

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

THE KING'S SHARP ARROWS.

A Sermon

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"Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee."—Psalm xlv. 5.

WHEN our Lord Jesus Christ is represented as a King, we delight to think of him as the Prince of Peace, whose dominion shall put an end to all war, and make it unnecessary for the nations of the earth to learn the arts of war any longer. Meanwhile, however, in this present state, evil is in the world; sin is all round us, and that sin is the curse of mankind. Christ, therefore, for our good, is a fighting King, combatting evil, and contending against sin in every form and shape; and, in that aspect, we regard him as standing in his glorious war-chariot, riding through the world in the power of his gospel, smiting right and left, with the great sword of the Spirit, and, at the same time, shooting his sharp arrows of gospel-truth to the very ends of the earth. The truth of God is the weapon that Christ uses. The weapons of his warfare are not carnal any more than are ours. The truth is his sword, and the truth is his arrow.

There are some truths which Jesus Christ proclaims in the gospel, and which he bids us also proclaim, which are like sharp arrows, wounding, piercing, killing, and of these I am about to speak, hoping and trusting that those arrows may, in all their sharpness, pierce all hearts that have not felt them yet, and that where they go, they may kill sin; and that then, he may come in to heal who has wounded them, and to give life to those whom he has slain.

First, we shall ask and answer the question, *what are those truths which are like sharp arrows?* Secondly, *why are they arrows?* And thirdly, *how come they to stick fast in human hearts?*

I. First, then, WHAT ARE THOSE TRUTHS WHICH ARE SHARP AS ARROWS IN THE HEARTS OF MEN?

There are many of them, but I shall only mention such as are most usually felt when men are convinced of sin. One arrow that

is always sharp is this, *the spirituality and holiness of the law of God*. Many men read the law of the ten commandments, or hear it read in their churches on the Sabbath, but they do not know that that law means a great deal more than the mere words seem to convey. For instance, it is written, "Thou shalt not commit adultery;" but Christ tells us that, even though no act of unchastity be committed, the very thought of it is condemned, and he who indulgeth an unclean look hath broken the command already. The law of God not only deals with the overt acts, but also with desires, and even with those imaginations which scarcely amount to desires, in which a man pictures the sin, and feels a pleasure in the picture, though he has not actually committed the sin. Now, when a man comes to understand in his heart, as well as to hear with his ears that God looks thus at his thoughts, and imaginations, and desires, and words as well as at his actions, then he stands in awe and amazement of the law, and says, "I cannot keep this law of God, for I am already condemned by it; and being condemned, what way of escape is there for me? How can I get my sins forgiven? By what means can I be reconciled to God?" This truth is indeed a sharp arrow, and well do I remember when first it pierced my heart and conscience. I felt that I could not stand the test of such a law for a single moment; and that, if called to stand before God's bar to be tried on such grounds, I should not require a trial, but must plead guilty at once, or stand there in silence to hear his righteous sentence of condemnation.

"How long beneath the law I lay
 In bondage and distress!
 I toil'd the precept to obey,
 But toil'd without success.

"Then, to abstain from outward sin,
 Was more than I could do:
 Now, if I feel its power within,
 I feel I hate it too."

Another of the truths, connected with Christ's gospel, that is like a sharp arrow, is this, *the utter impossibility of self-justification*. This is one of the truths of the gospel that we must never fail to proclaim: "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight." Having offended against God, you cannot expiate the past by any actions of yours. If you should henceforth keep the law without a single breach or slip, the fact remains that the sentence of condemnation has already gone forth against you. It is often said that this life is a life of probation, but that is not true. We have passed our probation, we have been proved guilty, and we are condemned already; and we shall abide under that sentence of condemnation unless we have help outside of ourselves to rescue us from it. Lost, lost, lost, utterly lost is the entire human race apart from the power supreme and divine which has been put forth in the person of Jesus Christ. Well do I remember when I first learned that no works of mine, no repentance, no prayers, and no tears could deliver me from the horrible pit into which

I was cast through sin. Then was I indeed pierced as with a barbed shaft that went right through my soul to the killing of all my proud hopes and boastings. May such an arrow from the King now pierce to the heart anyone here who still cherishes any hope of self-justification!

