

SURREY TABERNACLE PULPIT.

LEVEL GROUND AND HEAVENLY GATES.

A Sermon

BY MR. JAMES WELLS,

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“And men shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more utter destruction; but Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.”—Zechariah xiv. 11.

THE great and main business of the Old Testament Scriptures was to set forth the sufferings of Jesus Christ and the glory that should follow. Now that one scripture is very instructive, because it shows us that when we come to scriptures in the Old Testament that are rather ambiguous, we should test them by the person, and work, and glory of Christ; and then see whether in so doing there is a spiritual, a lively, a profitable, and a beautiful meaning brought out; and if there be, then there is not the slightest danger of our being wrong. I do not find that the Saviour had anything like a multiplicity of objects in his running commentary on the Scriptures, when, “beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself;”—they were concentrated in himself, and were all to come by him. This is the kind of rule that we are to go by, and hereby get at the meaning of the Scriptures. See how plain a clause a little farther back in this chapter is when tested by him:—“The Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee.” Here is the coming of Jesus Christ; so that when Jesus Christ came the Lord our God came. And the Lord sometimes overrules unbelief wonderfully; and when unbelief rises very high and becomes very strong, the Lord comes in sometimes with such rushing power, that the soul rushes with such power out of that unbelief as to say what it would not say if it had not been so oppressed. Just so with Thomas;—there he was under the power of unbelief:—I will not believe unless I see the prints of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side. But when the Saviour did appear, and poured life and light into Thomas’s soul, then he brought

out the fulfilment of this very clause, "The Lord my God shall come;"—Thomas said, "My Lord and my God!" there he recognised this very person. So the Lord overrules unbelief, overrules trouble, overrules everything; and by those very discouragements prepares us to receive the truth more largely, more heartily, more profitably than we should do even without those trials. Now Jesus Christ is the Lord God that did come; "and all the saints with thee." They were all with him virtually; he took upon him the seed of Abraham; and in his birth Isaiah foresaw this:—"Shall a nation be born at once?" Yes; they are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, and the whole of that nation were virtually born at once when Christ was born. "Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day?" Yes, when Christ rose from the dead; and all his saints were virtually with him also during his whole life. If they were not, whence cometh his sorrow, whence cometh his grief, whence cometh all he suffered in his life? All he suffered was by virtue of the oneness between him and his saints. And they were all with him in his death, all embodied in his death; he comprehended and embodied them in his death, and there and then turned them all, being sinners, into saints. And they were with him in his resurrection:—"Thy dead men shall live; with my dead body shall they arise; awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust, for thy dew is as the dew of herbs." And they were with him in his ascension to heaven; there he ascends as their representative, there he ascends to plead their cause. Now all through they were thus virtually with him; and what they have been relatively they shall by and by become actually, as he himself saith. If you notice the particular form and order of his words, he says, "Other sheep I have;"—mark, I have them now, in relationship; I have them now, in love; I have them now, in eternal choice; I have them now, in the eternal covenant;—like Peter's vision, they were possessed by the Lord before they themselves possessed the Lord in the manifestation thereof. So that being with him virtually then, they must be with him actually; the one follows upon the other. "The Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with thee." That scripture therefore has been fulfilled; but it does not follow that it has not yet to realise another fulfilment, because it has; for at the last great day also he shall come, and all his saints shall be with him; so that after receiving one fulfilment, it goes on then to realize its ultimate fulfilment. The Lord said by Hosea, "Out of Egypt have I called my son," referring to Israel coming out of Egypt; but it had another fulfilment to receive, for we find it referred to the Saviour returning from Egypt. I mention this just to show that when tested by the person and coming of Christ, how beautifully the Scriptures open

up. And can we have too much of mediation? can we be wrapped too much in that that taketh us up, and cleanseth us, and pardoneth us, and healeth us, and clotheth us, and keepeth us, and becomes surety for us, and will take us triumphantly at last into everlasting glory? The more we have thereof the better, for God ultimately is to become all and in all.

