

SURREY TABERNACLE PULPIT.

THE WORK OF FAITH

A SERMON – by MR. JAMES WELLS

AT THE NEW SURREY TABERNACLE, WANSEY STREET

VOL. XII. - No. 584.

“Which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” — Revelation xii. 17.

It is our mercy that the wrath of man is under the immediate command and control of the blessed God. David recognizes this when he says, “When I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me.” So the martyrs found it, so the people of God in all ages have found it, and so we shall find it. “Thou wilt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies you have plenty of instances of this in the word of God, —the Egyptians, the Assyrians, and many others “and thy right hand shall save me.” The dragon, and all the powers he had at command, set in against the woman, or the church; but while he cast floods of delusion and wrath out of his mouth, the Lord took care the earth should open;—that is, first the grave, and thereby the enemy should be swallowed up, as in the case of the Egyptians and the Assyrians; and then, when he pours out floods of delusion, the earth opens her mouth and receives those delusions, and helps the woman; for the more error is advocated, the more it alarms, awakens, and sets the people of God crying to him, driving them to the throne of grace. Therefore, it is the apostle said, “There must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.” Very often, when we get somewhat sleepy or careless in these eternal things, the Lord suffers an enemy to come in upon us, or suffers some delusion to arise, or some affliction; various ways hath he thus to make us feel that this is not our rest, but there remains a rest for the people of God.

My whole discourse this evening will be to show how the people of God keep the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, and I will take a fourfold view of our text. First, they the commandments of God by faith in Jesus Christ. Secondly, they keep the commandments of God personally and practically, Thirdly, they keep the commandments of God in contrast to the commandments of men. Fourthly, they hold the testimony of Christ in scriptural order.

First, then, they keep the commandments of God by faith in Jesus Christ. This is a, subject that we are always dwelling upon, and that we need always to be reminded of. When we say we keep the commandments by faith in Jesus Christ, that is only another way of saying that he hath kept the commandments for us. Hence it is that when the commandments were declared, they that heard the same could not endure that which was commanded. And let me just make a remark or turn upon the reason that we cannot endure that which is commanded. The apostle himself explains the reason; but we will carry it a little out in relation to our feeling upon the matter; for the Lord makes his people witnesses of the truth of his holy law, as well ns of the truth of his holy gospel. The apostle says, “The law is spiritual,

I am carnal, sold under sin." Therefore, leaving out all externals for a moment, the reason we cannot endure that which is commanded is because of our nature. Our nature is everything contrary to God's law. I might easily go through the commandments, and show that our nature has in it every principle of antagonism to that law. We are contrary to it, and apart from God's grace, whatever we do is just like ourselves. Hence our righteousness's, when we attempt to make them something before God, are spoken of as filthy rags, and we ourselves are spoken of as leaves that fade, as altogether as an unclean thing, as a piece of stubble. In truth, there is no help in the creature, there is no hope.

"Vain is the beast, all is lost,
Sin and death are stronger."

