

# SURREY TABERNACLE PULPIT.

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THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS.—No. 1.  
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A Sermon

BY MR. JAMES WELLS.

PREACHED ON SUNDAY MORNING, 27TH FEBRUARY, 1870.

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“And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.”—Luke xvi. 23.

“WHAT shall we eat? what shall we drink? and wherewithal shall we be clothed?” are questions that press themselves in this life upon every man and upon every woman. There is no one who does not know that it is more or less a struggle to attain even these temporary ends. And yet how very light and unimportant are those questions in comparison of the question, “What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” There is something in the constitution and in the destiny of man that seems to command, if anything could do so, almost a worshipful reverence for the very constitution of man. How wonderful is his destiny. We see only the mere introduction to his existence on this side of death; eternity comes next, and when he gets into that world he comes into a world that knows nothing either of change or of terminus. I should think it was something of this view of man that made David say of himself, “I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” We can understand the latter clause—that we are “wonderfully made;” whether we look at the structure of the body, the mystery of the soul, or the combination of the two, we are wonderfully made. But what does he mean by being “fearfully made?” Does he not mean by that that there is something for man to fear, something for man to dread, something that he stands exposed to beyond everything else in importance? Fearfully made! Ah, my hearer, when we trifle with

our immortal souls we trifle with our Maker, we trifle with every iota of the Bible, from the beginning even to the end. See the life the Saviour lived, and the death that he died, in order to obtain our deliverance from that hell of which our text speaks, and form us for that blissful scene, that blissful world, into which he himself hath entered.

I shall this morning dwell upon matters that are plain and simple. I shall not attempt to open up all the parts of this parable, but I shall notice three of the doctrines are either expressed or implied. First, *the state of the dead immediately after death*; secondly, *the distance between the saved and the lost*; thirdly, if time permit, that which the parable suggests, *the unrivalled and unrivallable superiority of the word of God to everything else*.

First, *the state of the dead immediately after death*. Those, then, that die in the Lord pass instantaneously from the body into heaven; there is no intermediate state whatever; this I shall try and make clear by example from the Old and New Testament. Secondly, that the lost sink instantaneously from the body into hell; every one that dies in his sins, his sins will sink him into hell; the sins under which he is will sink him into hell; that sin that sinks the body into the grave will sink the soul into hell, as sure as we exist, if we die unregenerate, if we die unbelievers, if we die unacquainted with that Jesus Christ who alone can save us. Now, those that die in the Lord, the soul has to go into the presence of the Lord immediately. We can never do better than to take the Saviour in all gospel matters as our forerunner; and he himself is an example of this. His soul went from the cross to the crown, from Calvary to eternal glory. After he said, "It is finished," he said to God the Father, "Into thy hands I commend my spirit;" and having said this he gave up the ghost. It is true some hold that Jesus Christ descended into the hell of the lost. The holy Scriptures nowhere authorize us to hold such a doctrine as that; and we must not presume, or assume, or make a doctrine, and then, after we have made it ourselves, call it the Lord's doctrine. We must be aware of all this, lest the Lord should come and say, "Thou feignest it out of thine own heart;" and I am sure if it is feigned out of our own heart, it will be like that heart itself—offensive in the sight of God. The holy Scriptures nowhere authorize the doctrine that Christ went into the hell of the lost. All the hell that he went into was the hell of our sins; that hell that made him sweat great drops of blood; the hell that he went into was the hell of God's wrath. These are the two mighty deeps that called one to the other; and the deeper our sins, the deeper that wrath which our sins called for. "All thy waves and thy billows go over me." But then all this was before he died; so

