

SURREY TABERNACLE PULPIT.

A FEW DAYS AT SINAI.

A Sermon

BY MR. JAMES WELLS,

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“Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount.”—DEUTERONOMY i. 6.

THESE words refer especially to mount Sinai: and the Lord brought the people to mount Sinai in order to prepare those among them that were his for the reception of that system of temporal, and at the same time typical mercy, which he himself would bring in. And hence it is spiritually and savingly the work of the Lord to prepare any man's heart for the gospel; for all of us by nature are as the thorny ground—the gospel will not take root in us; we are all as the stony ground—the gospel will not take any saving root in us; we are all as the wayside ground—the gospel will not take any saving hold of us. But when God hath prepared the heart (for the preparation of the heart is of the Lord); when he quickens the soul, sends the ploughshare, as it were, of conviction through the soul, and brings a sinner down under a sense of need, then that hardness of heart which he had towards his own soul departs, and he now has a feeling for his immortal soul; the hardness of heart which he had towards God now departs, and he has a heart now to pray, he has a heart now according to the Lord's promise,—“I will take away the heart of stone, and will give you an heart of flesh.” Such an one is by these convictions and experiences prepared to receive the glorious gospel of the blessed God. Such, then, is our state by nature, that we need the power of God to prepare us to receive the gospel. So, then, we shall take the people dwelling for the little time they dwelt at mount Sinai spiritually, as expressive of the dealings of the Lord with those for whom he intends eternal salvation. And when they had dwelt there long enough, and their conviction was deep enough to sink them into self-despair, and to make them say, “Let not this voice speak to us any more, but speak thou with us,” the Lord said,

"They have well spoken." And so that man that knows his state as a sinner, and something of the terribleness of the threatenings of God against him as a sinner, is led to pray, "Let not this voice speak any more," and to request that the voice of the Mediator might speak, that voice that saith, "Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you release; I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

There are two chief things I shall try to make clear; first, *what the right-minded Israelite learnt at Sinai*; and secondly, *what he was directed to do when he left Sinai*.

He learnt that there was a terrible, a deadly, and to the creature a damning antagonism between the nature of God and the nature of man,—I mean, of course, as a fallen man; not the nature of man abstractedly considered, as it was before the fall: it was in harmony then. It is through the sin into which we are brought,—saturated and steeped in sin as we are,—that our nature is entirely contrary to the nature of the blessed God. It is said of the Israelites at mount Sinai in the fourth chapter of this book, "Ye stood under the mountain." They saw that everything was over them. Let this represent that conviction of sin that brings a sinner to see his standing, that he is standing under all his sins; and that if he die without Christ, those sins will surely fall upon him like so many burning mountains, and that to eternity. And then standing under the mount means also standing under God's wrath, under the curse of God. Ah! let a sinner be awakened up to this; let him see this, that there is not anything he can do that can pass those sins away, that can pass that wrath away; he saith, Well, God is holy, and I have nothing but an unholy nature to meet him with; God is righteous, and I have nothing but an unrighteous nature to meet him with; God is good, and I have nothing but an evil nature to meet him with; God is truthful, and I have nothing but a heart deceitful above all things and desperately wicked to meet him with; God is every way right, and my nature is every way wrong. Here is the great secret, Natural conscience will convince us of sin morally; and this moral conviction of sin drives thousands into a superficial profession of Christ; but while there are so many flourishing plants planted by the hands of men, a mere moral conviction, and a mere superficial profession, "every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up." Now "ye stood under the mountain, and the mountain burned with fire," to represent the fiery law of God, that there is nothing but fire for you; that is to say, there is nothing but wrath. Hence the apostle, when the law came, and he stood under his sins, it brought to light what he was in his nature, the all manner of concupiscency that was in his nature. This mountain