Therefore, if God be determined that not one jot or tittle of his holy law shall fail, then we must either be lost to all eternity, or else a surety must step in and do that which we could not do. Let us then once more look at the Lord Jesus Christ as having done this himself. Let us never forget that he stood in our place, and that he stood for us; that he did not obey God's law for himself, but for us; he was under the law for us. And once more I must remind you, — for I do want the thought and the idea to run all over the world, because there is a wonderful information to the saints of God upon that point, there are many good people think that the law simply means the ten commandments; whereas the ten commandments are the mere embodiment of the substance of the law. The word "law," when taken in the legal sense, means any and every threatening that you can find from Genesis to Revelation. Let me once more remind you how this is proved, —that when the New Testament would quote the law of condemnation as it stands against us, it does not quote from the ten commandments, but from other parts; — as, "Cursed is he that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them:" and that "as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse of the law." Now if you take this broad view of the matter, then view the dear Savior as living a life of perfect obedience to God, seeing that he had in him as man everything that the law required; but then he was God as well as man, and therefore that obedience which he rendered had in it more value than the obedience of the law even thus would have had if the human race had not fallen. You may suppose the fall had not taken place, and the whole human race therefore had continued in its original state of holiness and righteousness, and had obeyed God's law; —well, then it would have been mere creature righteousness, then it would have been the creature simply doing that which was its duty to do; and the very day that that race should fail, that would end it all. But the Lord Jesus Christ being God as well as man, he loved God in a way that no mere creature ever could, and he brought a holiness to God's law which no mere creature ever could; he stood in an infallibility which no mere creature ever could; therefore, there was in his obedience a divine value. And besides, suppose Adam had not fallen, Adam never could have got to the end of the law. If Adam had stood to this day, it would have been still his duty to go on obeying. But the Lord Jesus Christ, being God as well as man, there was eternity in his obedience without his obeying eternally: because he brought his deity, his eternal deity, into his obedience and therefore that which he did in the time in which he thus lived is an everlasting righteousness. So that the people that are made righteous by that righteousness, there is no possibility in any way whatever of those people being otherwise than righteous. They are righteous by this righteousness of Jesus Christ, and that being imputed to them, you see the utter impossibility of their being unrighteous. "This is the name wherewith she shall be called, Jehovah our righteousness." Why, if that be my righteousness, I am always righteous. If I am a believer in Jesus Christ, I am as righteous when I am cast down, when I am full of doubts and fears, when I am rebellious, as when I am in the happiest state of mind. And I must go a little further: —you shall not meet a precept in the Bible, either in the law, the old covenant, or the gospel, which Jesus Christ has not met. Hence it is that millions go to heaven without ever obeying the precept at all. Why, say you, how is that? Infants go to heaven, and they do not obey the precept; and thousands have been called in the eleventh hour, as was the case with the thief.

Infants, and those that are thus called at the eleventh hour go to heaven by that righteousness that has met every precept from the beginning to the end of the Bible. Ah, say you, do you set the precepts aside? We will settle that question presently; -certainly not; but I do rejoice in One that says, "Search the Scriptures, for these are they that testify of me and it is one of our privileges to understand how they testify of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, then, the people of God keep all the commandments and all the precepts, first, by faith, by receiving Jesus Christ as the end of the law for righteousness. Moses gave the law, and Christ fulfilled it; and that is where we want to be, —where it is fulfilled. But let us go a little further, and look at the penalties of the law. What a sweet thought, that while we read the threatening's of the Bible, the dear Redeemer was made sin for us, made a curse for us, blotted out the handwriting that stood against us; so that it is written on the forefront of the throne, "There shall be no more curse." Now, poor sinner, that feels you are perceptively and penalty condemned, Jesus Christ is the remedy for both. By receiving him you keep all the commandments; they are all honoured and established, and all the penalties endured; and the dear Savior might well say on this ground, "If the Son make you free, ye shall be free indeed." But I must not forget that this is wonderfully hard work to be enabled to believe, and the Pharisee calls this Antinomianism, because it so touches his pride, he does not like to be made out such a poor, filthy, helpless, lost creature as to need such a complete Savior as this; therefore, he calls it dangerous doctrine. But the man convinced of what he is as a sinner says, —Dangerous or safe, I cannot be saved without it; I can see no hope for me without a completeness in Christ that frees me from every precept, from every threatening, from every penalty. And thus, says the apostle, "The life that I now live I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." This, then, is the first gospel commandment. "What shall I do to be saved?" Then comes the commandment, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." How sweet the thought that the Lord looks at us as we are in his dear Son, that Jesus is thus our representative, and that while the thunders roll, they cannot reach those that are the inhabitants of this eternal rock. It may therefore be said "Let the inhabitants of the rock sing, let them shout from the tops of the mountains." But am I in thus speaking, in showing how Christ in his substitution has met the precepts, endured the penalties, done away with all the threatening's and left nothing but blessing for the people, as said Peter "Ye are called to inherit a blessing," -am I in thus speaking going to set aside personal character? Why, that would be making use of one department to set aside another; whereas to scripturally handle the several departments of mercy is to make one department the means of bringing the other departments in. Hence the apostle, when he would bring in God's foreknowledge, brings in thereby God's decree; when he brings in the decree, he thereby brings in personal calling; and when he brings in personal calling, he then brings in personal and manifest justification; and when he brings in justification, he brings in by that the other department, for without justification there is no glorification, for the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God; we must be righteous in order to be saved. Do we then set aside personal character by the completeness that is in Christ? Why, it is out of that completeness that our personal character arises; it is by that completeness that personal character is brought in; for there could not be any real personal character acceptable to God if it were not for Christ's perfection. You believe in Jesus Christ, in this perfection, this substitution, and thereby by faith keep all the commandments. "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ." How could you be a believer, and acceptable as a believer to God if there were not a Christ to believe in, if there were not a perfection to believe in, if there were not an eternal righteousness to believe in, if there were not an atonement to believe in, if there were not a covenant to believe in, if there were not a covenant God to believe in, if there were not an immutable counsel to believe in? That kind of character acceptable to God arises thus from the very things that men object to. Abel had this character, and therefore unto Abel and to his services the Lord had respect. Cain had not this personal character, therefore unto Cain and to his services the Lord had not respect.