A third shaft from the King's bow is this, *the certainty of the judgment*. If there is any one truth that Christ proclaimed more often than another, it seems to me to be this,—that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust, and that the actions of this life will be reviewed in another life, and that rewards and punishments will be meted out by the great Judge who cannot err. Kind and gracious as was the mighty prophet of Nazareth, who has ever described in more graphic words than he did the separation of the sheep from the goats, and the blessing of those on the right hand and the cursing of those on the left? What words could there be more terrible than his when he spoke of the worm that dieth not and of the fire that never shall be quenched? O sinner, your sin is immortal; at least, there is only One who can kill it, and put it away, even Christ Jesus. You shall live again, sir; it shall not be the end of you when you are carried to your grave, and green grows the grass above you. You shall live again, and your thoughts, and words, and actions shall live too. Let them live in your conscience now, let the recollection of them alarm you even before they arise and accuse you before him who shall sit on the great white throne at the last tremendous judgment day. I know this, let a man be thoroughly convinced that he has sinned against God, that he cannot deliver himself from his sin, and that as surely as he lives there is a day of judgment awaiting him,—he has an arrow sticking fast in his heart which he will be compelled to say is sharp as long as he is one of the King's enemies.

Another sharp arrow is *the sense of the need of an entire renewal of our nature if we are not to be condemned at that judgment*.

“Not all the outward forms on earth,
Nor rites that God has given,
Nor will of man, nor blood, nor birth,
Can raise a soul to Heaven.

“The sovereign will of God alone
Creates us heirs of grace;
Born in the image of his Son,
A new peculiar race.”

Christ's words are clear and positive, “Ye must be born again.” Some perhaps ask, “But Master, may we not reform and amend?” Yes, ye may as far as ye can, but that will not suffice. “But, Master, may we not observe certain ceremonies which thou hast ordained, may we not attend to thy precepts, and so modify our present nature, and make ourselves fit for heaven?” Jesus says to them, as he said to Nicodemus, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born from above,” (for so stands the original,) “he cannot see the kingdom of God.” The Holy Spirit must come

upon you, and create in you new hearts and right spirits; there must be as total a change in you as though you actually became new creatures; otherwise, from hell you can never escape, and into heaven you can never enter; and this is true not only of the debauched, the dissolute, and the depraved, but also of the most moral, and amiable, and honourable of the whole human race. "Ye must be born again," or ye cannot enter into heaven. I remember how this sharp arrow stuck in my heart, and how I wandered to and fro, hoping that I might yet be born again, and sighing and crying in my soul because I lacked the one thing needful, which I could not give to myself, but for which I must look up to that great God whom I had offended, and who, I feared, would never deign to grant so great a boon to so unworthy a rebel. May that sharp arrow pierce other hearts just now!

Another arrow from the bow of King Jesus is *the sovereignty of God*. God has the right to bestow his mercy where he wills, or to withhold it if so he pleases. His grace is in no sense the discharge of a debt which he owes to us. If he had determined to destroy the whole race of men, we must admit that they had deserved such a doom. As he has chosen to save some, it is his grace that has done it, so let him be for ever adored for it. The apostle Paul, writing under inspiration, quotes God's words to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion;" and adds, "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." What humbling words are these! They make the sinner lie all broken and helpless at the feet of the God whom he has offended, tell him that he cannot save himself, and that now his only hope lies absolutely in the sovereign will of that God who can destroy him in a moment if so he wills. Men do not like this sharp arrow, and will do anything to get rid of it. They will try to deny the truth of it if they can; but let the Lord once drive this arrow right home through the heart and conscience, and I do not know any shaft out of the divine quiver that is more killing to human pride, and more deadly to self-righteousness than this eternal truth which has already brought many to Christ, and will bring many more, God blessing it.

"Praise the God of all creation,
 Praise the Father's boundless love;
 Praise the Lamb, our expiation,
 Priest and King enthroned above.
 Praise the Fountain of salvation,
 Him by whom our spirits live;
 Undivided adoration
 To the One Jehovah give."