burned with fire, and so you will see there is nothing but wrath;—you are by nature a child of wrath, and that is all you are. The man who lives a conscientious life, supposing him to be lost, which he will be and must if he be not born of God, notwithstanding his moral excellency, will not have such a hot, such a burning hell as the profligate or the persecutor will have; but still even for him there is nothing but wrath. “The mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven.” So if I would climb to heaven, there is wrath there; there is hell beneath, and hell reaches to heaven;—it burned with fire unto the midst of heaven. What a solemn lesson this is, when we see that our sins have lighted up a fire that burns to the very heavens. And then it goes on to say, with “darkness, clouds, and thick darkness.” Here is conviction of sin. Did we ever see our sins as impenetrable clouds, as darkness, as thick darkness? Do we know what it is to feel that our sinful state has made everything dark for life, even thick darkness; dark for death?—where shall I go to when I die? dark for judgment, dark for eternity, dark in every way? This then is one lesson they would learn,—the completeness of the contrast or terrible antagonism between the pure nature of God and the nature of the creature. Unless we are thus convinced, how can we prize that beautiful scripture in Isaiah xliv., where the Lord saith, “I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me, for I have redeemed thee”? What is this to the man that never saw his sinful state as a thick cloud, as thick darkness, and never saw his need of redemption, never saw his need of this saving gospel, and the eternal interposition of the blessed God? Ah, if I am speaking to any now that seem to be standing under the mount, under their sins, and feeling all is wrath, the Lord will speak ere long and say, “Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount;” and he will direct you to take the journey to the promised land, and will show you what you have to go on with by which you are sure to reach that land. This then is one thing they would learn. The apostle Paul never knew it in a state of nature. You could not have got him to say then what he said after called by grace. He says, “The law is spiritual.” He always before that held the law as merely moral. He did not suppose the law reached to what his nature was, but only to his outward life. But now, when taught of God, he finds out that the law is spiritual, and that he himself, in the contrast thereto, is carnal, sold under sin. Oh, there is plenty of room for such a Mediator as Jesus is, whether we see our need of him or not; there is plenty of room for the interposing and abounding grace of God, whether we see our need of it or not. It is a great mercy to be thus experimentally acquainted

with ourselves. We should never forget almost the first thing said of the prodigal,—“he came to himself;” and the Lord will, in order to save the soul, bring the man to himself, that he may find out what a poor, loathsome thing self is; and then he will say, Ah, Lord, if thou hast blotted out my transgressions as a thick cloud, it was a thick cloud indeed; my sins as a cloud, it was a cloud indeed; and if thou hast redeemed me, thou must have paid a mighty price indeed; and now, Lord, I am glad to come to thee, where that mercy is that comes by eternal redemption.

The second lesson the people would learn at Sinai would be their utter helplessness. Now what are we to do? Here are the thunders and the lightnings, we cannot stay them; here are the thick clouds and the thick darkness, we cannot remove it. What can we do? We dare not attempt to go up to meet God; it would be death to attempt it; for even if so much as a beast touched the mountain, it should be stoned or thrust through with a dart. If we attempt to touch the mountain—that is, defile it, that is the idea:—God is there in his legislative presence, in his terrible majesty as a sin-avenging God; and if we even touch the mount we shall as it were defile it; we must therefore stand at a distance; and bounds were set, lest the people should come nigh, and God should break forth upon them and destroy them. So they found out their helplessness. Ah, we can do nothing! What it may please God to do we don't know, but we can do nothing; here we are, helpless. Ah, just so; if the law be spiritual, holy, just, and good, and your nature carnal, unholy, and evil, what can you do? You must not touch it; if you attempted to touch it, you would, as it were, defile it; it would be repulsive in the sight of God. Do you know what is said of the best of the doings of the creature? I know very well there is hardly anything else talked about in our day but the doings of the creature in different places. Do you know what is said of the doings of the creature? Hear what the Church of old said:—“All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities like the wind have carried us away;”—poor, helpless creatures. What then must they do? Do? They can do nothing; only entreat that that voice may not be spoken to them any more. What I am dwelling upon now is a greater mystery and of greater importance than some may think. First, I say, it is a great mystery that the fall of man should have brought us into such an awful condition as we are in; and then at the same time blind us to our condition, and make us insensible and unconcerned about our condition. And while God's own word is clear upon the point that the creature can do nothing, yet everywhere the doctrine is preached that the creature can do something. But after all the creature is by nature dead in