Let us now come, secondly, to the personal keeping of the commandments. Let me mention a few of the commandments. I think the first is that of life. His commandment is everlasting life. The Lord passed by us when we were dead, and he said unto us, "Live," and we have been enabled to keep that commandment ever since. It brings me back again, you see, to faith. What a wonderful thing faith is! — "He that believeth hath everlasting life." Therefore to keep in the faith is to keep this commandment. He commands us to live, and by believing in Jesus Christ we do live. Can you live to God without it? How could I show my face here tonight but for atoning blood? how could I show my face here tonight if there were not a mediator? How could you ever show your face before God, or come to him, were it not for the mediation by which you have access to him? "Having boldness by the blood of Jesus," ah, the sweet sound, "the blood of Jesus," —to enter into the holy of holies. His commandment is eternal life, which we keep, and continue to live this life of faith. Now light is another commandment; —God commandeth the light, and he has commanded that to shine in our hearts; the consequence is that we walk in the light, even as God is in the light. Christ is the light, and God is in Christ, not imputing our trespasses unto us. So, Christ is the light in which we walk, and in him there is no darkness at all; there it is that God is light, in him is no darkness at all. Then, again, he hath commanded his covenant forever. How can we obey that commandment but by precious faith in Christ? And so of many more. But we will come to the Lord's own description. David describes it thus: — "The law of the Lord," which carries the idea of command, "is perfect;" that is, in its object, Christ the center; "converting the soul,"—converting the soul to this perfection that is in Christ; "the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord" —that is, the decisions and laws he has made on behalf of those that believe in Christ "are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they then, gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover, by them is thy servant warned," now look at that; — "by them is thy servant warned." There are a great many respects in which the people of God are warned, but I will here name one or two, and a scripture by which I think I can show what is there meant. "Moreover by them" —that is, by these gospel commandments, these blessed testimonies— "is thy servant warned." Let us hear the apostle's explanation, — "Warning every man." Surely the apostle does not mean every man literally. You cannot warn a dead man. You may warn a natural man morally, you may warn him rationally, but you cannot warn him spiritually; the man is dead in trespasses and in sins. "Warning every man, and teaching every man," every professed Christian man, "in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus warning every man against false doctrine, human tradition, and anything and everything that would mar the perfection of Christ, or lead us to place any hope in anything but the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, says David, "By them is thy servant warned; and in keeping of them there is great reward."

Now let us come down more to definition. I can give only a sample from the 15th of John. If you read that chapter through, you will find the commandments that the saints keep described very beautifully, indeed, it begins with the very subject we have treated upon. And what does the Savior say? Why, that that is very encouraging. You know the Holy Scriptures everywhere speak well of those that obey the Lord, obey the voice of the Lord, and the sheep that hear, obey, and follow the voice of the Shepherd. The Savior said, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." Ah, my hearer, then in prayer do we abide in the faith, and plead that almighty power, namely, Christ's prevailing power? Do we plead his name and make mention of his righteousness, even of his only? Shall your prayers fall to the ground? whatever your petitions are, whatever your troubles, as far as the answer shall be needful to do you good, it shall be done unto you. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples." Let us see if we can make this scripture plain. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bring forth much of me. If you make little of me, then you have not much praise to give to God. If you make little of me, as though the Savior, should say, then you have not much love to God.