Further, the Lord Jesus Christ often drives the arrow of conviction home in this form,—*the aggravation of the sin of men when they sin against light and against love*. It is no little evil to break God's law at all; but to do it knowingly is far worse than to do it ignorantly. To do it after many admonitions to the contrary, to continue to offend against God after being frequently rebuked, to

refuse all the invitations of his mercy, to resist the strivings of his Spirit, to be resolved to be lost, to be resolute upon damnation,—this is the very worst form of sin. There are some of you in whose hearts this arrow might well find a place, for you were brought up by godly parents, you were dandled upon the knees of piety, you heard the name of Jesus among the first sounds that saluted your infant ears. You were carried to the house of God before you were old enough to walk there, and your mother's tears have fallen upon your infant brow as she has wept out her prayers to God that the soul of her child might be precious in his sight. Some of you remember when the Word used to prick your conscience as you heard it preached, and you would go home, and shut your bedroom door, and kneel down and pray; and there was a time when, for weeks or months together, you could not sin as you used to do, but felt obliged to give up one evil and another. Yet you resisted the conviction that was then upon you. You struggled against it, you overcame it, and you went back into sin. You have never had so severe a contest with grace since then; still, you have had some struggles, and by dint of awful perseverance,—oh, that we had half the perseverance to be saved that some have to be lost!—by dint, I say, of awful perseverance, you have managed to remain a servant of Satan until now, nor can we bring you to accept the gospel of Christ. If you remain as you are, the Lord Jesus tells you, as he told the people of Capernaum and Bethsaida of old, that it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah at the day of judgment than for you. It would have been better for you if you had never been born; it would have been better for you, sir, if, when you were yet a babe, unconscious of right and wrong, a millstone had been hung about your neck, and you had been cast into the depths of the sea. O man, I pray that this sharp arrow may strike thee now, and wound thee, and that God may bless it to thee! If you and I should be lost after having such mothers and fathers as we had, if you and I should perish after such Christian training as we have had, when we meet each other in the lowest depths of hell, our miserable salutation would surely be something of this kind, "What fools we were, with so much light to prefer the darkness, with so much love from God to resolve to hate him! Knowing so well as we did our duty, what arrant fools we were to have neglected it! Knowing that sin was folly, how could we choose it; and knowing that holiness was happiness, for we saw it reflected in the faces of our dearest relatives and friends, how was it that we did not seek it for ourselves?" How we shall wring our hands in unutterable anguish if this should ever be our portion! The Lord prevent it, by his grace!

The last sharp arrow that I shall mention is one which Christ himself has often shot, it is this,—*that condemnation for sin is a matter of this present time.* Dear hearers, if you have never heard this truth before, hear it now, and tremble at it. You have not to wait until you rise from the dead to receive your condemnation. "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God;" and as

“there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus,” so we may solemnly say, “There is therefore now a most weighty condemnation upon you who are not in Christ Jesus, who are walking, not after the Spirit, but after the flesh.” Your sentence is already passed, like that of the poor wretch who is now lying in the condemned cell, to-morrow to suffer the extreme penalty of the law; such is your lot, “condemned already.”

All these truths are the sharp arrows from the bow of King Jesus.

II. Now, secondly, let us enquire, WHY ARE THEY CALLED ARROWS?

First, they are called arrows *because they are far-reaching*. Some people, who have never heard the gospel, have nevertheless unexpectedly found one or other of these arrows rankling in their hearts. We have known men, who have been at their ordinary work, when one of these arrows has suddenly struck them. Where the voice of the minister could not go, there the arrow of Christ could find its mark. Never give up hope for the world, even in its darkest days. The world was once in a very midnight, and there was a monk, named Luther, on his knees, going up the so-called staircase of Pilate at Rome, and repeating a prayer on every step in order to try to win his way to heaven; and there came to him, while on those very stairs, an arrow from the King that pierced him right to his heart. The arrow bore this inscription, “The just shall live by faith,”—a sentence which had previously been discovered by him in a Bible in the monastery at Erfurt. He was attempting to justify himself by works like that of climbing the so-called holy stairs, but he found that it was of no use; and, through faith in Jesus, he became the great leader of the Reformers of his day. Perhaps, at this very moment, while we are assembled here worshipping God, there may be men, similarly deluded, in places where an idolatrous system has usurped the name and place of Christianity, yet the gospel may reach them even amidst the mummeries of the mass; ay, and at the ale-bench, and in worse places still, if God so wills it, the arrow from the Prince’s bow may find its target, and reach the human heart. Pray, my brethren and sisters, that the King may be lavish with his sharp arrows, so that many may fall under his power.

