

THE MOUNTAIN OF JUDAH

A SERMON –Preached on Sunday Morning October 13th 1867, by

MR. JAMES WELLS

AT THE NEW SURREY TABERNACLE, WANSEY STREET

VOL. IX. - No. 466.

"The voice of my beloved: behold he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills"—
Song of Solomon ii.8

ONE of the most striking features of this book of Solomon's Song is that of liveliness. We find the church here represented in the liveliness of her affections to Christ, to God; we here see the Savior in the liveliness of his love, and of his activities towards the church; and so he is represented as a roe, or as a young hart, expressive of freedom and activity. And there appears, both on the part of the church and of the Savior, an infinity, I was going to say, of delight in each other. Hence the church in the next verse speaks of the position the Savior then occupied, and indicates that he would by and by come out of that position into another; for she says, "He standeth behind our wall." The 2nd of Ephesians I think will explain to us what is meant by the wall. The apostle there calls the ceremonial law a wall, and Christ came and broke down that wall of partition between Jew and Gentile, that both Jew and Gentile may share in the blessedness of God's everlasting love to man. "He looketh forth at the windows." May not these windows denote the ordinances of that dispensation? Every sacrifice was to the right-minded Israelite a kind of window that let in upon his mind some light concerning the one ultimate sacrifice by which sin should be eternally put away. "Showing himself through the lattice." The ordinances of that dispensation are there, I think, meant. But by and by this wondrous person should come and accomplish all the great ends predicted. Hence the delightful truth, "The winter is past," and the winter there I take to be the wrath of God; "the rain is over and gone," and the rain we there take to be that rain of fire and brimstone that must ultimately descend upon the heads of the wicked, upon the heads of all that are not found in Christ. But on behalf of those that are brought to know his voice and to love him, on their behalf this winter is past, this ruin is over and gone, and now he brings in a paradisiacal and endless summer. As Watts nicely sings concerning this new, this gospel state,—

There everlasting spring abides,
And never-withering flowers;
Death, like a narrow sea, divides
This heavenly land from ours."

I cannot attempt to take up all the parts of our text this morning, and therefore will pass over such parts as I should not have time to deal with, and treat only of those parts that I shall be able, I think, to get through. You observe, for instance, in the first place the voice. The 3rd of John, that whole chapter may be taken as a kind of sample of what the voice of Christ is. There, in that chapter you get the voice of regeneration, the voice of mediation, the voice of discrimination, and the raised eternal relationship to the church. "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom." All this I must pass by. And you will observe that

the things included in this voice—that is, the voice of his word—the things included are all endearing. Hence the church says here, “The voice of my beloved.” And that doctrine that has not a tendency to endear the Savior to a sensible sinner is not God’s doctrine; that doctrine that has not a tendency to enthrone the everlasting God in the best affections of the man that feels his need of eternal mercy, is not of God, for God is love, and every one of the testimonies of his blessed word tend to that end— namely, love. God the Father hath served us in love; Christ hath served us in love, the Holy Spirit serves us and dwells in us by love. “I have loved thee,” is the language of the Eternal Three, “with an everlasting love.” He has determined, therefore, that his people shall serve him in the same spirit, from the same motive, in the same element, and in the same bond. So it is that the promises are exceeding great unto all them that love him.

I will this morning take a twofold view of our subject. I will first notice the mountains and hills of impediment which the Savior overcomes. I will secondly take the mountains and the hills to denote the eternal truths of the gospel, “here the Savior lives also in triumph, and where his people shall dwell forever with him.