Just in proportion as you make much of Christ, you love God, you praise and glorify God; you feel that if you had a thousand lives, you could lay them down in his blessed service. But if there be something else to take the Savior's place, and you make but little of him, then what does the Savior say? he to whom little is forgiven loveth but little. But the woman, when the tide of mercy had rolled in upon her soul, and melted her otherwise adamant heart, she washed the Saviour's feet with her tears, wiped them with the hairs of her head, and anointed them with costly ointment. She cared naught for Simon's feast; she cared naught for what there was on the table; she cared naught for what others were doing; her concern was thus to show her love to Jesus, "She loveth much because much is forgiven her." If you can catch the idea, it is as though the Savior should say, My Father has sent me, and he is glorified in your being pleased with me; — "Blessed is he whosoever is not offended in me he is glorified in your making much of me; for "it is the will of the Father that all men," that is, all believing men, should honor the Son even as they honor the Father." Here, then, to keep the commandment is to abide in him. And you cannot bring forth much fruit without making much of Christ. Much fruit means much love, much praise, much zeal, much decision, and much devotion. Now the Savior said, "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you; continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments," — my authoritative truths, "ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." Sweet, dear Redeemer! he has kept the Father's commandments, both in the legal and the gospel sense; he has not concealed the lovingkindness of God, nor hid the righteousness of God from the great congregation; therefore, he continues in God's love. And the first commandment to us, as we have said, is, — believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and abide in these truths, and you shall abide in his love. Now let us have the Savior's comment upon this, I will give the modern comment first. The modern comment is—Dear friends, I have not said these things to you to encourage you to sin, or to make you careless, or neglect your duty and perhaps I have gone a little too far in what I have said. And so, after they have said a little gospel, they seem to make an apology for it. Let us hear what the Savior says about it. After dwelling upon our abiding in him, and he in us, he says, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you." And what was Christ's joy? It consisted in carrying out the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God; and that will of God embodies not only his mediatorial work, but the eternal happiness of the people by that work, and the eternal glory of God. "These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." Can anything be more beautiful? — "and that your joy might be full" — that whatever little joy you have now may continue; that the gospel may never cease to be a pleasure to you, a comfort to you, life and light to you, an encouragement to you; and that your joy may be full. As Christ's joy is full, so their joy shall be full also. Here again is keeping the commandments; here are they that keep the commandments of God. And the Savior lays great emphasis in that chapter upon brotherly love, commands you to love one another; and so, he goes on in that chapter, which time does not allow me to enlarge upon. And just so, let us have Jesus Christ to begin with, as we have tonight, and then see what it is to keep his commandments in this spiritual sense, what is the consequence? The consequence is that just as persons are made manifest, as being thus practical believers, standing out for God's truth, God's cause, there is a unity of spirit among them, a unity of soul. But can a mere ceremonial religion produce what this vital godliness does? So much then for personal character; —each believer is thus brought to know the truth for himself, and to keep it.

But, thirdly, I notice that believers keep the commandments of God in contrast to the commandments of men. Now when Moses was about to leave Egypt, Pharaoh gave him a command; but Moses had a command from God, in opposition to that, "We will go three days journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to the Lord our God, as he shall command us." Now Pharaoh had just commanded Moses. But Moses well knew that what was not in accordance with God's blessed truth could not be acceptable; and so he listened not to the word of man, but to the word of God. Then again, go on all through the Scriptures, and you see perpetually false prophets arise, and men acquired great political or civil power over the