Our text refers to a particular state of things in which the people are to dwell, and that state of things is described in the preceding verse—that “all the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon, south of Jerusalem; and it shall be lifted up, and inhabited in her place, from Benjamin’s gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananeel unto the king’s winepresses.” I do desire to be thankful that we live in a day when we can enjoy the full benefit of what our God has given. Times have been—and it is so in some countries now, and there are plenty would have it now in this country—in which men have held that no private Christian, and no what they call unordained minister—that is, who is not made a minister by Act of Parliament or civil law—ought to have the whole range of the Scriptures, but that we shall dole out to them such parts of the Scriptures as we think proper; and those parts that those non-intellectual, non-educated, non-collegiate people cannot understand, we will withhold from them. Let us be thankful, then, that we have the whole range of the Bible. It is true there are some ministers who say we have no business to meddle with certain parts; but then that is simply saying God ought not to have given them, if we have no business to meddle with them. “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God,” and if it is not profitable to us, it is because we do not understand it and do not enter into it.

The text presents itself in a threefold form. First, here is *an order of things in which the people of God are to dwell*; secondly, *partial destruction*; “there shall be no more utter destruction;” thirdly, *the ultimate safety*:—“Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited.”

First, here is *an order of things in which the people of God are to dwell*. “All the land shall be turned as a plain from Geba to Rimmon, south of Jerusalem.” What does this mean? Every one knows that south of Jerusalem it was very hilly and rough, and places of idolatry; but let us come at once to what is the meaning. To be turned as a plain means that it shall be made level—that is the idea. It was to be made level with the temple; it is to stand level with something; and the doctrine here meant is that of consecration to God. Jeremiah in his 31st chapter sums it up thus, that all this part of the land that shall be so dealt with “shall be holy unto the Lord; it shall not be plucked up, nor thrown down any

more for ever." So then the land being turned as a plain is a strong and bold figurative form of speech to show that sinners shall be consecrated to God by being brought into reconciliation with him, and be brought to stand level with something. What is that that they are brought to stand level with, brought to stand even with? What a sweet theme it is to dwell upon! David explains the whole of this part when he saith, "My foot standeth in an even place." Bring in the righteousness of Christ, and if thou believest in Christ's righteousness as the way of justification, justified freely by his grace, thou art by that righteousness brought into a complete level, even with all the demands of law and of justice; the law demands no more, justice demands no more; love, I was going to say, can suggest no more than what is embodied in this, and the glory to which it leads. "My foot standeth in an even place." And the apostle Paul was almost in the third heavens while dwelling upon this, to show how by precious faith we are, in receiving Christ's righteousness, brought even with all the demands of law and justice. It is indeed a beautiful theme. What! not a fault? I, who am all faults? I, whose faults are like the stars of the sky and the sands of the sea-shore for number; who can number up the idle, the evil, and wicked thoughts I have had since my natal day? and yet not one to be laid to my charge!—all taken away, all forgiven: not a spot, not a wrinkle. And the apostle seems to sound out the words as a challenge to the whole universe,—“Who shall lay anything”—from the least to the greatest of your faults—“to the charge of God's elect?” How is that, Paul? Why, “it is God that justifieth.” And how does he justify? Why, by faith in Christ. “Be it known, then, men and brethren, that through this man”—this wondrous man, this God-man, this wondrous person—“is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.” Now there was a time when we were not standing on this level with law and justice; there was a time when we were standing in a very different position; but now our foot standeth in an even place. And being brought up into this level, even with the demands of law and justice, the Christian is prepared for heaven at any moment. It does not matter whether you die in your sleep, or drop down dead, or die by acute or by chronic disease, let it be what it may, there you stand complete in Christ, even with all the demands of law and justice; so that when you do die, your soul will realize the mystic meaning of that scripture, “Dan is a lion's whelp; he shall leap from Bashan,”—called a lion to denote his oneness with the Lion of the tribe of Judah. And though the poor body is gasping for breath, dying in mortal weak-

ness, the soul with its majestic powers shall leap into eternal glory. It is already level therewith; it is already even therewith; it has not any up-hill work to do. "Whom he justified, them he also glorified," because the justification stands even with eternal glorification. It is a divine righteousness, a heavenly righteousness, God's righteousness, an eternal and infallible righteousness, freely given. Is there any difficulty, therefore, in understanding the meaning of the land being turned into a plain? And the next clause I shall have to notice explains it still more clearly.