First, then, just a word upon the mountains, the hills of impediment which the Savior overcomes. And I will here take the Savior leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills, to denote with what triumph and with what certainty he enables all his people to overcome all their troubles. And I pray as I go along this morning you may feel unbounded confidence in Christ, that you may feel unbounded confidence in the blessed God to appear for you, and to enable you ere long to overcome every mountain, every difficulty. Let us see, then, the various representations of this in the word of the Lord, and let us see under what circumstances the Lord takes his people up. It is encouraging, at least to me, and to hundreds of you; and happy for you all if you can feel that that is your name, if you can feel that you are described, and that you can answer to that;—when the Lord would represent to us how he would overcome all impediments for us he says, “Fear not, thou worm Jacob,” Oh, happy is the man that is brought low enough to see and feel what a poor, helpless, worthless creature he is - that he is, as it were, a worm, and no man; that sin hath so spoiled us, so enfeebled us, so degraded us, so corrupted us, and so altogether ruined us, that we are as poor worms. There is no danger of excess in humility here. If the heart be deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, what can go farther than that? And if the Lord has given us some samples of the same, I am sure we shall, as sinners considered, be worthless in our own sight. Human merit, human power, creature doing, form any part of the salvation of the soul! Such a doctrine could not be for one moment admitted into our minds or hearts. Now the Lord, then, thus sees us. And if a worm has mountains to impede it, what can that poor worm do? Just so our sins. And some of us have difficulties in other respects. A little difficulty, if you have no means of getting over it, rises to a great difficulty, like a great mountain, like a mountain of brass; it seems as though it would never be moved. Now hear, then, what the Lord says on this; and of course he says it by Jesus Christ, by what Jesus Christ as done in leaping and skipping upon those mountains and hills, treading them down, so that all must pass away. “Fear not, thou worm Jacob, ye men of Israel.” The first clause takes them up in what they are in themselves; the second clause takes them up in what they are in Christ. Whenever I read those two clauses I think—at least, generally I do—of the words of the apostle, “I knew a man in Christ.” Now does not that throw a little light upon this? “Fear not, thou worm Jacob;” that is what you are in yourself;—“ye men of Israel;” that is what you are in Christ Jesus. Now here is the promise, by what you are in Christ—in Christ you are men; there you stand in the full stature of a man; then you stand in holiness and righteousness, created in Christ Jesus. “Ye men of Israel I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.” Then comes the promise of what the gospel shall do, and what you shall do by the gospel. “Behold, I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth;” all this of course is figurative, but then not at all ambiguously so; it is so clear that we can understand it; - thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat

them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff." So that these very difficulties shall, by our pleading God's promises, making use of his blessed word by prayer and supplication - these rocky, these adamant, iron sort of mountains, shall become beaten small; great difficulties shall come to be little difficulties;—"thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them;" and thou shalt stand still, as it were, and see the interposing hand of the Lord in taking away the mountains and hills of thy sins, and then fulfil, in thy happy experience, the testimony, "Thou shalt rejoice in the Lord, and shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel." Is not this one of the things the church meant? "the voice of my beloved." He cometh leaping upon that mountain that made me tremble; he skips upon these hills that overshadowed me, and that I thought would fall upon me and crush me, and I should be ruined, damned, and lost forever; but Jesus steps in with his might power, and with infinite ease treads them down to a plain, makes himself manifest to my soul, enables me to rejoice that he has indeed wrought the victory, and lets me into the secret the apostle spoke of when he said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me." And then, when you are thus favored, the Lord knows what your after experience will be. When your sins are thus taken away, and you can see the Lord's interposing hand, he knows what your after experience will be. And you will say, Well, the Lord has been kind to me, yet what a poor creature I am! I do thirst for another manifestation of his mercy; I do thirst for another revelation of his victorious power. Very well; there the Lord meets you. "When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them." What, hear their thirst? Yes; "I will hear them." Now mark, - "their tongue faileth." Can you not recognize here the work of the Holy Spirit, or in other words, a part of your experience? The tongue faileth; the man cannot express a word. Is it not so with you? You try to pray, kneel down in private before the Lord, cannot find a word to say; you can only sigh and mourn; and when you get off your knees Satan says, You have been mocking the Lord, you have not been praying. Whereas you have been praying, not with your tongue, not with words, but the soul secretly sighs and seeks for something, you hardly know what, and yet you do, you know it is the Lord. Now "when the poor and needy seek water, and there is none"—mark that, I cannot find anything.—"and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them." My hearer, can thou see thy self as a poor worm, and can thou feel thyself to be poor and needy? Hast thou a thirst—if it be not very intense, if it be only a humble thirst, if you even thirst to have more thirst after God, to have more thirst after the river of his pleasure? If thou hast this thirst, then thou art a part of the happy number on whose behalf the Savior has trodden down all their sins, all their faults; these dark mountains and hills are gone; the Lord is come unto thee, and thou art come back to the Lord, there to dwell forever. Then, again, "Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain; and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shouting's, crying, Grace, grace unto it." Ah, then, says the poor sinner, this great mountain of sin, this great mountain of trouble, this great mountain of opposition, if grace, grace be to do it, then I will not despair. "Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel"—meaning of course spiritually Jesus Christ—"thou shalt become a plain; and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it." Here is the grace of God our Father, that where the mountain abounds in magnitude, grace shall much more abound; where the mountain is deeply rooted and strong, grace in its strength shall much more abound. Here is the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, here is the grace of the Holy Spirit, and here is the grace of the gospel. "Thou shalt become a plain." I cannot describe the sweetness of unbounded confidence in God. You know the 11th of the Hebrews, what a wonderful illustration that is of the sweetness of unbounded confidence in God, in the right way. It must be the confidence of faith; it must not be the confidence of the flesh. If you think you are a good creature, and so you will have a strong confidence; if you think, like the elder brother, you have never transgressed at any time, and on that ground have a strong confidence, and grudge the poor prodigal the kind reception he has met with, and the provision made for him, then, alas! thine hope will prove to be but a spider's web, thy confidence will prove to be vain. For it must be the confidence of faith, that is, you must be sensible of your need of Christ, and you must be a believer in

