

GOOD ADVICE

A SERMON

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“Be you faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life.” Revelation 2:10

UNTO five out of the seven churches here presented to us, the Lord deals very solemn rebukes. Unto two of the churches, Smyrna and Philadelphia, the Lord deals out no reproof. And the sins, the prominent and fearful sins of the churches to whom he deals out these rebukes, their sins were three, namely, apostacy, amalgamation, and formality. The sin of Ephesus was that of apostacy. They had left their first love; they had gone away from the great principles addressed to them some years before, as recorded in the Epistle to the Ephesians; they had, in a great measure, gone away from these principles; their sin was the sin of apostacy. And then the sin of the churches of Pergamos and Thyatira was that of amalgamation with the gross idolatrous systems that were around them; and the sin of the church of Sardis and Laodicea was that of formality, having a name to live, and were dead, were neither cold nor hot. But here is a church, the church of Smyrna, which appears to be in a condition of temporal poverty, and seemed to be contracted as to the comforts of this world; and these springs of earthly comfort being so far dried up, they appear to have sought the Lord with more earnestness, and with more decision; and being thus so earnest with the Lord, they escape amalgamation, escape mere formality, and stand before the Lord in a spirit and form pleasing in his sight. And therefore, he says, “I know your works, and tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich). Fear none of those things which you shall suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that you may be tried; and you shall have tribulation ten days: be you faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life.” Happy, then, the people, or happy that man, to whom this description belongs! I mean the spiritual part thereof, the man who is favored thus to stand before the Lord in that spirit of faith, and life, and interest, which is pleasing in his sight. Now, our text contains three parts, *the object*, *the subject*, and *the end*. The object is, *God himself, to whom we are to be faithful*; the subject is that of *faithfulness*; the end is the *crown of life*. “Be you faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life.”

I notice, then, first, *the object to whom we are to be faithful, namely, unto God*. We are, of course, to view God in and by Christ Jesus; for Christ has said, “He that has seen me has seen the Father.” And you will observe that the Savior appears to this church of Smyrna in very beautiful forms, altogether in pleasing and attractive forms. “Unto the angel”, that is, to the minister, “of the church in Smyrna write: These things says the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; I know your works, and tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich).” Here is a fourfold form in which the Savior appears. First, that he is the beginning, he is the first. And this you will see throughout the order

of salvation. In every step in the salvation of a sinner, Jesus Christ must be the first. Let us just name those steps very concisely. First, as to the love of God. If we are loved with an everlasting love, then that love is in Christ Jesus. He stands first, as the object of God's first love, of God's everlasting love, and they are loved by him. You cannot love God by the law. If we love God, really and truly so, in a way that evidences that God has loved us, then we shall love him by Christ Jesus. Jesus Christ is that gift of God's love. He came into the world; Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. "And herein perceive we the love of God, that he laid down his life for us; not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Jesus Christ, therefore, stands first in love. And then in election it is also true. As Watts nicely expresses it:

"Christ be my first elect, he said,
Then chose our souls in Christ our head."