Then we come secondly, in this part, to the impediment removed. This righteousness brings us up into a level, but though we are brought up into a level by this righteousness, there is something still standing between us and God; there is something still in the way; and what is that? My sin. "Who art thou, O great mountain?" Accumulated transgressions; and there they stand like granite rocks, and threaten my eternal ruin; but "before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain." The dear Redeemer marches down to this tremendous mountain, takes it on his shoulders, casts it behind his back, throws it into everlasting oblivion. "Before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain." The impediment has vanished; the sun now comes down this valley with healing in his rays; now the impediment is removed out of the way, now there is nothing to hinder, nothing to hurt: the valley is filled, the mountain is lowered, the crooked is straight, the rough is plain, the glory is revealed; all flesh shall see it together. The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it; men shall dwell in it. Where would you dwell but in this beautiful order of things, where you stand even with law and justice, even with all the sanctions of the pure perfections of the great God, where every impediment is moved out of the way—"Thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back;" where would you like to dwell, but where you are thus justified and have peace with God? where would you like to dwell but where this great Zerubbabel has removed this mighty mountain, and shall go on with his mighty work until the top stone be brought home with shoutings of "Grace, grace unto it"? Well might the poet say,—

"Oh, what a sweet, exalted song
Shall rend the vaulted skies,
When, shouting Grace, the blood-washed throng
Shall see the top stone rise."

And yet we are not to dig in this part for any water! Why, there is water all over the globe if you can dig deep enough to get it; and the deeper the well the better the water tastes, because it is more unmixed with superficial matters belonging to this dirty world; and therefore if we can get at these deep things of God, they come with

a coolness, a freshness, and a purity, and a blessedness. Only there is this about them, I grant, that with literal water—which I am more fond of than any other drink under heaven—your thirst is soon quenched. But I will say one thing of this living water—that the more you drink of it the more you want—it quenches your thirst, and yet it makes you thirst for more. The dear Saviour brought the secret out. Blessed Jesus, we are thy witnesses of the truth. “The water I shall give shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life;” as though he should say, When once you taste this pure water of the river of life, if it did not last to eternity it could not satisfy you, for you will never say you have had enough; you will never say, Give me no more; you will never say there is too much. No; it shall go flowing on to the countless ages of an eternal world. “And men shall dwell in it.” Jesus Christ dwells here, where this land is thus turned into a plain, where we are brought up into a level with the demands of law and justice. God dwells here; the Holy Spirit dwells here; the promises dwell here; the people dwell here; and it is a dwelling-place into which none can come but by the regenerating power of God: it is a new birth, it is new creatureship, a new kingdom, a new scene of things altogether into which the people of God are thus brought.

Now I will say nothing about the topography here from Geba to Rimmon, because although we may get something out of those two words as to their etymological meaning, yet etymologies are often very uncertain. Therefore I will take it simply to mean the Gentile world; it represents the Gentiles, and they are to be brought into connection with the new Jerusalem. “All the land shall be turned as a plain, from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem.” The literal Jerusalem was on the north.

But mark the next words: “It shall be lifted up.” The Scriptures very often declare a thing, and then follow it up with an explanation. Now here is a kind of explanation. “It shall be lifted up;” not only turned into a plain, but lifted up. Is there any difficulty about this? Ephesians ii. and other scriptures are clear upon it. “He hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” They find fault with us for being what they call high in doctrine; I don’t mind how high a man is in doctrine, if he is as high in his affections as he is in doctrine; but if he hold the doctrine in his head, and his heart is not there, his affection not there, his desires not there, his soul not there, then alas, alas! it is a mere creed floating on the brain, and will never take the man to heaven. But if a man hath the truth and the love of the truth, I care not how high he is. “Set your affections on things above;” let them be planted there, let them grow there; as I have lately said,

they will bring you a good reward. I have found it so, and I do find it so. I hear Wisdom saying, "I love them that love me;" and Wisdom is sure to show the truth of its own testimony. Therefore, while I rather rejoice than not in being reproached at what they call a *hyper*, I am careful at the same time that my heart should be as high as my doctrine. "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." And surely, surely, our hearts cannot be too near to God; our hearts and affections cannot be too much in heaven; surely our conversation cannot be too much in heaven, from whence we look for the Saviour, "even Jesus, which hath delivered us from the wrath to come." But look at this lifting up. "It shall be lifted up and inhabited in her place." Now I prefer the marginal reading here. Our translators have kindly given us a marginal reading; and that is what you that don't trouble yourselves with the original language—enough to do with your own—can see as well as I can. In the margin it reads, "it shall be lifted up and abide in her own place." I like that reading; I think that to be the more correct reading of the two. What a sweet truth this conveys!