his atonement, in his righteousness, in the dignity of his person, and in the immutability of God. If that be your faith, then your faith will stand not in the flesh in its goodness or badness, nor in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. When it is thus the confidence of faith you cannot have too much confidence. So, then, the poor sinner says, How am I to become a part of mercy's building? how am I to be so honored? how can I be made one of the lively stones built up forming that spiritual house? how can I be engaged in the holy, righteous, and heavenly service of the blessed God, offering up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ? The answer is, "Grace, grace unto it." Here, then, it must be the confidence of faith. Now look at that thought if you can. Can you not see the difference between the confidence of the flesh and the confidence of faith? Hence, you know, we live in a day when men are multiplying all sorts of ceremonies and austerities and there is their confidence. But all such confidence is in the flesh. But the confidence of faith cannot be too strong. If you be a believer in the Lord, believe his blessed truth, you cannot have too much confidence. "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" Let us have another scripture upon this subject, the 40th of Isaiah, "Make straight in the desert a highway for our God." There are some of you, I am afraid, know not what it is to be brought into the desert in the sense there spoken of. To be brought into the desert is to be brought into a solemn conviction of your state; to feel what a poor, lost, solitary, miserable, lone creature you are,—like a pelican in the wilderness, like an owl in the desert, like a sparrow alone upon the housetop; and you will say, I do not think any one of the Lord's children could be such a poor, solitary, mopish, miserable creature as I am. That is the desert. Now, "Make straight in the desert a highway for our God." It is all made straight in your soul now. You are brought into this desert state; you can listen to the warfare that he has accomplished; you can listen to the announcement of the pardon which he hath established; you can listen to the substituting of grace now and glory hereafter into the place of your sins,—"She hath received double for all her sins." There the way is prepared. "Make straight in the desert a highway for our God." I say, how welcome the Savior is to such! Now what does the Lord say unto you? you that know what this solitude is, what this severation from the world is, what this warfare being accomplished is,—What does he say? He says, "Every valley shall be exalted." Now suppose we take that this way, that every deficiency shall be made up, that whatever your need in Jesus dwells, and there it dwells for you. "And every mountain and hill"—every impediment—"shall be made low," and you shall see over them, and leap over them, and skip over them; do as the Savior does, for he teaches us in many things to do like himself; and so David says, "By thee I have run through a troop; and by my God have I leaped over a wall." And are the places rough? Then "the rough places shall he made plain." And are things rather crooked? Yes, this is crooked, that is crooked, and the other is crooked; oh, so many crooked things. Well, then, here is some work for faith. "The crooked shall be made straight." It will come right by and by; yes, only you must wait for it, for "the vision is for an appointed time;" wait for it with a confidence in the Lord's word that every crooked thing will ere long come straight. "And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed." What is there called very beautifully "the glory of the Lord" is in another place called "the salvation of the Lord." "The salvation of the Lord shall be revealed." So, then, the salvation of the Lord is the glory of the Lord, for he glories in salvation, and he is thereby glorified, and saved sinners must and shall glory in this eternal salvation. "And all flesh shall see it together;" Jew and Gentile shall glorify God. So much, then, for the achievements. But we have not done yet. I suppose you all have your troubles of some kind or another, and you may depend upon it that your best policy is to look to the Lord, and to stand before the Lord, and to wait his good pleasure; he will not say thee nay. One of the old came to a wise conclusion; when he saw everything going adverse to God's truth and to himself he said, "Therefore I will look to the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me." The heathen gods do not hear the prayers addressed to them, because they are no gods, but my God is the living God, the king of eternity. His ear is not deaf, his eye is not dim, his hand is not shortened that it cannot deliver, therefore "I will look to the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me." Again, those of you that are thus brought to know your need of this mercy of the Lord, the Lord intends to bring you to heaven. It does not matter what there is in the way. I