Jesus Christ was chosen to the great work which he performed. And it is a pleasing thought, when we look at the purpose, how completely the purpose for which he was chosen was carried out. He did not fail; the very work for which he was chosen he carried out to perfection. Now the people are chosen in him. And so, my hearer, if you should choose that good part which shall not be taken from you, it must be after the same order in which the Lord has chosen you, namely, in his dear Son. And if you should be led to choose him as your only hope, be led to choose him as the only way in which you can begin to hope, then you are led to choose that good part which shall not be taken from you. And as to election, if election has chosen you, you will be sure to choose that. The reason that men live and die without choosing election, is because election has not chosen them, and therefore they are not led to choose that. But wherever electing grace has chosen a man, that man will be led to choose electing grace, and be led to choose Jesus Christ as the chosen head of the church. He, therefore, must be the first in election; so that if we are chosen to salvation, it must be entirely by him. Then, again, in predestination he stands first. Hence the apostle expresses this in few but beautiful words, giving us, at the same time, a negative to set by the side of the positive, that he might thereby present that contrast that should on the one hand solemnize our minds, and on the other hand encourage us to hope in the mercy of God; and he words it in this way: "He has not appointed us unto wrath." We who are brought to love Jesus, we who are brought to choose him who has chosen us, to choose this good part, "he has not appointed us unto wrath." Then comes the positive, "but to obtain salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ." So that there must be the salvation upon which the appointment is to rest, and that rests upon Jesus Christ, "who was verily foreordained." Then, again, he must go first in the precept of the law. He is our forerunner; he has gone before us there, and he has obeyed that law, and brought in an everlasting righteousness. So that we must have righteousness by a righteousness that is already wrought. And then, again, he has gone through all the penalties of the law and has endured all there was to be endured. And so, he is the first, then, in the order of things. This is one sense in which Jesus Christ is the first. So that God loves us by him, and chooses us by him, and ordains us to everything that is good by him, and deals with us, and this is a great secret to be let into; it is a heavenly, a holy, a delightful secret to be acquainted with, that the Lord deals with you by Jesus Christ. When he takes you into consideration, he does not take you into consideration apart from his dear Son; for if he take you into consideration apart from his dear Son, then he must take you into consideration penally, and he must number your sins, and he must weigh, as it were, the weight of your guilt, measure the magnitude of your guilt, and measure out to you that wrath, that you have entailed.

But then, this is not the way he considers us. He considers us in and by his dear Son and looks upon the things that are equal. He sees in his dear Son that which is equal, in Christ's sufferings, to the demerit of our sin; and he sees in Christ Jesus an atonement, a righteousness, and everything adequate to our necessities. Here God deals with us by his dear Son; and Jesus Christ deals with us by the love of the Father unto us, and on the ground of the work he has done; and so the blessed Spirit deals with us in the same way, and the Lord will live with us in the same way to all eternity. And therefore it is "that in the dispensation of the fulness of time, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him; in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who works all things after the counsel of his own will." This is one thing, then, to which we are to be faithful, viz., that we have to hold fast Christ Jesus, as standing first in all the successive steps of salvation. In thus holding fast Christ Jesus, we hold fast the covenant oath of God the Father; in a word, we hold fast all the promises, and all the precepts, and all that belongs to our eternal welfare. He, therefore, is the first; and how sweet the thought, too, that he is the last! There, of course, it means that he is, as I observed last Sunday morning, and therefore will not now enlarge upon this part, that he is the completeness of all things. I know not what your feelings may be, but I seem never weary of looking at that delightful truth, "You are complete in him." Oh, the deficiencies in myself that I feel; the many thoughts, the many evils of my depraved nature, that make me groan, and cast me down! And amidst all these voices against me, there comes a voice from heaven that says, "You are," notwithstanding all your deficiencies and all your faults, you are brought to know Jesus, and brought to believe in him, and brought to believe his testimony, and that he stands first, and he is here first, and he stands pre-eminent, and "you are complete in him." You are right there; you are entirely free there. It is a delightful truth. He then is the last; there is nothing after him. When he comes, there is no sin then after him, he is the end of it; there can be no death after him, there can be no curse after him, there can be no tribulation after him. Hence it is said, "You shall not sorrow any more at all;" that is, in Christ Jesus; you shall never sorrow in Christ Jesus. You sorrow in the first Adam that your first paradise is gone. The Jew may sorrow that his temple, and his city, and his land are gone, and that he is a wanderer and a captive to the present day. But we shall never have to sorrow that our heavenly paradise is gone; we shall never have to sorrow that the new Jerusalem is gone; we shall never have to sorrow that the temple, the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, is gone; we shall never have to sorrow that the incorruptible inheritance is gone; we shall never have to sorrow for the loss of anything, for there is no loss. Christ never lost anything, and never will lose anything. Even his precious, infinitely precious life he did not lose; no, he laid it down, and in a form, too, that made it of infinite and of eternal value to the souls of men, and of eternal glory to the blessed God. He, therefore, is the first, and he is the last; he is the completion of all things. So that you begin to live by him, and in him you have all the life you want; you will never want another life after the life you have in him, because the life is eternal in him; you will never want another sun to shine upon you, for he is a sun that will never go down; you will never want another kingdom, for his is a kingdom that has no end; you will never want another priest, for he is a priest forever; you will never want another king, for he is a king forever; and you will never want another happiness, for he is our happiness forever; you will never want another joy, for God by him is our exceeding joy; you will never want any other resources, for all our springs are in the Lord,

"Springs of salvation that never run dry,

And all for the lifting of Jesus on high.”