that "thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." And why was not his soul left in the hell of our sin; why was not his soul left in the hell of the fiery wrath of God, in the hell of that wrath due to our sins? Ah, how sweet, how beautiful the answer, "It is finished." He endured all that was due to our sins, and there is no more to endure; he suffered all that was due to our sins, and there is no more to suffer. Why, then, should Christ go into the hell of the lost? It was finished on the cross of Calvary, and he went immediately into the bosom of the Father. Mark the language in the 13th of John—"When Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father,"—knowing that he came from God, and went to God—"having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." And again, he refers to this immediate departure into heaven when he saith, "I go unto the Father;" and when he spoke of going away he said, "If ye loved me,"—that is, in that respect—"ye would rejoice because I said, I go unto the Father; for my Father is greater than I." I may here just name that some have said that the Saviour descended into the hell of the lost in order there to demonstrate to fallen angels the victory he had wrought. Well, if you are a little attentive to the holy Scriptures, you will see there was no necessity for this, for the fallen angels well knew him on earth without his going down into the hell of the lost. "We know thee," they said, "who thou art; thou art the Holy One of God;" and they trembled before him, and acknowledged his sovereign power over them, his sovereign command, that he could do as he pleased with them. And so, when he cast out the legion of devils, they so forgot themselves,—because they would of course not willingly acknowledge the sovereignty and power of Christ,—that they besought him that he would suffer them to go into the herd of swine. And Satan well knew when the Saviour died; Satan was there; Satan put it into the heart of Judas to betray the Saviour; and Satan followed it up,—he inclined the high priest, and Pilate, and Herod, and the people, to treat the Saviour as they did. Oh how did Satan hope that the treatment of the Saviour by the priests, by Pilate, by Herod, and the mob,—how did Satan hope that these things would stop him, move him, drive him back. Oh how he was defeated when he saw the Saviour proof against it all. Here then is one of the things that Solomon could not comprehend,—the way of a serpent upon a rock. Yes, Satan found the Saviour to be a rock; he found no vulnerable place, no pregnable place, no place which he could get hold of; he could find no flaw there; Jesus stood in all the stability of his eternal deity. So then he had not to go into the regions of the lost

to demonstrate his victory; they knew very well what his victory was. The Saviour went immediately from the cross into the presence of the Lord; and on that same day (and that circumstance has done our hearts good many times), Jesus Christ received into heaven the poor dying malefactor;—"This day shalt thou be in paradise with me." But Jesus was there first, because he gave up the ghost at three o'clock in the afternoon, but the others were not yet dead; therefore the soldiers brake the legs of the malefactors, to hasten their death, as it was not lawful that they should be on the cross on the Sabbath day. So that the very law the Lord took advantage of to fulfil his own promise,—“This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” But for that law, and their breaking the legs of the malefactors, he might have lived two or three days longer, and the promise not been fulfilled. Ah, so it is, friends, that the Lord makes subservient to the purposes of his love and mercy some of the worst doings of men. “This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” “With me.” Jesus knew the moment when the malefactor would arrive, and he arrived there in all the welcome of saving grace, of mediatorial perfection, of which he had borne testimony on the cross,—“This man hath done nothing amiss;” he arrived there in all the prevalency of the Saviour’s intercession, according to his prayer on the cross, “Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom;” he arrived there amid all the triumphs of the cross, and as an example and illustration of the great truth that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners; and it is with this his name will resound throughout all the realms of heaven to all eternity. Never will that song grow out of date, or become insipid, mechanical, or formal;—“Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.” When we look, then, at the Saviour commending his Spirit into the hands of the Father, when we look at what he saith in other places about his going to the Father, and when we look at his promise to the dying malefactor; when we see no necessity whatever for his descending into the hell of the lost; and when we do see that there was a hell into which he did go,—namely, the hell of our sins and the hell of that wrath due to our sins; I think there we ought to stop; so that immediately upon death we may say here of the dear Saviour, as is said of all the saints, “Absent from the body, present with the Lord.”

Then let us come to the Old Testament, and see if we do not find this doctrine there. We find it even where death was not; because those who went to heaven without dying were only kind of examples of those who go to heaven at death. Where was Enoch taken to

