; and the unpillared vault of heaven, that has stood so firm these many ages,—even it shall come down with a crash; but no word of Jesus Christ shall ever be dissolved or pass away. We must stick to the old gospel, then. It sufficed for our fathers and our grandfathers; and it will suffice for our grandchildren, if the world stands so long as to see them also grow up to preach it.

This text also *has a bearing upon church-members*, especially upon you very timid souls who, now and then, get afraid that everything good is coming to an end. I meet with some dear old ladies, of both sexes, who are very nervous about what is coming to pass. They are afraid that dreadful times are coming. Yes, no doubt they are; but there is a sinful timidity which does dishonour to the power and truth of God. There have always been, in all ages, some Latimers and Luthers who had no fear for God's truth. People complained that they were very dogmatical; but they did not care what was said about them, they were probably just as happy whatever the world said. Luther had one very special friend among the German princes, and someone asked the Reformer, "Suppose that he should withdraw his protection from you, where would you hide?" "Beneath the broad shield of heaven," he answered; and Luther spoke wisely. He would not feel that he was dependent upon any man, but upon God alone. I wish, my poor trembling friend, that you had something of his holy courage. Do not get into that doubting state of mind again; heaven and earth shall pass away, so wait till you see them all going; and when they do go, just sit still, and sing,—

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

But, next, our text *has a bearing on all believers*. Dear friends, if Christ's words shall never pass away, let us believe them to be true to

ourselves. Are any of you persecuted? Do not give way for a single moment; stand to your colours; never be ashamed to own your Lord. Remember how he said, "Who art thou, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass; and forgettest the Lord thy Maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy?" Hold thou to Christ, whose words shall never pass away.

Are you very sick and weak, or are you getting very poor? Well, your health and your property, too, will pass away; but Christ's words will never pass away. Are you dying? Christ's words will never die or pass away; die with them in your heart. When I went, last week, to see one of the members of this church who is very ill, I had a little of my own teaching given back to me. This dear brother said to me, "Do you remember saying to us, years ago, 'What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee,' is a third-class carriage, but it is in the gospel train, and it will take you to heaven;" but you added, "Why do you not go in the first-class carriage,—'I will trust, and not be afraid'?" I commend that first-class carriage to all of you: "I will trust, and not be afraid." Let faith expel fear, and so travel to heaven first-class. You well may do so, for there is no cause to be afraid.

If any of the words of Christ could pass away with this wind, and that wind, and the other wind, oh, dear, what a card-house we should live in! But if they all stand firmly for ever,—as they do,—then why and wherefore should we indulge the slightest fear? One reason why some of you do not rest in Christ as you should, is because you do not get right down flat on to his words, and trust wholly to them. You know what the negro said when his master asked him why he was so confident about salvation. He answered, "Massa, you try to stand; but Sam fall flat down on de promise, and when he is flat down on de promise, he can't fall any lower." Just so; then fall flat on the promise; and if you lie there, clinging and resting there alone, then heaven and earth shall pass away, but not the words on which you are trusting.

Now, last of all, *this is a word to sinners*. What a message my text has for those of you who do not love Christ, those of you who are undecided. Christ's words shall not pass away; what then? This is the only gospel that you will ever hear; the last train is about to start. If you do not go by that, there is no other that will carry you to heaven; "for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." The gospel will never change its character. Are any of you waiting till it does, like the countryman who said he would cross the river when all the water had run by? There will never be any easier way to heaven than there is at this moment. I verily believe that some people, by delay, make the road to heaven harder for themselves than it would otherwise be. If they are ultimately saved, it is more difficult for them to trust to Christ when they have been long delaying. Even mercy seems sometimes to act like Benjamin Franklin did when a man came into

his shop to buy a book, but wasted the bookseller's time by his foolish delay. The man asked, "What is the price of this book, sir?" "Four shillings," said Franklin. "It is rather dear," said the man; "I will not take it." He waited about ten minutes, and then he asked, "What now, really, will you take for that book?" "Five shillings," said Franklin. "No," said the customer, "you asked only four shillings just now." Franklin replied, "Sir, you have taken up ten minutes of my time attending to you, so that makes the price of the book one shilling more; it is five shillings now; but if you do not buy it quickly, it will be more." There was some common sense in that mode of dealing; and you will truly find, in spiritual matters, that there is nothing gained by delay, but there is increased sin, increased hardness of heart, and even an increased difficulty in yielding the soul to Christ.

The best time for any of you to come to Jesus is just now; you never can have a fairer opportunity than that which lies before you at the present moment. I am sure of it, because God's wisdom always picks the best opportunity; and what does God's wisdom say? "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts;" and yet again, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." If Christ's words are to stand, there will be no other gospel ever presented to you. If Christ's words are to stand, why should you delay? Sometimes, when I have been returning from preaching away from here, I have seen people outside the theatre as I have gone by, quite a crowd of them, and I have asked a friend why they were waiting. "Oh!" he has answered, "they are expecting to get in at half-price." Well, now, you cannot expect anything of that kind in the matter of salvation, for the original charge is "without money and without price," and it never can be any lower than it is now. Then, why not come at once? I came to Jesus Christ when I was fifteen years of age, and I wish I had come to him fifteen years before if it had been possible. Oh, that I should ever have lived a single minute without the sweet knowledge of salvation by Jesus Christ! It is not a thing to be put off; God grant that you may no longer put it off! You have done too much of that already, so make haste, and come to Christ this very moment.