They are called arrows, again, *because they are penetrating*. These truths enter a man’s heart whether he likes them or not. There are some of these arrows that are aimed at a man, but he seems to be clad in steel, and they cannot gain an entrance for a time; but, by-and-by, they pierce him to the heart, and cut him to the very quick. We have known some sinners to be very angry when this has been the case with them. That is of very little consequence so long as they do but get wounded by the arrows of King Jesus. Because these truths wound people, penetrating their hearts, they are rightly called arrows.

They are also called arrows *because, if they once get in, they rankle, and you cannot get them out*. Often have I heard something like this said by those who have come here to make a profession of their faith in Christ, “I was utterly godless, and never went to any place of worship; but, one evening, I stole in here, and listened to

a sermon. I was angry to the last degree at what I heard, I could have cursed the preacher to his face; yet, I do not know how it was, I soon found myself in this place again, wanting to know more about this religion that I detested all the time." I have often heard a man say, "I could not help thinking of it, sir; it haunted my dreams; it kept with me at my work; I loathed it, yet there it was always near me. Certain questions arose within me that I could not answer, and difficulties came up which I could not solve; so I was obliged to let this strange new influence, which had got hold of me, still rankle within my heart." I have sometimes likened an unconverted man to a wild giraffe in an African forest, and Christ's gospel, like a mighty lion, leaps upon him from the thicket, fastens its powerful fangs in his flesh, and begins to tear away his very life. He strives and struggles, dashes hither and thither, and tries to rid himself of the awful load that he bears upon his back, but all his efforts are in vain. The poor giraffe in the grip of the lion is distracted, and the man under conviction of sin cannot imagine what is to become of him. He thinks that he is lost, and that he must feel the full force of divine wrath against sin; yet this is the way of mercy, it is thus that men are saved. Down falls the man at last, and then he, who seemed to be his enemy, stoops down, and nobly gives back the life that appeared to have gone from him; or, rather, gives him an infinitely nobler life, and so the forgiven sinner lives for ever. Oh, that the power of the gospel may thus be exerted upon some wild, untamable spirit that may be here just now!

The gospel message is specially called an arrow *because it kills*. What does it kill? It kills many things. Gospel preaching, when applied by the Holy Ghost, kills in men their carnal ease. A man, when he first hears the gospel, may perhaps say, "What is the need to bother oneself about that? It will all come right, I have no doubt." Ah! but let one of these truths that I have mentioned—that truth, for instance, about the judgment to come,—get into his heart, and rankle there, the man will not talk any longer about not bothering himself; he must care. "Why!" saith he, "to-morrow, I may be before God's judgment throne, and I am unprepared to meet him. My brother died only last week, and my sister was taken away only a fortnight ago, and I may be called away at any moment. I cannot bear the thought of being in hell for ever; I must begin to think; I must begin to care about my soul." Carnal ease is one of the first things that is killed by the arrows of Christ.

I will tell you another thing that is killed by these sharp arrows, and that is, the foolish scepticism which some people think we ought to nurse and cuddle up in our places of worship. I do not believe that the scepticism of this age has so much to do with people's heads as with their hearts. If they were not wicked, they would not doubt; but because they will not be holy, they will not believe. To answer many of their questions would be as foolish as to do what a boy did, according to a fable which I read in an old book the other day. A boy, in a scavenger's cart, was so badly-disposed, that he said he would throw dirt in the face of the moon; and another boy,