when he was translated? He was taken to where his faith was, as every one will be. His faith was in God, and as his faith was in God, he was taken to God. So by faith Enoch was translated, and was not found,—translated that he should not see death; so that he went directly to heaven, as a kind of illustration of the fact that when you die, the very moment the body ceases to breathe, by an order of things that the great God has established, and we ought to be thankful for that,—the Lord has so ordered it that the soul is not to stop in the body a single moment when the body is dead. Now the Lord might have so ordered it as far as your mind to have agonized in the body after death; because you all know that the soul is not the life of the body;—the blood and the animal spirit are the life of the body; the body in creation had life before it had a soul; God created Adam a living animal, and then after that gave him an immortal soul,—breathed into him the breath of life, and man became a living soul. So it is a kind order of things as far as the saints are concerned that the very moment you breathe your last breath, at that very moment you are surrounded by angelic hosts, at that very moment you are ushered into the presence of your blest Redeemer, at that very moment you are ushered into a fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore. Angels attended all the steps of the Saviour while he was here below, and angels attend all the saints now. When a sinner is regenerated, brought to saving repentance, the angels know it, and rejoice therein; and when a believer is on his dying bed, angels know it; another heir of bliss is just about to enter heaven. Seeing, therefore, that the angels are ministering spirits to them that are the heirs of salvation, is it any wonder that it should be said that Lazarus was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom? Oh, it may well be said, "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord." Then again, Elijah,—where was he taken to? Why, taken to heaven; it saith so, and that decides the matter with me. If the Lord speaks a word, I say, Well, Lord, that will do for me, even though I cannot see the why or the wherefore. If the Lord saith Jonah was in the whale's belly three days and three nights, if I cannot understand how he could live there, I believe it because the Lord says it. If the Lord saith that the barrel of meal and the cruse of oil held out for so many months, I cannot philosophically explain it, but if the Lord says it, that is quite enough for me. And if I cannot understand how the multitude were fed with five loaves and two fishes, yet if the Lord says it, that is quite enough for me. If the Lord says his grace is sufficient for me, and I do not seem to realize his grace as I could wish, yet if he says his grace is sufficient, that is quite enough for me. So Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And where did Moses go to when he

died? I should rather think he went to heaven. His body did not go there:—the Lord sent angels and buried the body of Moses; and the devil came, and he wanted to bury the body of Moses. The devil was at the funeral of Moses:—Now, he says, here is a very nice cemetery, this is a very nice place, a very nice, comfortable place indeed; do not bury him in that valley; nobody will be able to give the honour due to him there; bury him in some conspicuous place, where they can do honour to his name. No doubt but they would have turned him into an idol, and worshipped his dead body, no question about that; and so the angel rebuked Satan. The angel would not lower himself by using any reviling accusation,—as though the angel should say,—Well, I can't expect you to do anything contrary to your nature; you are an enemy to God; you could not get hold of Moses when he was alive, and now you want to get hold of his dead body. So then, "no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day." If the Jews could get hold of it, what a market they would make of it; we should hear a great deal more about Moses' dead body than about Jesus Christ's living person. But where did Moses' soul go to? I should think it went to heaven. Fifteen hundred years afterwards, when the dear Saviour was on the mount of transfiguration, lo, and behold, this same Moses appeared. Well, Moses, I know what you said while you were on earth!—you said of Jesus Christ that he was a rock, and that his work was perfect; what do you say now? Well, Elijah and I say that there is a decease to be accomplished at Jerusalem; he will accomplish the warfare, he will finish the work; so that my fifteen hundred years in heaven have not lessened my assurance, but rather increased it, if such a thing were possible, that he will accomplish the warfare, and that he will accomplish it at Jerusalem. Ah, friends, so he did. So then, the Old Testament saints, where did they die? Answer, that little sentence,—of what importance it is,—"These all died in faith." Well then, as they died in faith, as I have said, their faith was in Christ, and their faith was in God; for they all saw the day of Christ,—Abraham and all that followed saw the day of Christ; so they died in faith, and immediately upon their death were in heaven, in the presence of the blessed God, and yet lived, for God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. The Lord wisely hides from us the glories of heaven, for if we could see as much as some of the ancients did, I was going to say we should be hardly fit to live. We have many advantages which the Old Testament saints had not, inasmuch as we see all the ancient predictions fulfilled in the coming of Christ; that which they longed to have accomplished we see is accomplished; and those predictions which they longed to see fulfilled we see fulfilled. On the other hand, they had some advan-