Here, then, he appears to the church of Smyrna as the first and as the last. He places himself between the church and all her sins, and all her troubles, and all her foes; there he stands as the shield and buckler; and he is the last, the first and the last, the all and in all. “Which was dead and is alive.” So that when he died, every one of their sins died. Samson’s lion roared against him, and that represents to me sin in its unatoned for, unpardoned aspect. But when the lion is dead, then this very carcass can be subservient to bring sweetness to the person on whose behalf the lion is slain. So, atoned for and pardoned sin, what a mighty difference between the two! In its unatoned for, unpardoned shape and form, it roars against us like the lion, threatening our lives; but when atoned for and pardoned, it becomes helpless; it cannot rise and threaten us now; there are no teeth to show but such as we may laugh at; it is but a carcass; the sting, the strength, the substance is gone. Such is the revelation the Lord made of himself to this church.

The next is *the subject, faithfulness*. First, we are to hold this fast. And we may, perhaps, on this part just refer, though we have the Bible full of examples of faithfulness, just refer in the first place to Abraham. I am very fond of referring to Abraham, for the Lord himself has intended Abraham to be the representative of all that should afterwards believe, of all that should be brought into the same blessedness. I don’t know that Abraham ever did anything so very wonderful. I don’t read that he ever had a collection for anybody; and I don’t read that he ever converted anyone; I don’t read that he built a chapel, or built a church; he built some altars to the Lord; there does not seem anything so very wonderful: so that some of our divines are very much at a loss when they refer to Abraham, wherein Abraham was such a conspicuous representative of the faithful, seeing we don’t see anything so very wonderful in the way of good works. There is a secret somewhere, and I suppose the secret lies in this one thing, that God revealed himself to Abraham, and Abraham saw Jesus Christ in that very character we are made acquainted with him in, in the eternity of his priesthood; for Christ being the first and the last, is nothing else but the declaration of the same truth, that he is a priest forever. There was none before him; he was the first that ever put away sin, and he is the last, because no other is needed. Thus, Abraham saw the day of Christ. Then you well know, there it is, a self-evident truth, that God did appear to Abraham by an immutable oath; he knew that Christ was made a priest by an immutable oath. Now, then, wherein laid Abraham’s faithfulness? First, in holding fast, unmixed, uncorrupted, uncompromised, just that revelation which God made unto him. He would not take from a thread to a shoe-latchet of any other people’s religion. No, he had lifted up his hand to the most high God; he had sworn allegiance to the God of heaven, and he would not have from a thread to a shoe-latchet. He found his eternal all in the eternal priesthood of Christ; he found his eternal safety in the immutable, sworn covenant of the eternal God; and by that, Abraham scrupulously, solemnly, decisively, abode. And after abiding by those truths for a hundred years, for he knew the truth more than a hundred years before he died, he died in precisely the same truths; he held them fast to the end; and whether he was in Egypt, or wherever he might be, he still held fast the truth. “Now, they that be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.” He held fast those truths in a way in which he could put to flight the armies of the aliens; he held fast those truths in a way in which he could prevail with God in prayer. See how solemn that prayer on behalf of Sodom and Gomorrah. And if there had been ten hyper-Calvinists there (that is, ten true believers), if there had been ten free-grace men there, those ten free-grace men would have been salt enough to have preserved the cities. But there were not ten; and Abraham felt that his mouth must now be stopped. So that he did prevail; for all that did love