trespasses and sins : God alone can bring the man to life. The Israelites, then, could do nothing. Well, we know what the Lord did ; he did something : he provided a sacrifice, and a mercy-seat, and prepared that way in which he would dwell among them. Just so now we can do nothing. I wish to be clear here. You know one and another among us are being taken away week by week, and none of us know whether we shall ever come to this chapel any more ; every sermon therefore that we come to listen to, let our desire to the Lord be like this,—If I never hear another, may this be such a testimony as I can go home and die upon. Upon this matter of helplessness hear what the word of the Lord saith : “Cursed is he that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.” It is no use for us to dream of continuing in all things, with the deceitful heart and vile nature that we have. And “he that offendeth in one point is guilty of the whole.” I do not wonder, therefore, at the apostle saying, “I speak to them that know the law ;” and those that know the law will through the law become dead to the law, and place their hope exclusively in the eternal perfection of Christ, and in the yea and amen promise which is by him. They would learn, then, the solemn antagonism, and their need of Christ as the way of reconciliation to God ; they would learn their helplessness, and entire dependence upon God for what he was pleased to do. And wherever he brings this conviction, it is a sure sign that he will in his own time reveal unto such his dear Son ; for this conviction is nothing else but the beginning of that good work that shall be performed unto the day of Jesus Christ.

The third thing they learnt would be that there was no pattern after which they could copy at Sinai. There is great emphasis laid upon the words, “Ye saw no similitude.” Those words are used several times. I am aware that that is a thrust at idolatry,—that they could not hereafter make the likeness of something they saw there, because there was no likeness ; but then it has another meaning. There was no similitude there ; there was nothing as a copy, as an example, to which they could conform. Where then are they to come for a similitude, for something to which they can conform ? They must come to mount Zion. Jesus Christ is a priest after the order of Melchizedec ; Jesus Christ is the image of God ; and receiving Christ by precious faith we come into the image of God, into the likeness of God, for Christ is the shining forth of God’s glory, and the express image of his person, and he hath predestinated the people to be conformed to the image of his dear Son. So there is no similitude, no pattern, at Sinai ; but in mount Zion there is Christ Jesus the Lord ; and when conformed by faith to him, putting

on his righteousness,—“put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ,”—here is a similitude, a form, a shape, an order of things in which we are sweetly conformed to the blessed God; and that God that so righteously stands against us at Sinai, righteously as well as mercifully stands for us at mount Zion.

The fourth thing they would learn would be this,—that it was through the forbearance of God that they were not cut down altogether. “Did ever,” saith Moses, “people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live?” They would learn this. Ah, we are not cut down. They were afraid they would be. “Let us not hear this voice speaking to us any more, lest we die.” Now, Christian, bring this home to yourself. While you were in a state of nature, how is it that your life was preserved? Why were you not cut down while in that condition, and sent to remediless woe? And since you have known the Lord it is equally applicable. How is it the Lord has not cut you down as a cumberer of the ground? For every Christian, let him bring forth as much fruit as he may, feels as though he was a poor fruitless creature, a poor fruitless tree. Ah, he saith, it might well be said of me, “Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground.” But through the long-suffering, forbearance, and unchangability of God, I am preserved;—there is a place he has given me in Christ; “There is a place by me,” saith the Lord, and that place is Christ; “and thou shalt stand upon a rock,” and that rock mystically is Christ; and so the soul is brought up out of the horrible pit and miry clay, and made to stand upon this Rock of Ages. I should not like you to lose sight of this one lesson, that it is through the forbearance of God. Ah, this is a blessed doctrine. The Lord waiteth and forbeareth, and nothing can provoke him to execute the fierceness of his anger upon Ephraim. “I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim; for I am God, and not man.” “Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still.” Ah, the apostle Peter saith, “God is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish,” that is, not willing that any of the *us* should perish;—“but is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any” of us “should perish, but that all” the *us* “should come to repentance.” And if God wills the people to come to repentance, come to repentance they must; and if he wills them not to perish, then the counsel of his will must stand good. “This is the will of your Father which is in heaven, that not one of these little ones should perish.” See then his long-suffering, waiting until the appointed time arrives; and he bears with our manners in the

wilderness. We sometimes sing the words, and I hope with sacred feeling ; it is a very nice reflection ; the poet, looking back at our state by nature, says,—

“ See how heaven's indulgent care,
Attends their wanderings here and there.
Glory to God, they ne'er shall rove
Beyond the limits of his love ;
Fenced with Jehovah's shalls and wills,
Firm as the everlasting hills.”