tages which we have not ; the Lord, as it were, to make up the deficiency, appeared to them more familiarly than he does to us. Look at his appearing to Noah ; there must have been a great deal of explanation and so on in showing Noah how to proceed with the ark. Look at the Lord's appearing nine times to Abraham. Ah, only think of it, Christian ;—if a Divine Person in the course of seventy or eighty years should come and make himself visible to you nine times, and say something infinitely blessed each time, what a privilege you would feel that to be. So that they sometimes saw heaven,—heaven represented by what they saw. I need not remind you of Jacob on his way to Padan-aram ; I need not remind you of Gideon ; I need not remind you of Isaiah, who saw the Lord high and lifted up, and his train filling the temple ; I need not remind you of Ezekiel ;—see how the heavens were opened to him. “ I,” saith the prophet, “ was among the captives by the river Chebar, and the heavens were opened unto me.” So that if we have the advantage of seeing these things fulfilled, the Old Testament saints had the advantage of personal, visible interviews with the Great Eternal that you and I can never have until we are stripped of this house of clay, and see him as he is, and love him as we ought. Then, if we come to the New Testament, how clear it is there. That one scripture, if there were no other, would be sufficient,—“ Absent from the body, present with the Lord ;” and that by the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. What do you suppose the apostle means when he saith, “ I desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better ?” Where did the spirit of Stephen go immediately to ? But I need not enlarge upon this. You have here, then, in this solemn parable, Lazarus, carried by angels into Abraham's bosom, and Abraham is in heaven ; the other, the rich man, dies, and immediately upon death, “ in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.” Death to the Christian is the last enemy ; there is no sighing, no sorrowing, no pain, no hunger, no thirst, no grief of any kind whatever after that. “ One more pang, the keenest and the last ;” when we come to that, there is nothing after it.

Secondly, we come to a part if possible more important,—*the distance between the saved and the lost*. “ He seeth Abraham afar off.” This he never saw before. In the first place, this rich man was a Jew ; he was a literal descendant of Abraham, therefore Abraham calls him his son. So that this man, this rich man, like the rest of the Jews, always thought that as he was the natural descendant of Abraham he was like Abraham, that he was near to Abraham. Abraham is my father, and therefore as he is my father, and I am one of his children, I cannot be lost ;—impossible for me

to be lost; I cannot go to hell; I am one of Abraham's children. I cannot go to hell; I have been christened, and confirmed, and have received the sacrament;—I cannot go to hell, saith another, for I belong to the only true Catholic Church, the Roman Catholic Church;—just as though any Church could save us; just as though any sect or party could save us,—high doctrine, low doctrine, or no doctrine. Why, salvation is of the Lord. I would as soon expect one Church to save me as another Church. Our faith must not thus be placed, because we belong to this, and that, and the other. Let us trace this matter out closely, for it is more important than may at first sight appear. This man thought that he was near to his father Abraham in relationship, in right, in title, and in heirship. But while this rich man was like Abraham after the flesh, he had not any likeness to Abraham after the spirit. Now Lazarus was like Abraham spiritually; and in order for us to be saved—here comes the point,—in order for us to be where Abraham is, we must be like Abraham; we must possess the same spirit; for when the spirit departs the body, it is met by the living God;—"the spirit returns to God that gave it;" and if that spirit be an unbelieving spirit, a spirit of ignorance and enmity, as all by nature are, then its very condition sinks it to hell. On the other hand, if it be of the same spirit that Abraham was of, then as you are near to Abraham in likeness now, you will be with him in glory then. Let us trace out the features of Abraham. What was his first feature? It was that he was called by grace. "The Lord called Abraham alone." Abraham's attention was solemnly called to eternal things; Abraham was called to look forward to a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Abraham was called to separate himself from all others, and to let his faith be in God alone. Abraham was called to hearken to God, to be with God, and God walked with him. Now let us come home to our own feelings. Have we been compelled, through grace, to look solemnly, prayerfully, and earnestly at eternal things? Have we been compelled to look by faith to God by Jesus Christ, to plead his righteousness and his atonement? Have these things been made so weighty to us as to sever us from all that which is hostile to God's truth, and stand out for that truth by which alone we can be saved? This is the experience that Abraham had; this is the experience that the rich man had not. The second feature in Abraham's character is this, that he received understandingly and in power the everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure. Let us hear the apostle's explanation of it,—that "when God gave the promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater he swore by himself, saying, In blessing I will bless thee, in multiplying I will multiply thee." This is not the covenant that God made with