You are lifted up into God's love, and that is your place, and you are to abide there; you are lifted up into God's eternal choice of you, and that is your own place, and you are to abide there; you are lifted up into the knowledge of God, and you are to abide there; you are lifted up into the completeness of Christ, and you are to abide there; you are lifted up into the bond of an eternal covenant with the great God, and you are to abide there. You sometimes sing the words,—

"Where is the power can reach them there,
Or what shall force them thence?"

"She shall abide in her own place." If you are at home in these places, then is realized already, though you may not be able to see it, in your soul's experience, that scripture in Isaiah, "He shall dwell on high; his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks; bread shall be given him; waters shall be sure." Why, if God say this, how can it fail? It may appear to us in many ways to fail, but it cannot fail. "Bread shall be given"—take it both ways if you like, temporally and spiritually,—"and waters shall be sure." "It shall be lifted up, and abide in her own place." And how so? First, because there is nothing to put them down; Jesus Christ's work hath taken away all the reasons why they should be put down, and God's immutability makes it impossible they should be put down; and God being always with them also makes it impossible that they should be put down out of their place. Mark the words of the dear Saviour to the apostles, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the

gospel to every creature; and lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." "She shall abide in her own place." What a blessed alteration, what a blessed consecration, and what a blessed exaltation! And then abiding in her own place, you will see, has one or two contrasts. First, it contrasts with the first Adam, who did not abide in his place; and we fell in him, and did not abide, therefore, in our original place. Secondly it refers, I think, by contrast, to the literal Jews; their place was in covenant with God, but they left that covenant, and went into covenant with the heathen around them, and worshipped their gods, and so they did not abide in their own place. And then, thirdly, it contrasts with an apostate church, a church that was apparently in the right place, but they have apostatized and have gone down from that order of things by which alone they can be saved. But the man that shall dwell in this order of things stands on a level, or even, with all the demands of law and justice; and thus lifted up he shall abide in his own place. Then, whatever houses or lands or friends or property you may lose, you will never lose this; you will always have a place there. Have we not some of us sympathized pretty deeply in our feelings, and united with David in the same prayer, "Be thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort"? So much for the consecration.

Now let us look at the several steps by which this is illustrated and brought about. "From Benjamin's gate unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of Hananeel unto the king's winepresses." Are you at a loss to know what is meant by the gate of Benjamin? The word Benjamin means, "the son of the right hand;" here you are directed to Christ, and Christ is the Son of God's right hand; and what is said of Benjamin in Deut. xxxiii. applies nicely to the Saviour,—"The beloved of the Lord;" and if ever there was a beloved of the Lord, Jesus Christ was so; and yet he assures us himself that all the people are loved the same as he is: "Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me." He did not grudge our being loved with the same love that he himself was loved with. Though we were worthless, he infinitely worthy of the love, we infinitely unworthy of it, yet "Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me." He did not envy his brethren; no, he was above it all, and rejoiced in that equality upon which the Father had put his poor brethren; he came to exalt us. "The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him; and the Lord shall cover him," that is, throw a shield over him, "all the day long," which God did; God took care of Christ, as a pledge that he will take care of the people, compassing them about with a shield; "he shall dwell between his shoulders," in the very centre of his power. Christ dwells in the very centre of God's power, and the people of God dwell in

the very centre of his power ; they are sometimes represented as on the breastplate. I like the words you sometimes sing,—

“ They on his sacred bosom lay,
Loved with an everlasting love.”