am going to give you a sample now of the unbounded confidence you are to have in him—the confidence of faith. The Lord intended to bring a people—those that should believe, and did believe, and were alive at the last, and did reach Canaan, he intended to bring them into the Promised Land. There were tremendous impediments that stood in the way. Let us see how the word of the Lord handles that subject. Let us hear David's comment upon it; and it comes just to our subject, for the mountains and the hills were glad to leap and skip out of the way of the Lord Jesus Christ. The mountains and hills and seas and rivers are personalized, and represented as seeing the Savior come as their conqueror, and glad to get out of his way. 114th Psalm: "When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a people of strange language;"— and of course the world are strangers to us, and we are strangers to them, that is, in spiritual matters. Their religious language is a strange language, quite alien to us, and our spiritual language is quite alien to them; so that if you bring the Pharisaically disposed and the true believer together, they do not talk many minutes before they are barbarians one to the other; there is no love lost between them. It is a strange language. And so when a man becomes half Ashdod and half Canaan, a sort of half-and-half professor, it does not do for the true Christian. There is a wall of partition between them, until the Lord opens the eyes of the Pharisaically disposed, and brings him out of his Ashdod language to speak the pure language of the promised land. "Judah was his sanctuary;" that is, the tribe of Judah took the lead. Why did the tribe of Judah take the lead? what was the reason of that? Well; you all know the reason. The tribe of Judah took the lead because Jesus Christ belonged to that tribe, and descended from that tribe; and that is to teach us that he is to take the lead. He comes first; he is the forerunner; he has taken the lead; he has passed through the gate, and brings us out; he has taken the lead in our salvation; the Alpha and the Omega: and we may safely follow him, but we may not safely follow anyone else. Follow him and we are safe. Who but the Savior could utter such words as the following?—"He that followeth me shall not abide in darkness." As though he should say, Poor sinner, you are in the dark. Yes, Lord, I do not see the way of salvation clearly. Then follow after me; trace me out in my life, and death, and resurrection, and ascension, and intercession, and kingdom, and see what I have done, and you shall not abide in darkness. You will soon get out of it, you will soon come into the light. Well, when the Lord does interpose for his people mark what is said. "The sea saw it, and fled." Why, the sea had more visual power than most of the Israelites had. They were afraid of the sea; but God made the sea afraid of him. And no doubt they were afterwards afraid of the Jordan, but "Jordan was driven back." And as to the various kingdoms, they are called mountains and hills. How shall we meet these mighty kings, these formidable kingdoms? Oh "the mountains skipped like rams, and the little hills like lambs." Then David brings out the secret – the Lord's presence – he brings a kind of sledge-hammer; for the Lord says, "Is not my word like a hammer, that breaketh the rock to pieces?" – he brings a sledge-hammer down upon your unbelief, why, you will all go away from the Surrey Tabernacle this morning believers. "Who turned the rock into a standing water" Why, it is the very last thing we should have thought of. We were all thirsting, and ready to stone Moses, will him out of the way – he has brought us, we said, into this wilderness to destroy us at last. God steps in, and turns the burning, dry granite rock into a standing water; "and the flint" – pretty hard material, you see – "into a fountain of waters." Why, then, if God can do that, he can do anything. "The voice of my beloved! Behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills." And whatever the believer needs, God will do for him, let it be what it may. "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" Are not these things, then, encouraging to us? Are they not glorifying to the God of our salvation?

I must pass by many thing, and go on now to take another view of these mountains, after showing that they set forth the Savior's triumphs over all, the completeness and glory of the victory he has brought in, as a sample of his interposing for his people down to the end of time. I have said nothing upon the mountain of death; that is already virtually overcome. But I now, secondly, take the mountains and the hills to denote the eternal truths of the gospel, as spoken of in this book—the mountains of eternity. "The voice my beloved! behold, he comes upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills," of division. "Until the