the truth were saved. Now, then, Abraham abode by these blessed truths, held them fast. Go wherever he might, he carried those truths with him, and never deviated from them. "They that be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham." One more point, and that is that this gospel, this order of things; those two points simplified, the eternal priesthood of Christ, and God thereby appearing in his immutable oath, that this gospel, this testimony, this twofold testimony of God, was dearer to Abraham than language can describe. When God, the God of his eternal salvation; when that God who had said to Abraham, and Abraham had understood how it was, "I am your shield," if, by the eternal priesthood of Christ, and by his immutable oath, he be my shield, what can harm me? if he be for me, what can harm me? I am surrounded, as though he should say, with mighty nations, and here am I feeble and few; but what can harm me? he is my shield, the Lord says, "And my exceeding great reward." So, when this same God called upon him to sacrifice Isaac, such was the love that Abraham had to the truth, that rather than give it up he would obey that terrible command; rather than part with the truth, he would obey a command that touched him in his tenderest part, that touched him to the very quick; and it was a wondrous act of faith, though I will not now stop to speak particularly, if you were to take into consideration all the circumstances that must have entered, feelings and apprehensions that must have entered into his mind. But, nevertheless, it is the God I love; he says it, and what he says I cannot deviate from; because, in disagreeing with him I then give up the truth; and I cannot do that. He does not require me, after all, to give up Isaac to Satan; he requires me to give up Isaac to himself; and it is the Lord that gave, and he has right to take away; and my desire is to have grace whereby, as though he should say, to say, "Blessed be the name of the Lord," What a good thing it is, if called upon so to do, to feel prepared to give up anything and everything, rather than give up the truth, if you must give up one or the other; buy the truth at any price, sell it at no price. Ah, what a gratulation did that obedience bring from heaven. "Now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." And therefore, the Lord blessed him upon this evidence of love to his blessed name. Now, then, like Abraham, be you faithful unto death; hold fast the same truth; take not from a thread to a shoe latchet of free-will, or duty-faith, or any other system; reject the whole of it; hold fast the eternal perfection of Christ; hold fast the immutable covenant of the blessed God; "Be you faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life." And I am sure I am in order here in this representation, by the way in which the Savior appears to this church, "the first and the last." You will recollect the peculiar characteristic of Melchizedek was that he had no predecessor, no successor. So here, Christ is the first; he has no predecessor; and he is the last, he has no successor. He was dead, and he was the first that died to atone for sin, and the last that will ever he needed; he rose from the dead as the resurrection of others, and he lives; and because he lives they shall live also. Here is the same gospel that Abraham received, understood, and rejoiced in; and Abraham looked, in the light of this mediation, and in the light of this immutability, he looked for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God, and to that city he is come. "Be you," then, "faithful unto death."

But I must just bring in a margin here to my sermon. Does it mean that the people of God shall in all respects be infallibly faithful? Shall there be no failure? It cannot mean that, no; cannot mean that. We have a great many partial failures in the word of God. Perhaps the most terrible failure of all, the most difficult to explain, the most mysterious drawback in all the Bible among good men, is that of Solomon. Look at him in his old age, led away by outlandish women in the way that he was, to build, out of the revenue of his kingdom, those dens of iniquity for false gods. What a mystery was this! This was a dreadful failure; this was a dreadful drawback. Yet Solomon was

beloved of his God; yet Solomon is now in heaven. That same man that wrote the wondrous and beautiful book, Solomon's Song; that same man that wrote the decisive, and cutting, and instructive Proverbs; that same man. What a mysterious development was there of human depravity and of human weakness, even in a man who had been conspicuously a saint of God. So that there was a failure. I reckon that to be the greatest, and most mysterious failure on the part of a good man of any recorded in the Bible. But, nevertheless, whatever is there said, Solomon's soul could not part with the truth; however much he might be carnalized and hardened, and through weakness submitting to the clamors of those she-devils; however much he might, I say, be entangled with them, and be led by the clamor of those women, yet, when the soul is born of God, there is the incorruptible seed; and however, by mysterious circumstances, that seed may be buried, yet there it is. And perhaps, though I have no positive authority to say so, perhaps the Book of Ecclesiastes is nothing else but the bursting forth of Solomon's soul under the feelings which he had then experienced, under that tremendous circumstance, and showing that his own abundant riches and position led him to it and he might well call the whole of it vanity and vexation of spirit, and sum up the whole of the happiness of man, it is translated, "This is the whole *duty* of man;" but the word *duty* is not in the original; happiness is the great question of the Book of Ecclesiastes, and so we ought to have had in the last verse, at least, I think so, not *duty*, but *happiness*, that the whole happiness of man lies in the fear of God, for it shall be well with them that fear God. Now then, Solomon, nevertheless, was faithful unto death; he would be reckoned faithful unto death, notwithstanding this drawback. All the Old and New Testament saints would be reckoned faithful unto death, notwithstanding their drawbacks; I will prove this presently. Peter would be reckoned faithful unto death, notwithstanding his drawbacks; because, amidst them all there was a secret holding fast of God's truth; there was no vital departing from God's truth. Moses failed, as we see, in several things, so far so as to lose the promised land and yet, with all his failings, he never gave up the truth, he held that fast. And so, you will find that the New Testament declares that Moses was faithful in all his house; does not take any notice of his failings. And really, there is something very pleasing in the thought, You come to the New Testament, and all through the New Testament, from the first beautiful chapter, where we have the name of Jesus, where we have Ruth and Rahab as samples of mercy to poor sinners, the New Testament does not in one instance, from the first to the last verse, make the slightest reference to the faults of the Old Testament saints. How unlike very often Christians one to another, I say, how unlike! Job might well say, "I desire to reason with God." There I shall find mercy, there I shall find compassion, there I shall find One that understands all things, that knows the cause of all things, and will show mercy where fellow-creatures would show nothing but wrath. "O Let me," says David, and it is a wise desire, "Let me fall into the hands of the Lord, for great are his mercies; but let me not fall into the hands of man."