who, I suppose, was a great deal better, but certainly not any wiser, fetched a basin of water and a piece of sponge to wash the moon's face. When I read that story, I thought of those who are always finding out some reason to doubt the authenticity of the Bible, or who throw dirt in the face of the gospel in some other way; and then there is some well-meaning but foolish divine, who leaves off preaching the truth, and runs with his sponge and his basin of water to wash the face of the blessed gospel, which is as clean as the sun or the moon, and needs none of his washing, for it is not defiled with the dirt that any fool may choose to fling at it. I believe that, at the bottom of your hearts, you do not really doubt, for you know that God will bring you before his judgment-bar to give an account of your actions; and when the King's sharp arrows pierce your hearts, all your whimsies die, your idle fancies flee away, and your cry is, "Do I not believe? Indeed I do. Oh, that I could but doubt in order to get a little rest to my troubled spirit; or, rather, blessed Spirit, come and teach me if there is not something to be believed by which a lost and condemned spirit may find peace with God!"

The arrows of Christ, wherever they come, always kill self-righteousness. There was never a shaft shot from Christ's bow that was not fatal to all trust in our own goodness. Christ abhors that abomination, and kills it wherever he finds it. Hardness of heart, want of feeling,—this also is slain wherever Christ's sharp arrows come; so also is procrastination, that great ruiner of the souls of men. Oh, that some sharp arrow might fly from Christ's bow into the heart of any sinner here who is saying, "There is time enough yet!" Instead of talking like that, he would say, "I want to be forgiven to-night; I cannot bear this terrible burden of guilt any longer. If there were no future, my present agony is so great that I long for immediate deliverance from it." Jesus, thou blessed Divine Archer, shoot forth thine arrows now into men's hearts, that all these ills that they have—unbelief, and hardness of heart, and love of sin, and delay, may fall down slain at thy glorious feet, and then come thou, and save the sinners by thy grace, and thy head shall wear the crown for ever and ever!

How gladly would I, if I could, say anything that might encourage any of you to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, but I know that my feeble voice is not sufficient to help you. It is the almighty Spirit who alone can do this, and I earnestly pray that he may. My grief is not so much concerning you who are seeking the Saviour, as concerning you who are not seeking him. You may think that it is a trifling matter to preach the gospel, or to listen to preaching; but the hour cometh, and every moment brings it nearer, when you will know that the truths of which I have been speaking are the only real things this side of heaven and hell. When you lie a-dying, and are brought face to face with the mysteries of the next world, you will count all your money-getting, and your amusements, and all else to be but foolery. Oh, do not trifle any longer with your eternal interests! If any of you must play the fool, do it with your money, or your estates, or your

bodies; but do not do it with your immortal souls, for these, if once lost, can never be recovered. Once let the divine sentence go forth, "Depart, ye cursed," and it can never be reversed, and changed into a benediction. Once let the iron bar that shuts up lost spirits in hell be driven home by the hand of infinite justice, and there is no hand in heaven, or earth, or hell, that can ever slide that iron bar back. Once done, 'tis done for ever; so, sirs, I beseech you, escape to the cross while you may. Look to him who died upon it. Trust yourselves wholly to him. Forsake your sins, walk in his ways, and live as his followers should; for then, but not till then, will you be safe.

III. And now, to conclude, having examined the King's sharp arrows, and seen why they are called by that name, let us enquire, HOW DO THEY GET INTO MEN'S HEARTS?

Many are the times that I have handled these arrows of the King, and many are the times that, from this my watch-tower, I have shot them from my bow; and the Lord knoweth with what intense desire I have longed that they might enter the hearts of those at whom I have aimed them. I could, with my finger,—but I shall not,—indicate some of the targets at which I have aimed. I will mention no names; there is no need for me to do that; you know very well to whom these personal messages have been addressed. I suppose I cannot have been a good shot, for, with many of you, I have not yet found the joint in your harness through which I could reach your heart. Oh, that I might speedily be able to do so!