Abraham in relation to the Jews as a nation ; this is the covenant that God made with Abraham and all his spiritual seed. Abraham saw that if the blessing failed, God himself must fail ; Abraham saw that the blessing could not fail by anything wrong in him, because the Lord met Abraham as a sinner, an idolater, and only as a sinner ; and the Lord revealed to him this immutable oath—"he swore by himself." Why, what will you say at the Surrey Tabernacle here when I tell you it is one of the highest joys and rejoicings of my heart to know that hundreds of you understand the new covenant, the sworn promise ; that you feel if your eternal life and welfare did not rest upon such bases, there could be no hope for you ? Therefore the Lord was abundantly willing to reveal this immutable counsel, that "we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." This rich man knew nothing whatever of this oath, nothing of this promise, nothing of this covenant ordered in all things and sure ; he had not this likeness to Abraham ; but the Lord has blessed us with this likeness. There was a time when we were not concerned for eternal things ; but the time arrived when we were solemnly and earnestly concerned ; there was a time when we were utterly ignorant of this new covenant, this sworn yea and amen promise, this immutable covenant, this immutable counsel ; but now, bless the Lord, we glory therein. Another feature in Abraham was that he saw, and of course received and abode thereby, the eternal priesthood of Christ. That 14th chapter of Genesis, taken in connection with the Epistle to the Hebrews, how instructive it is ! Melchizedek met Abraham with bread and wine, the bread representing the bread of eternal life, the wine representing the blood of the everlasting covenant ; and he blessed Abraham in the name of the Most High God. Here Abraham saw the perfect and eternal priesthood of Christ. This is that faith which the rich man had not, but which Lazarus had ; this is that knowledge of the new covenant which the rich man had not, but Lazarus had ; this is that knowledge of the priesthood of Christ which the rich man had not, but which Lazarus had. Then again, when Abraham is put to the test, he at the command of the Lord gives up that that was dear to him, dearer than anything else on earth,—his own beloved son ; he gave him up, for the Lord accepted the deed of Abraham as though he had actually sacrificed his son, because Abraham meant so to do in obedience to the Lord ; and you know what the Lord saith of that. Therefore Abraham would give up anything and everything rather than give up God's truth. Have we not some of us—most of us, I hope—the same feeling ? God helping us, much as we may mourn departing friends, and much as we may groan under various afflictions,—the Lord takes away this

comfort and that, and the other, takes away this and that object of desire, and we seem as though we were left desolate, yet if he will but keep his truth with us, and keep his Spirit with us, and keep himself with us, and himself still be our life and the length of our days, we would rather part with anything and everything than his blessed truth. So with Abraham, he held out to the last; he died in the same faith in which he lived. Thus then the rich man saw Abraham afar off, because he had not this spiritual likeness to Abraham while he was on earth. Here was the distance. He made sure he was going to Abraham, thought he was like him; so he was after the flesh, but not after the spirit. So the Jews of old. There never was in existence before or since a body of men farther from the spirit, the faith, the hope of Abraham than the Jews of the Saviour's day; and yet they made sure they were like Abraham. Why, the Saviour saith, So far from your being the true children of Abraham, you are his children after the flesh; so far from your being like him, you are of your father the devil; he was a liar, and you love lies and hate the truth; he was a murderer, and you mean to murder me, and all my saints that you can; and yet you think that you are like Abraham. Why, never was a people farther off. Ah, what delusions Satan is suffered thus to beguile men by; how great the mercy of being delivered from them all.

I now notice, in the next place, the answers that Abraham gave, bearing upon this same subject. The rich man saw Abraham afar off, and entreated him to send Lazarus with a drop of water to cool his tongue; "for I am tormented in this flame;" showing that the flame was internal. Ah, it is the conscience, the soul, the spirit, the fiery law of God, and all the sins of the man meeting, and there is the fire that cannot be quenched, there is the worm that cannot die. And now mark Abraham's language to the rich man. "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things." Jesus Christ was not one of your good things; there was something you liked better than him; God's truth was not of your good things, there was something you liked better than you did that; God's service was not one of your good things, there was something you liked better than you did that; and God's eternal mercy was not one of your good things. Your good things consisted simply of the things of your mortal life;—rich, arrayed in purple and fine linen, faring sumptuously every day. Your good things. Why, you are one not with Abraham, not with Lazarus; you are one with the rich fool, that said, "What shall I do to bestow my fruits? I will pull down my barns, and build greater, and say unto my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." Directly comes the voice, "Thou fool, this night shall