So then, faithful unto death; many drawbacks, yet, notwithstanding these drawbacks, you will be reckoned by your faithfulness and the respects in which you are unfaithful are passed by. Well, but, say you, how can the respects in which good men sometimes are unfaithful, how can those respects be passed by? How can they be passed by in those respects? The answer is this, that the Lord Jesus Christ was a merciful and a faithful High Priest, without a drawback; there was no drawback there. My faithfulness, holding fast the truth and abiding by it, is a proof that I am a Christian; but my salvation does not lie there. My salvation lies first in the faithfulness, the perfect faithfulness of Christ as my High Priest; and, secondly, my salvation lies in the faithfulness of God, who has sworn that he will not suffer his faithfulness to fail. Nevertheless, the Lord grant us the grace of our text: "Be you faithful unto death." Of course, those failings are not put upon

record, I need not say so, for our imitation, but for our caution, for our admonition; that we may see, from the failure of man, what human nature is, as well as feel, which we do, in our own hearts, what poor creatures we are. So that, if we hold out to the end, and are faithful to the end, then it is because he who began the good work will carry it on to the day of Christ. But again, faithfulness, there is a great pleasure in it, a very great pleasure. See how happy the man of God that went to Bethel; but for that drawback in his faithfulness, how happy he might have been. He went and delivered his message, and the king stretched out his hand to smite the prophet, and the king's arm was paralyzed; and the prophet prayed for the king; God answered the prophet's prayer, and healed the king's arm. There stood the prophet, a terror to all his enemies; his enemies saw the God of heaven was with him; the king was obliged to sue to this solitary prophet that he would pray to God for him, and he did. Ah! the false prophet! You may depend upon it that the false prophet was one of the most smooth, oily, smiling, snickering, polite, obliging, winning, good-natured, lively, open-hearted men possible; and turnabout and twist about with all the politeness imaginable, that you had needed superhuman power really to reject such politeness. "Why, come, eat, eat bread and drink water. I am also a prophet. Why, everybody: says what a nice man I am." Ah! so it is, as good John Berridge said, he could bear the whole; stand before the frowns of the bishop; but when the bishop began to be kind to him, he felt his need of more grace to withstand the bishop's kindness than to withstand his unkindness, when the bishop opposed him in preaching the truth. Well, if this false prophet had raised up persecution against the true prophet, he would have been in no danger; but it is very hard to reject kindness. It shines upon you and melts down your faithfulness ere you are aware of it. How happy, now, that man might have gone to his home, speaking after the manner of men. I have been and borne my testimony; I have delivered my message; here I am with God, and God with me. But, poor man, he failed. What a mercy, then, that while it is a sweet thing to be faithful, if we fail, we thereby lose a great many advantages, nevertheless our souls are not lost; then it is we are saved so as by fire. And so, a lion met the man of God and slew him. Thus, then, "Be you faithful unto death." If there were no possibility of failure, not that there is any possibility of *fatal* failure; but if there were no possibility of failure at all, would such advice as this be needful? Now, for instance, suppose you are meditating, and say, Well, I do not know; I hold fast the testimony of Christ; I hold fast this order of things; I read the Bible, I go to hear the word, but I get nothing; everything seems at a distance, and everything seems against me; perhaps I am wrong after all. I look around, and I see men that are not so high in doctrine, they get on better, and seem ten times happier, they spread like the green bay tree, like a strawberry bed, are everywhere almost; while here am I, a poor, little, withered shrub, seem to have neither growth, nor strength, nor anything else; I do not know what to make of it; perhaps I am wrong after all. Well, suppose, in the midst of such ruminations, our text comes in, "Be you faithful unto death;" and you cannot be faithful without believing; so be you believing unto death; tarry by the stuff; hold fast; and if you have not the crown of lovingkindness and enjoyment now, you shall have it by-and-by. "Be you faithful unto death." It does not say, Be you happy unto death; it does not say, Enjoy the truth unto death; it does not say, Be comfortable unto death; be assured of your interest unto death; it does not say that; but it does say, "Be you faithful unto death." Abide by the truth; tarry by the stuff; and after you have suffered awhile, and the Lord has tried you so long, then will come the turning of the captivity, and then you will bless his holy name that you did not run away. "Blessed are all they that wait for him." So that while the child of God is thus tempted almost to give up the truth, or thinking at least it is no use to hold it fast, the words of our text may come in and encourage such; "Be you faithful unto death." And then, when these words come with something like power, it makes the truth our element, it makes it pleasant to us to be