But, according to my text, the arrows which are there spoken of, and which are shot by the King, do get right into the hearts of his enemies; and I suppose this is for two reasons,—first, *because the Lord Jesus Christ always takes good aim*. We cannot do this except as he puts his hands on our hands; for then, the aim will be his rather than ours, like the shots of certain eminent people, on great public occasions, who have the sighting done for them by experts. It is only when the Lord Jesus Christ does this for us that the arrow of the truth goes home to the heart and conscience of the hearer. Christ's aim is always true. If the truth should come home to any of you, believe that it was meant for you. Do not be vexed, or think that there has been a mistake. It was meant for you; and although it may pain you, bless God for the pain. It will be better for you thus to be pained, and afterwards be fitted to enter into heaven, than to be left to get a seared and hardened conscience, and to be cast into hell.

The other reason why these arrows of the King get into the hearts of his enemies is that, together with the good aim, *there is always almighty strength at the back of the bow*. It is said that the bow of William the Conqueror was so strong that no man in England, except himself, could bend it; and the great bow of King Jesus is such as none of us can bend. It has the power of the Holy Ghost in it; it is the Holy Ghost himself who gives force and power to the Word so that it pierces through all the sinner's armour, and the most vital part of his being, and smites him even in the heart.

Bearing this last thought in mind, I say to you who love the

Lord, do you not see how dependent we are upon the Holy Spirit? There lie the arrows, but they will kill nobody till the Holy Spirit gets them into the hearts of sinners. There is much precious truth in this blessed Book, but there it will lie till the Holy Spirit takes it, and shoots it right into the hearts of men. So, what is our duty as Christian men and women? Why, dear brethren and sisters, let us never grieve the Holy Spirit. You know that we can do it by neglecting to honour him, by falling out amongst ourselves, by cherishing unlovely dispositions, by being unholy. As church-members, we can easily drive the Holy Spirit away from us; but, instead of grieving him, let us honour him, and let us entreat him to work with us.

“Brethren, pray for us.” I believe I am the constant subject of the prayers of the different members of this church, to whom I feel the deepest gratitude; but I also beg you to pray for all the ministers of Christ, and for one another, and for all work that is being done for Christ. Remember the Sunday-school teachers. Think of those good men who, all the week, are doing the hard work of City-missionaries, and those good women who are working as Bible-women;—pray for all such labourers, and for all who are doing anything for Christ, and ask that the Holy Spirit may be with them to make their labours a means of blessing to the people. Whenever you seek to do anything for Christ, as you begin, and as you go on, and when you conclude, let it all be done in real dependence upon the Holy Spirit. Blessed be God, the Holy Spirit is not far away from us, nor is he hard to find; for he dwells within the true Church of Christ. We are not to think of him as if he were some mysterious being, very far distant from us, and not easily to be brought to us, to whom we need to cry as Baal’s priests cried to their idol-god, “O Baal, hear us!” The Holy Spirit is always at work in the Church, and it is a wonder that he does so much while the Church often does so little. Oh, if we were but all awake, all alive, all full of zeal, all full of love, all full of self-sacrifice, then, depending upon him, we might expect to see the King’s sharp arrows flying from his bow to the right and to the left, behind and in the front, while tens of thousands would fall down before him, and London, and Great Britain, and the world at large would behold the King riding in triumph in his glorious chariot of salvation.

The Lord send it! The Lord send it! I know your hearts say, “Amen!” But you must work for it, and watch for it, and pray for it, and then it will come, and unto Christ shall be the glory for ever. Amen.

Exposition by C. H. Spurgeon.

PSALM XLV.

To the chief Musician upon Shoshannim, (or, upon the lilies,) for the sons of Korah, Maschil, A Song of loves.

We may look upon the 45th Psalm as being a sort of compendium of the Song of Solomon. It is written, too, upon the same subject, and that is not the marriage of Solomon with Pharaoh’s daughter;—only the strangest and most whimsical fancy could ever have found Pharaoh’s daughter either

in this Psalm or in the Book of the Canticles. It is a description of Christ and his Church; a song of love between that pair for ever affianced, and soon to sit down together at the marriage supper in glory.

Verse 1. *My heart is inditing a good matter :*

Or, as the margin has it, "My heart boileth or bubbleth up with good matter." It is said of Origen, one of the ancient fathers of the Church, that, whenever he preached, he preached with great earnestness and fervour; but that, when he spoke of Christ, he seemed to be all on fire. So, whenever our hearts speak of the good matter which concerns Christ, our souls should be all on fire, we should be boiling over with love to him.