But here they are represented as dwelling in the very centre of his power : “ Kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.” Here is the Son of the right hand; and what does he do? Why, by his mediatorial work he becomes the gate to God’s right hand; and if you are found at the last at his right hand, it will be said, “ Come, ye blessed;” and if you are not found at the last at the right hand, you will be found at the left, and it will be, “ Depart, ye cursed.” Here, then, is the gate of Benjamin, the gate of the right hand; Christ’s mediatorial work is the gate that leads to the right hand of God, where there are pleasures, not plagues,—plagues are put away,—where there are pleasures for evermore. And yet we must not meddle with these scriptures. The Lord help us to profit by them. I think you like to see the beauties of the dear Redeemer, even where they would scarcely be suspected to exist. The gate of the right hand,—Christ’s mediatorial work is the gate; this gate, into which the righteous shall enter, leads us away from hell, from the world, from death, leads us to God’s right hand; there we are enthroned, for we are to sit down in his throne with him, and that for ever. “ Unto the place of the first gate.” What a wonderful person the Saviour is; he will go with us all through this matter as clearly as can be. Just now it was the gate of the right hand, now it is the first gate. Why is he called the first gate? Because there was never one before him; he is the first. As the poet says upon another point, of the angels,—

“ They saw him break the bars of death,
Which none e’er broke before.”

He was the first gate; he brake in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron of our prison; he is the first gate—Alpha, the first; we never found the gate of heaven till we found him; he was the first gate we found, bless his dear and holy name, and we were glad to enter by the first gate; none would do for a way to heaven but Christ Jesus. It is the same doctrine, you know, when he saith, “ I am the door of the sheep.” Then there is “ the corner gate.” This corner gate is mentioned last; that is, the last gate. Test that by the Lord Jesus Christ; he is the last gate—he certainly is. What does the last gate mean? The final judgment; and it is by him that everything will be summed up at the last. So that he is the gate of the right hand, the first gate and the last gate; bless the Lord for this. Every other gate is shut against the saints of God, the gates of hell and of death; there is no gate of hell

open to the saints; Christ is the ultimate gate, the last gate. I have not so much light upon his being called the corner gate as I could wish; I have hardly entered upon it, but still I must say a word upon it. I think that his being called the corner stone will throw a little light upon this. The corner stone was reckoned to consecrate the whole building in ancient times. Now I grant the idea is superstitious; it was superstitious of the people; but you gather from Jeremiah li., that when they were going to erect a building they would get a corner stone from some prosperous city, from some prosperous country, in order by that corner stone to enlist the gods of that country on their side, so that they should have the same prosperity as the gods of that country from whence they took this stone gave to it. Now, though this is superstitious, do you not see in it a perversion of the blessed truth, that Christ is the corner stone? Jesus Christ was taken from a very prosperous country, very indeed; he was taken from heaven, and by him the God of that country, the better country of heaven, is on our side; and so the whole building is consecrated to God by him; and as he came from a prosperous country, the building to which he comes is to prosper just as the country prospers from which he came.

"That thy will may be done on earth as it is in heaven." Whatever God has willed on earth will be as surely done; there may be much conflict here, while there is perfect harmony in heaven; but his will is as truly done here as it is there. Here then we have the corner-gate, by which the whole is to be finally settled, and by which the whole city is consecrated to God. And there is another point, which may seem a little fanciful, but I shall not trespass too much upon your patience. In 2 Kings xiv. 18 you will find that Jehoash came to Jerusalem in the days of Amaziah, "and brake down the wall of Jerusalem from the gate of Ephraim unto the corner gate;" but he did not break the corner gate down; he left that. Now whether what Jehoash did not do was a type of what could not be done I am not able to say, but it seems like it in reading it. The Bible is a very wonderful book; you hardly ever get anything ambiguous in one place but you get a little light upon it in another. I thought to myself, Jesus Christ is that corner gate by which everything is to be finally settled, and it never can be broken down; the devil may come against it, but he never can break it down; it still remains. And so the final judgment by Jesus Christ is recorded, and I have already stated it this morning:—"Come, ye blessed, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