Let me earnestly entreat you not to be looking out for some larger possible hope that may reach you after death. That is a terrible delusion; I pray you, risk not your soul upon it. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but Christ's words shall not pass away; and, as I have already reminded you, he has said, "He that believeth not shall be damned." And so he will be, and there is nothing but that awful doom for him. You have your choice now. If you trust in Christ, you shall have eternal glory. If you will not have Christ as your Saviour, you shall have everlasting punishment; there is no other hope for you. I do pray God to lead you to come to Christ at once. Oh, that you would not hesitate, since he invites you! Oh, that you would not tarry, since that were to insult him! May his blessed Spirit now compel you to come in, that the house of his mercy may be filled! All you have to do is to trust him; you have not to be doers until first you have trusted to what he has done. Then he will make

you doers. Come empty; come sinful; come hard-hearted; come just as you are. Tarry not to cleanse or mend; but, just as you find yourself, rest yourself on Jesus. Fall flat on his promise. Depend upon the merit of his blood, and the power of his ever-living plea. God help you now to do this, for his dear name's sake! Amen.

Expositions by C. H. Spurgeon.

PSALMS XX. AND XXI.

The 20th Psalm is a prayer for the King; not only for David or Solomon, but for "great David's greater Son," the true King of the Church. As if the Church saw Jesus going forth to his work, she offers up a prayer for him.

Psalm xx. Verse 1. The LORD hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee;

And so it came to pass; in that dread night in Gethsemane, Jesus "was heard in that he feared." The God of wrestling Jacob heard the cries of his dear Son, and defended him, or supported him, as it is in the marginal reading.

2. *Send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Zion;*

And you know how there came, from yonder heavenly Jerusalem, an angel strengthening him. The celestial messenger stood at his side amidst the gloom of the olive garden, and brought him comfort and succour from God's right hand.

"His earnest prayers, his deepening groans,
Were heard before angelic thrones;
Amazement wrapt the sky:
'Go, strengthen Christ!' the Father said:
The astonish'd seraph bow'd his head
And left the realms on high."

3. *Remember all thy offerings, and accept thy burnt sacrifice; Selah.*

And so he did; there was never such acceptance given to any burnt sacrifice as was given to our Divine Lord when he offered up himself.

4. *Grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfil all thy counsel.*

Is it not written, "Prayer also shall be made for him continually; and daily shall he be praised"? Here, then, is a suitable prayer for you to present on behalf of the Lord Jesus,—that God would grant him according to his own heart, and fulfil all his counsel.

5. *We will rejoice in thy salvation,*

Come, brothers and sisters, let us make this verse true; and even if we have anything to sigh over, let us lay it aside while we now devote ourselves to the happy work of rejoicing in the glorious salvation of our Lord and King.

5—9. *And in the name of our God we will set up our banners: the LORD fulfil all thy petitions. Now know I that the LORD saveth his anointed; he will hear him from his holy heaven with the saving strength of his right hand. Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God. They are brought down and fallen: but we are risen, and stand upright. Save, LORD: let the king hear us when we call.*

What a blessing it is that our King does hear us when we call upon him! He is full of sympathy with all his people, for, in the time of his sojourn on earth, he often knew what it was to plead with his Father; and as God

heard him then, so does he himself hear us now. All glory be to his blessed name!

The 21st Psalm views the King as having ended his battle, and achieved his victory.

Psalm xxi. Verses 1, 2. *The king shall joy in thy strength, O LORD; and in thy salvation how greatly shall he rejoice! Thou hast given him his heart's desire, and hast not withholden the request of his lips. Selah.*

God gave to Jesus the strength needed to accomplish the work which he came to do, and he is daily giving him to see of the travail of his soul that he may be satisfied.

3. *For thou preventest him with the blessings of goodness:*

They go before him, like scouts or forerunners. Wherever Jesus comes, the blessings of goodness fly before him to the sons of men.

3. *Thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head.*

Let us crown him afresh to-night with our poor garlands of praise, while God sets a crown of pure gold upon his head.

4. *He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him, even length of days for ever and ever.*

And because he lives, we shall live also; the Father hath given to him to have life in himself, and hence he communicates of that life to us who believe in him.

5. *His glory is great in thy salvation: honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him.*

Heaped it on him. There is no one so worthy of honour as our Lord Jesus is; none are so majestic as the Man of sorrows who once bowed his head to death on his people's behalf.

6. *For thou hast made him most blessed for ever: thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance.*

The Father rewards him for all his service: "Thou hast made him most blessed for ever." We cannot imagine how great is the joy of Christ as his Father smiles upon him: "Thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance."

7, 8. *For the king trusteth in the LORD, and through the mercy of the most High he shall not be moved. Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies:*

Oh, what a wonderful prophecy that is! Christ's hand shall find out all his enemies. If they hide themselves, he shall discover them. If they cover themselves with chain armour, yet still his hand will find out their vulnerable parts, and touch their very souls until they melt with fear: "Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies." Are there any of these enemies of Christ here to-night? If so, not only will his eye find them out, but his hand will find them out, too.

8—13. *Thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee. Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger: the LORD shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them. Their fruit shalt thou destroy from the earth, and their seed from among the children of men. For they intended evil against thee: they imagined a mischievous device, which they are not able to perform. Therefore shalt thou make them turn their back, when thou shalt make ready thine arrows upon thy strings against the face of them. Be thou exalted, LORD, in thine own strength: so will we sing and praise thy power.*