day break, and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether;" Bether meaning "division." There is God's everlasting love to Jacob in contradiction to Esau; God's everlasting love to his own, in contradistinction to the others; and Christ gloried in that mountain of division. There is God's eternal election, and Christ gloried in the same, and commands his disciples to rejoice that their names are written in heaven. There is his eternal achievement, by which he hath redeemed his people, and distinguished them from all others by that eternal redemption, for none but the redeemed can learn that song that the redeemed sing. "The mountains of division." Then comes regeneration; that brings his people up to Mount Zion—mountain of division. Then comes resurrection to life; then comes glorification. Here is a range of mountains reaching from eternity to eternity. "Until the day break." I think the day breaking means the gospel dispensation. Until the ceremonial shadows—for those sacrifices were a shadow of good things to come—until these shadows shall flee away, turn, my beloved; abide by thy covenant, abide by thy Father's counsel, abide on the mountains of division, "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec." That is one order of mountains. If we know our need of the Lord's mercy we shall see that we can be saved after no other order of things. "Like a roe or a young hart,"— active and interested. So the Savior is. You know how many things he says of his people that show this; see the 10th and 17th chapters of John. Second, there is the mountain of myrrh. "Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh." There myrrh means what the word itself signifies,—bitterness. "Call me not Naomi," sweetness and pleasantness; "call me Mara," the same root from which the word myrrh comes; "for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me." The mountain of myrrh I take to mean Calvary's wondrous cross. There is the mountain of myrrh; there is the bitterness of sin, which the Savior endured; there is the bitterness of death, which he took away; and there was concentrated at the same time all the bitter enmity of fallen angels,— "Now is your hour, and the power of darkness;" there was concentrated all the bitterness of men, they mocked him through it all, it was a bitter mountain! a mountain of myrrh. There he concentrated all our bitters, and took the bitterness away. And I know not what we should be in the contemplation of this if we refused in our souls and feelings to sing with the poet, "How sweet," contrasted with the bitterness,—

"How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer's ear!"

What name is like it! Here is the mountain of myrrh, then. And you will perceive—but that I will dwell upon presently—that these mountains are all eternal. Mount Calvary—the redemption wrought there is eternal, "And to the hill of frankincense." There is his intercession. How expressive,— "the hill of frankincense!" He ascends to God's right hand and makes intercession for us; mingling much incense, offering much incense, with the prayers of the saints. Now watch me, every one of you, very narrowly in what I am going to say. From this mountain of myrrh, from this hill of frankincense —his intercession,— there is a certain voice, and what is it? He speaks thus, it so nicely accords with what we are saying. He says to the church, "Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee." That is the voice from the mountain of myrrh, from the hill of frankincense. Can you now bear testimony, and say, O God, thou knowest all things, and thou knowest that I see and feel that thou canst not pronounce me spotless in any other way, thou canst not declare me righteous in any other way, that thou canst not say that I am all fair, there is no spot in me, in any other way but in this way,—Jesus blood cleansing me from all sin. There thou art all fair; there is no spot in thee. And who will question but that the Savior delighted to do this part as well as all the other parts of the will of God? Who will dispute but that the Savior did spiritually leap and skip own upon this mountain? For he triumphed over principalities and powers in the very midst of them. See the thief's transition from the cross to the crown, from the gates of hell into the paradise of heaven; expressive of the Savior's triumph in the very midst of all he endured. Again, how does this matter end? I

do not know whether you ever noticed that there is a striking analogy between the close of Solomon's Song and the close of the Bible itself, — a striking analogy. Solomon's Song closes thus, — "Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices." Here is everything, you see; fragrant, beautiful, pleasant, attractive, and delightful. "The mountains of spices." "Make haste." How does the Bible close, how does the Book of the Revelation close? "Surely I come quickly Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Ah, if the Lord said to your son before you left your house this morning, "Surely I come quickly," you would be almost ready to say, Lord, I am going to meet thy dear children; I am going to hear one of thy servants; I am going to thine house. Do thou come quickly, that we may see thee in the beginning of the service, and see thee all through the service, and feel thou art with us. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." And then mark the mountains of spices all of you that can say, "Come quickly," that you long for his presence from day to day, for it does not mean merely his ultimate coming, but his present coming as well, manifesting himself as he doth not unto the world, "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all" that thus are longing from time to time for his presence; "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." What a sweet analogy there is, then, between the close of this book and the close of the Revelation! Now the mountains of Bether are eternal these divisions that God has made will remain forever; the mountain of myrrh— that which Christ wrought—will remain forever; the hill of frankincense, where Christ lives, will last forever, for "he dieth no more;" the mountains of eternity, the mountains of spices, will remain forever; pleasantness in every part for ever. Let us see if we can get a word from Jacob upon this very subject, and then I suppose we must close. Jacob says to his son Joseph, and we cannot doubt that it has a spiritual meaning, "The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors." Does Jacob mean to say that he had blessed Joseph with greater blessings than Isaac his father blessed him with? I should think not. And yet he says, "The blessings of thy father," meaning himself, taking it in the spiritual sense, "have prevailed" - not shall, but have prevailed— "above the blessings of my progenitors." Those progenitors must be Adam and Eve; and the blessings which they possessed were lost by sin. But the blessings that the saints possess were never lost; they were always in the Savior's hands, sin could not reach them,—all these blessings remain. Now mark why these blessings are, in a spiritual sense, so great; "unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills;" the everlasting division, the everlasting victory, the everlasting life, the everlasting spicy mountains, the everlasting paradise.