Then we go on to "the tower of Hananeel;" and what does Hananeel mean? If we can with safety depend upon the etymology

of the word, you read in Cruden that it signifies "the mercy of the Lord." Ah, what was it but mercy that brought us up into this even standing, lifted us up, brought us into the gate of the right hand, into the first gate, and into the last gate;—what is this but mercy? So it signifies the mercy of the Lord, and the grace of the Lord, and the gift of the Lord, all embodied in Christ; and Christ is that strong tower, the righteous runneth into it and is safe. And he receives these people in all these respects. I cannot now enlarge upon the last clause, but see how beautifully it winds up:—"unto the king's winepresses." I will not say, here is a reference to the sufferings of Christ; we may take that view of it, but I must not take that view of it now. "Unto the king's winepresses;"—that wine that cheers and doth not inebriate. There are many scriptures that wind up in that same beautiful way;—that lovely paragraph in Deut. xxxii., the last clause is, "and drink the pure blood of the grape." There is much said about this in the holy Scriptures, to set forth the cheerfulness of the saints of God, their strength, their peacefulness, and happiness, and glory, by the blood of the grape, by the blood of the everlasting covenant. "Sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine. I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day." "And men shall dwell in it." I cannot leave this part now without just saying that to my mind it is a beautiful representation of the order in which we are to dwell with God. First, we are brought to stand by faith in Christ—for we stand by faith—even with all the demands of law and justice; secondly, as an explanation of this, we are said to be lifted up, and are to abide in this place into which the Lord hath lifted us; then that Jesus Christ appears as the gate of the right hand, the first gate, the consecrated gate, the last gate, the tower, and then by him the glory, the blessing, the cheerfulness, the happiness, that shall be enjoyed to all eternity, indicated by the wine of the gospel, the precious blood of the everlasting covenant. Ah, my hearers, after myriads and myriads—yea, if the first astronomer in the world were to run up the arithmetical scale to the uttermost extent of his talents, what would his calculation be in comparison of the countless millions of years that eternity consists of? And yet, after countless millions are gone, the name of Jesus, the atonement of Jesus, the righteousness of Jesus, everything pertaining to him, will be as fresh, as new, as blessed, and yield the same glory that it did the first moment we took possession of the bliss. "Men shall dwell in it."

And now what shall I say upon the other parts? Nothing, I suppose, hardly. *The partial destruction.* "There shall be no more utter destruction." Then there is to be some destruction? Yes,

friends. I get very comfortable sometimes, comforts abound in my soul; I can leave everything with the Lord, and not a wave of trouble seems to roll across my peaceful breast;—in comes the enemy like a flood, destroys it all, and there I am as poor as though my Father would not give me a farthing, there I am as comfortless as though I had never known his name. It is gone; is it gone for ever? What do you say, David? “He restoreth my soul;” bless the Lord for that. It is only partially gone, not utterly and finally gone. Ah, but suppose you go away into captivity of soul, and circumstances, and bodily affliction,—I don’t know how many calamities at once; what then? Well, the answer is, “When the Lord turned our captivity,” and there is promise after promise that he will turn our captivity,—“then was our mouth filled with laughter and our tongue with singing.” So, then, if we lose our liberty sometimes—I mean as to enjoyment, and so on, and fellowship with God, it is not utter destruction, it is only for a little while. And, then, again, we may lose this, and that, and the other; but there stands that beautiful scripture in 2 Samuel,—David inquired of the Lord—that was very wise; “Go,” the Lord said, “and thou shalt recover all;” and he did recover all; and so we shall recover all our comforts. The joy you used to have will come back again. If you could have seen Job at the end,—Well, Job, you said you would it were with you as in months past; now your captivity is turned, how now? Oh, it is not only with me as it was in days past, but better; I have twice as much temporally, and twice as much spiritually, as I ever had before; and I know very much better how to estimate it now; I held it in my supposed wisdom before—this great “I;” but now, behold, I am vile, now I am dust and ashes; now I loathe myself in my own sight; now I will hold these things in the Lord. So, then, no more utter destruction. The poor body must mingle with the dust by and by; but hear what the word of the Lord says upon that:—“Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.” Ah, Lord, my brother is dead. But he shall rise again. No utter destruction; it may well be said, “Happy is the people whose God is the Lord.” Time does not allow me to enlarge upon this, but you see that you should never despair; if the light, the joy, the comfort, are gone, they will come back again; the Lord is with you. Are you put, like Manasseh, among thorns, and afar from the Lord’s house, afar from fellowship with him? There is nothing too hard for him; he can turn our captivity as streams in the south, and cause us again to rejoice in his goodness.

Lastly, *the ultimate safety*. “Jerusalem shall be safely inhabited;” that, of course, means the new Jerusalem. Go to one of the Psalms—the 144th—and there you get it!