I think the Christian cannot dwell too much upon the forbearance of God. What does it mean ? It means his immutability ; he loves you, and that love knows no variation ; and see the greatness of that love,—it bears with everything there is to bear with ; and the dear Redeemer has wrought a work which is as lasting and as unchanging as himself ; it arises from his wondrous nature, and is glorious as himself. Hence by that work the people are to be conformed to his image. Let us, then, bless the Lord for his forbearance, his long-suffering ; with him there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. And the Lord has declared that this blessed truth, his forbearance, long-suffering, immutability, is to yield or afford strong consolation for those that know their need of Christ Jesus as the only refuge for poor sinners.

The fifth and last lesson I will name they would learn at Sinai would be, that of all calamities, of all fearful and dreadful destinies, that by which we fall into the hands of a sin-avenging God, is the most awful. “Ah,” they would say, “look at this awful majesty. If I am to fall into the hands of such a God as this, if he be against me, well might the Apostle say, he is a consuming fire.” This is another strong feeling which the Christian has. The tried Christian sometimes looks at Sinai, and then at Zion. “Ah,” he saith, “I can see in Zion that Jerusalem is there, a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down, not one of the stakes thereof shall be removed, nor one of the cords thereof broken. There the Lord, in contrast to Sinai, will be unto as a place of broad rivers and streams ; everything paradisiacal and refreshing. Will that be my lot ? or will Sinai be my lot ? Shall I be received at the last into those realms where the Lamb leads them to fountains of living waters, and God wipes away all tears from their eyes ; or shall I be left to be lost ?” I do hope you will all see the importance of abiding by the truthful testimonies of the blessed God. While men are saying doctrine is of secondary consideration, I say it is of primary consideration ; it is the great essential consideration. What does the Saviour say upon these weighty matters in contrast ? He gives us in Matthew xxiii, a sample of human traditions and doc-

trines instead of the doctrines of God; and what did those doctrines do? "Ye pass by the weighty matters of judgment." How did they do this? By being led by human tradition. And it often astonishes me that in our latitudinarian day there are some that question whether the Romish Church is the harlot of Babylon; whether the Romish Church is so marked by blasphemies as the same church is that is spoken of in Revelation. The matter is as clear as ABC. Only think of a dying worm displacing the eternal testimonies of the blessed God, and putting his own sinful, satanic doctrines, ceremonies, inventions, and plans into the place of the counsel of the Most High. What did the martyrs die for? Not one died for morality. They were not put to death for any immorality; they were charged with it, the same as the Saviour was charged with it; and what will not the devil do? But it was for the truth that they died; at least, if I may judge by what we read, and if I may judge by the infallible rule of the word of God, they were put to death for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held. It was for the word of truth they were put to death.

These, then, were some of the things they learnt at Sinai. Have we, not in the same form, but in a better way—namely, internally—learnt the same lessons,—not in form, but in kind? Can we say that we are made sensible of the deadly antagonism between our nature and the pure nature of our Maker? If so, how shall we prize that precious fountain that is opened for sin and for uncleanness, that takes away all antagonism, and establishes an eternal harmony between the saved soul and the everlasting God! And if we know our helplessness, how shall we prize that precious faith that enables us to say with the Apostle, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me"! And if we know something of the fact that there is no similitude to which we can there be conformed, how shall we rejoice in conformity to the Lord Jesus Christ! And if we know something, too, of the great truth that it is through the forbearance of God, through the Lord's mercies, that we are not consumed, how shall we prize that mediation that establishes this forbearance and immutability in our favour! And if we know something of the solemnity, the awfulness, of falling into the hands of the living God as a sin-avenging God, how shall we earnestly seek the Lord Jesus Christ; how shall we prize that refuge, that hiding-place; how shall we say with the Apostle, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ"!