thy soul be required of thee; then whose shall these things be?" I would not be so dishonest as to say that we do not all love the world, and the things of time and sense; nay, I will go further than that,—that all Christians love the world and the things of time and sense very much more than it is desirable to do. And yet with all their faults,—for I hope in my last days that I shall not begin to beat the servants and the handmaidens, and begin to reproach the people of God; I never did and never will, for with all their faults, if they have a love (which we all have, there is no use denying it,) to the world, yet there is something which they love better. "If any man love the world;—which scripture must be taken in the comparative sense,—if you love these things more than you love the Saviour; if you love the world more than you love the truth, and will part with the truth or with the service of God, or stay away from the house of God, neglect the house of God, forsake the assembling of yourselves together for the sake of a little worldly advantage, that of course is a most wretched state of mind. So then, "thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things." Happy the man that can say, Well, I have my worldly tendencies, and love the things of time and sense, the same as other people; but at the same time the love of God, the electing grace of God, the promises of God, the precepts of God, the Christ of God, the salvation of God, the mercy of God, the presence of God, the care of God, the kindness of God, the eternity of God, the immutability of God, God in all these saving relations,—these are my good things.

"I'd part with all the joys of sense,  
To gaze upon thy throne;  
Pleasures spring fresh for ever thence,  
Unspeakable, unknown."

Then, mark, while these were his good things, there was no possibility of getting any mitigation to the lost man. "Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed; so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence." Once in hell, in hell for ever; once in heaven, in heaven for ever.

I may just say the word Lazarus signifies "the help of God." Here was Lazarus, the very dogs licking his sores. One goes past, and says, Do you see that poor creature lying at that rich man's gate every day? Poor helpless cripple! Do you see him, covered with wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores? Poor wretch! he hasn't a halfpenny to help himself with, and he desires the crumbs that fall from the rich man's table; and the rich man has not even the generosity just to give him a few crumbs. What do you think;—that Lazarus, notwithstanding his sores, his poverty, his helplessness—

ness, his pennilessness, his outcast condition, is one of the elect. No, says the other, he can't be one of the elect. If you told me the rich man was one of the elect, I should believe it, because see how nice he appears; he looks like a favourite of heaven; but to talk of that poor creature being elect is a monstrous thing; and to tell us he shall go to heaven:—what, such a miserable-looking object as that! Now the rich man is a fine looking man, a learned man, a clever man; he has got a deal of money,—very clever man; and they will want some clever men in heaven,—that is the man that will go to heaven; as for that poor Lazarus going to heaven, it is monstrous. No doubt the devil sometimes told Lazarus this. Now I am speaking this morning to some poor Lazarus;—everything seems to go against you, and Satan comes in and says, You an object of God's care! You redeemed by an infinite price! God love you and take you to heaven! Well then, if Satan should serve you so, the Lord enable you to run off to Lazarus, and have a word or two with him, and just look at his position. There he was helpless, miserable; but then his name embodies the great secret,—Lazarus signifies “the help of God.” And if Lazarus had been offered to exchange places, that is, spiritually as well as temporally, with the rich man, depend upon it he would have been like the rest you read of, not accepting deliverance in that way, that he might obtain a better resurrection. Ah, friends, it is a solemn truth that the Lord often gives riches in his anger, and takes them away in his wrath. “The prosperity of fools shall destroy them.” The Lord often doeth this. One of old wondered when he saw the prosperity of the wicked; but when he went into the sanctuary of God, he saw that the Lord had given those riches to them in anger, and would take both the riches of these men and them away in his wrath. Ah then, happy the man whom God has prospered in this world, that is led to know the Lord, and to make a right use of that the Lord has blessed him with, to do all he can for poor Lazarus—for there are plenty of Lazaruses, I can tell you, in our day;—and for God's cause, and thus to show his sympathy practically with the brethren. And then, if the apostle John were here, seeing you do as you have done (there are, I grieve to say, some few exceptions among you, I suppose more clearly to demonstrate the rule, or else generally I have everything to commend you for; your kindness has been above all praise;—if the apostle John were here, and to see these practical demonstrations of your love to God, to Christ, and the truth, he would embody you when he saith, “We know that we are passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.” Therefore we are to live not merely for ourselves, but for others as well.