1. *I speak of the things which I have made touching the king :*

A man can never speak so well of the things which he has learned, or heard, as of the things which he has made, that is, the things which he has experienced. Indeed, this is your life-work and mine, beloved, to tell to others the things which we have made our own touching the king.

1. *My tongue is the pen of a ready writer.*

A ready writer writes what he has thought of beforehand, what he has well meditated upon, and digested; so the psalmist declares that this rapturous song is as certainly true as the *verbu scriptu* of a thoughtful penman.

2. *Thou art fairer than the children of men :*

The Hebrew word here is doubled, as much as to say, "Thou art doubly fair; thou art fair, fair; twice fairer than the children of men." Both in outward appearance—although his visage was so sadly marred while he was here,—and in personal character, our Lord Jesus Christ is "fairer than the children of men."

2. *Grace is poured into thy lips :*

Grace has, in the most copious manner, been poured upon Christ, and now there pours from his lips a very cataract of grace;—floods of love, and tenderness, and holy eloquence stream from his lips.

2, 3. *Therefore God hath blessed thee for ever. Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty.*

Put thy sword where it will be ready for use; come forth, and let us see thee appear in thy strength, O most Mighty! For this is one of the names of Christ: "I have laid help upon One that is mighty; I have exalted One chosen out of the people."

4, 5. *And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right Judah shall teach thee terrible things. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee.*

You may see, on some of the ancient slabs, representations of Oriental monarchs riding in their chariots, perhaps engaged in hunting, or pursuing their enemies, with their bow and arrow in their hands, and their sword upon their thigh. So is our Saviour thus graphically described. His Word is his sword, and the testimony of his ministers he makes to be like sharp arrows sticking in the hearts of his enemies. May it be so this day, and every day may Christ thus ride prosperously!

6. *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre.*

This could not have been said of Solomon; for he was never called God. It refers to none other than Christ the King, whose throne is for ever and ever.

7—9. *Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. All thy*

garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad. Kings' daughters were among thy honourable women :

Thy maids of honour, for all those who truly wait on Christ become at once the King's daughters. It is more noble to serve God than to sit as king upon a throne. The day shall come when all the honour of earthly kings' daughters will have passed away, but the glory of those who are in Christ's court as honourable women shall abide for ever.

9. *Upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir.*

In the best and purest gold. Every member of the Church of Christ may well say, with Dr. Watts,—

“Strangely, my soul, art thou array'd
By the great Sacred Three”

10, 11. *Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear ; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house ; so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty : for he is thy Lord ; and worship thou him.*

Though the Church has been brought up in the world, she is to be separated from it. The more distinction there can be between Christians and worldlings, the better will it be for both. Christ greatly admires the beauty of his Church when she is separated from the world, and it is nothing but an adulterous alliance when the church becomes united to the State. We never can expect any great and permanent blessing to any church which thus degrades and dishonours itself. If a church cannot stand without the support of the civil power, let it fall ; but happy is that Church which relies alone upon the King himself, and is content with the dowry which he gives her.

12. *And the daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift ; even the rich among the people shall intreat thy favour.*

The day is coming when the Church of Christ shall be honoured by all men. The merchant princes, who now esteem her as a thing of nought, shall come with their tribute to her, and those who once despised her shall entreat her favour.

13, 14. *The king's daughter is all glorious within : her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework : the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee.*

Happy was John the Baptist to be “the friend of the Bridegroom” to Christ, and happy are the hearts of those who are the bridesmaids to his Church : “the virgins her companions that follow her”—you, whose pure hearts are set upon the Lord alone, and who follow whithersoever he doth lead, you, too, “shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework” with his Church.

15, 16. *With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought : they shall enter into the king's palace. Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.*

There is such a thing as an apostolical succession, though not the fiction which usually goes by that name. The Lord is constantly raising up fresh disciples, fresh preachers, and fresh teachers, whom he makes to be princes in his earthly courts, and who shall be princes in his heavenly courts for ever and ever.

17. *I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations : therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever.*

“Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Does his successive journeys run ;
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.”