Secondly, I notice *what the right-minded Israelite was directed to do when he left Sinai*. They had dwelt there long enough to prepare

them;—mind, the right-minded among them only; for we find that the main body of the people soon after this fell into idolatry; they had not profitted. And so it is now. A minister may preach the terrors of the law, but the dead man does not feel nor see them; he may preach the beauties and attractions of the gospel, but it is all alike to the man dead in trespasses and in sins; he has no feeling, no concern; he is content with the world, content with a little sort of decent profession, and so he wraps it up. But when God comes in, and makes the sinner sensible of his condition, how that changes the scene. Now when they left this mount they were to take their journey towards the promised land, “to the mount of the Amorites, and unto all the places nigh thereunto, in the plain, in the hills, and in the vale, and in the south, and by the sea side;” and, indeed, to aim at the full liberty they were to have. The Lord there gives an account of the limits of the promised land; and they were to aim at the possession of the whole of it, which they did not acquire until the days of David. David was a beautiful type of Christ in working out the liberty of the people. What had the people to go on with? They were to set their faces and their hearts towards the promised land; and I will give a threefold description of what they had to go on with. First, that which was past; second, that which was present; and third, that which reached on to the future. So that they had plenty to go on with. And if all of you had as much to go on with temporally, in this world, as we have to go on with spiritually, you would all be so rich that you would not know what to do with your possessions. First, then, they had to go on with that which was past. What was their past? The salvation from Egypt. “Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed; thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation.” They were to take this past salvation with them as an assurance that there was not anything too hard for the Lord. But they—the main body of them—neglected this salvation, thought nothing of it, and put human inventions into the place thereof; they ceased to believe in it, never having understood it; they saw God’s works, but not so as to understand them. The main body of the people, then, left this salvation behind. But those that took this salvation with them—that is, the testimony of the salvation—reached the promised land. Just so now, we must take the salvation with us—the testimony of it—that Christ wrought at Calvary’s cross. If we neglect to take with us the testimony of his finished work, his salvation, the victory he has wrought, then we shall come short; and if we could go up to heaven’s gate we should not be admitted, because we have not the true testimony of Christ’s finished work. We must take that with us. “He that overcometh,”—that is, receiveth

the testimony of what Christ has wrought—"unto him will I give power over the nations;" he is sure to be victorious; "I will give him the morning star;" that is, as Christ is the morning star, he will give such to be like unto himself. Thus, then, they had that which was past. And you read in Ecclesiastes that "God requireth that which is past." The prophets required that which was future; but that which was future with them is past with us; the Messiah did come, and did achieve that which was predicted. So that we have this to go on with, and the Lord will go on with us by this salvation. Secondly, what there was present to go on with. Here is the manna; here is the bread of life, and it will come every day. Who is so well able to feed you every day as the God of heaven and earth? Ah, but will the manna continue? Of course it will; the Lord says it shall. It did not come on the ground of your goodness, but it came because you needed it, and God had a favour unto you; and it will continue. So the manna did continue, and so the bread of life shall continue with us. You sometimes hesitate and say, I don't know, I'm sure, whether I shall be able to go on with this business now; I am afraid I shall not get a bit of bread; I think I shall drop this, and take to something else. But if you were sure it would answer all your purposes, and that it would bring you a loaf of bread all your days, you would have none of this anxiety. That was the position of the Israelites;—they could not be starved. Then there was the rock, and that rock mystically is Christ, as well as the manna mystically is Christ. Therefore they had plenty of pure, refreshing, healing water to go on with. And every one knows, or might if they tried it, that pure water is the best drink under the heavens. Again, they had the sacrifice to go on with. There was the priesthood. They were poor sinners, but the sacrifice day by day met them. I am a sinner, Lord. Well, but there is a sin offering for you. I deserve thy wrath. There is a burnt offering for you. I have a great deal of trouble. There is a peace offering for you. I am weary. There is a Sabbath day offering for you. I am in debt. There is a jubilee offering for you. Whatever the man's trouble was, there was an offering to meet him in that trouble. Then again, there was the cloud to guide them,—to shelter them by day and guide them by night; a beautiful figure of God's truth. As God was in the cloud, so God is in the truth. Then again they had the presence of God; then they had the mercy-seat; so they had plenty to go on with. You might imagine an Israelite going back to Egypt, and the Egyptian saying to him, What, are you come back?—For they did go back in their hearts, and some of them made a captain over them to take them back again. A pretty captain he must have been; I wouldn't have had such a captain as