faithful unto death, to hold fast the truth, stand out for the experience of it, for the order of it, and the practice of it, the fruits of it and the blessed effects of it, in all respects mingled, I admit, in the creature with many faults; but, bless the Lord, his people shall not be judged after the flesh, but “according to your faith be it unto you,” and according to the nature of your works be it unto you. So, if your works are works of faith in and love to the truth, then you stand accepted before God. Thus, then; the nature of this faithfulness is to abide, as Abraham and all the ancients did, though mingled with many drawbacks, is to abide faithfully by the truth. “He that endures the hatred of all men for my name’s sake;” there it is. “You shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake.” It is very unpleasant; but he that endures this hatred, is willing to put up with it unto the end, the same shall be saved. But if you begin to think, Dear, what an unpleasant thing it is to be hated; what an unpleasant thing it is to be everywhere spoken against; what an unpleasant thing it is to have an evil name: how shall I avoid this? Why, just moderate your tone a little; compromise matters, and go over to the other party, and give up your own conscience, and your own soul, and your own hope, and everything, and sacrifice, if the thing were possible, the salvation of your soul at the shrine of their gospels, then you will cease to be spoken evilly of. But “woe unto you, if all men speak well of you.” Now you will admit that your humble servant is not much in danger of that woe. That scripture has been a comfort to me many times. “Woe unto you, if all men speak well of you; for so did their fathers of the false prophets;” but not of the true prophets, no. If the Lord speaks well of us, that is the great thing.

In conclusion, I notice *the certainty*. “I will give you a crown of life.” This certainty lies in four things. First, in the limitations put upon all our troubles. Now, just notice the beautiful way in which the limitations are given, as in this verse. There are no less than seven limitations given in this verse to the troubles of the people of God, to show the certainty of their ultimately possessing what the Lord has promised, and the certainty of their being faithful unto death too. Mere professors may fail; real possessors may in some respects partially fail, but they shall recover all. “Fear none of those things which you shall suffer,” bodily affliction, family trouble, church trouble, worldly trouble, whatever it may be; “Fear none of those things which you shall suffer.” Why not? Because another scripture says, “Nothing shall by any means hurt you.”

Again, “I know your tribulation, and poverty.” Here is limitation again, you see; our tribulations are limited as to their nature; they shall not hurt us. Ah I say you; I have a great trouble I think will hurt me. Oh, no! Why, Job’s troubles did him no harm in the end. No; none of the troubles which all the saints of God have, can do them any harm in the end. “I know your poverty and tribulation” not your poverty and condemnation, but your poverty and tribulation, it is only tribulation.