that; I should want to go forward, no going back for me.—What have you come back for? the Egyptian would say. I don't know. Could you get nothing to eat? Oh yes, plenty to eat. Nothing to drink? Yes, plenty. Wasn't your health good? Yes. Did your feet swell, so that you couldn't travel any further? No. Did your raiment wax old, and you were so shabby you were ashamed to go on? No. What have you come back for, then? I don't know, I am sure. Was your God with you? Oh dear, yes. Was the cloud with you? Yes. Was the mercy-seat with you? Yes. Did your enemies conquer you? No; we conquered them all; we went to war with the Amalekites, and killed them, but they couldn't kill any of us. What have you come back for? I don't know, I am sure. Why, I should think the Israelite would have been like the man in the parable,—speechless. What a fool he must have looked! Ah, my hearer, that man that departs from God's truth, that brings us the manna, the water from the rock, and shows us the High Priest, the sacrifice in all its adaptability, that shows us the mercy-seat, the presence of God, and these eternal realities,—if that man knew the value of these things. Ah, I was afraid the Lord would turn me back, and so I came back. Oh you silly thing, you should have stopped till he had sent you back; he would never have sent you back if you believed in him, and your heart was with him. Ah, but I feared he would. Well, but did he tell you to go back? No; he blamed any of us that had an inclination to go back. Well then, don't blame the Lord. To whom did he swear in his wrath that they should not enter into his rest but to them that believed not? Then also they had, shall I call it, a threefold assurance, only they must have faith in it, that they should reach and possess the promised land. First, there was a sermon sent to the tribes of Israel when they were in the wilderness, and a thorough good sermon it was; and that sermon contained the faith of one that one would think wouldn't even indulge the least hope of any interest in Israel's happy destiny. What is the sermon the spies brought? Well, we met with a person in the land—a woman,—and she said, "I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man;" and only in one woman,—that is my old friend Rahab; "for the Lord your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath." Now, Israelite, what do you think of

that? Oh, if that is it, I will go on. Depend upon it the right-minded among them would look upon that as the best sermon in the world. "The Lord your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath;"—he will do it, there is no uncertainty about it. What is the good of that gospel that comes with, "I hope and trust, and humbly think, and wish and desire, and woo and coo?" What does the devil care for that? Nothing but "I will and they shall" can decide the case in favour of a poor sinner that feels his need of the certainty of God's truth. Then they had some more words they were to take with them. Now, brother Israelite, take these words with you as a believer in the past salvation, as a believer in what you have to go on with—namely, God himself; and every mercy you need he will bestow. "Thou shalt bring them in,"—we are not to get the land in possession by our own sword, neither is our own arm to save us, but thine arm, and thy right hand, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hast a favour unto us;—"Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which thou hast made for thee to dwell in, in the sanctuary, O Lord, which thy hands have established. The Lord shall reign for ever and ever." And then also the Lord saith, "I have set the land before you;"—I would rather take the marginal reading there, because it makes that scripture harmonize rather more with the sermon of my old friend; she says, "The Lord has given you the land;" and so here the marginal reading is, "I have *given* the land before you;" that is stronger still;—"Go in and possess the land which the Lord sware to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; to them and their seed after them." If there are all these encouraging words in relation to the temporal Canaan, when we take God's higher oath in Christ Jesus, revealed to Abraham; when we take the positive promise, then what is there to discourage? Whatever there is in self or in circumstance to discourage, there is very much more in the gospel to encourage us. May the Lord, therefore, still keep us pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. And so it is that, in whatever mount or valley of trouble, he will ere long say, Ye have dwelt long enough in this place. And this he will at the last day say to all the righteous dead, Ye have dwelt long enough in this place, rise and see the kingdom I bestow. But eternity will not be too long to dwell in Mount Zion. And he will never, never, never, say, Ye have dwelt long enough in *this* mount. Only a few days at Sinai, but in Mount Zion days without end. Amen.