people of God. Now they had, in contrast to human commandments, to keep the commandments of God, that is, the truths of God, at the risk of their lives. Take Micaiah. When Jehoshaphat was misled by the little humiliation and pretended reformation of Ahab, Jehoshaphat very foolishly went into affinity with him, we must beware of mere empty professors; it ruined Jehoshaphat, and it ruined his house, going into affinity with Ahab. And Jehoshaphat was very uneasy. Here are all these false prophets; but is there not here a prophet of the Lord? Yes, there is that Micaiah. Well, I should like to see him. So, Micaiah came, and they expressed their wish to him that as all the prophets spoke good words of Ahab, good words of the king, he would do the same. Well now, suppose Micaiah had consented, — which he did not, but spoke decidedly, and said, “As the Lord liveth, even what my God saith, that will I speak.” But we will suppose for a moment that Micaiah had said, —Well, I don’t wish to be disagreeable; what have the prophets said? Why, that Ahab shall go to Ramoth-gilead, and he will conquer. Very well, I will say the same. We will suppose that Micaiah had done that, that would not have saved Ahab’s life, Ahab would have been slain all the same, he would have lost the victory all the same, he would have been subjected to the judgment all the same. Therefore, it is that the prophet was wise in keeping God’s commandment, and rejecting the commandments of men. And where was there a prophet that was not commanded by man to cease from preaching what he did preach? See how they treated Jeremiah; perpetually commanded him not to prophesy what he did. And suppose Jeremiah had turned around, and said, Very well, then, I will not prophesy any longer—indeed, he was so discouraged and distressed at one time as to say he would not speak in the name of the Lord any more—but suppose he had turned round and said, Very well, I will not prophesy against Jerusalem any more, —that would not have saved Jerusalem. He knew very well that if they persisted in their then course destruction would come; therefore, though they put him in the stocks, cast him into the dungeon, threatened his life, and persecuted him in every possible way, yet none of these things could move Jeremiah, or stop his prophecies. The Lord had said to him, “Thou shalt speak unto them all that I command thee; be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them.” Jeremiah therefore abode by the truth, and spoke that which he was commanded, thus keeping the commandment of God. And I am sure he held also, both by his words and his writings, the testimony of Jesus Christ. Though some of the prophets, especially Isaiah, speak more largely of Christ than Jeremiah, yet when Jeremiah does come upon the subject, he says a very great deal in very few words. Then we come to the New Testament; there, again, we see man steps in with this command, “Did not we straightly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man’s blood upon us. Oh no, “We ought to obey God rather than men but we do not intend to bring this man’s blood upon you. Alas, you have brought this man’s blood penalty upon yourselves, said Peter: “The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree but while you are thus murderers, we do not stop there; listen a little further, “Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior you are poor, lost sinners, murderers of the Prince of life, but he can save you; he is exalted “to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.” Oh, how the prophets and men of God have from time to time been misunderstood! Now, the people of God are governed by the gospel, and thereby they keep the commandments of God. What God says is with them law; what man says is with them nothing at all. Now take the Roman Catholic church. Does the gospel govern the Roman Catholic church? No; but the Roman Catholic church governs the gospel, and so the people of the Roman Catholic church do not keep the commandments of God, but the commandments of men; and though they hold the testimony of Christ, yet they hold it in a way that is offensive to God. Let me be, if I can, a little more clear here. What is the Roman Catholic church—the Roman Catholic people at large? No such thing, friends. The Roman Catholic church is the Romish government. They would fain persuade us they mean the people at large when they speak of the Roman Catholic church; but they do not mean the people at large they merely mean the Romish government. Hence you will find in their persecutions, they do not say, Do you obey God’s word? Do you obey the gospel? Do you obey Jesus Christ? No; but they say, Do you obey Holy Church? What do they mean by

Holy Church? The people at large? No; they mean only the government. Every member of the Roman Catholic church is bound to obey what they call the Roman Catholic church. Roman Catholicism governs the gospel, and brings it into such shapes and forms as will answer the purposes of these aspiring men, bringing the bodies and souls of men into bondage. And the Puseyites are of the same spirit. Hence, I saw in one of the papers a little time ago that a Puseyite minister in his defense said, "My object is to bring the people to obey the church." What do they mean by the church? The government, themselves; that is what they mean; they do not mean the people at large. So that the gospel in a Roman Catholic church and in the Puseyite church, by and by, when they get on a little farther, will have no authority whatever; and if the people are allowed, which they are by the Puseyites, to have the Bible, yet at the same time they must be careful to take the Puseyite interpretation of the Bible; and thus, though they possess the Bible, the liberty of the people is taken away. Now, God's church is of a very different make; they that shall be saved are they that keep the commandments of God, to the rejecting of all commandments and traditions of men. God's church has no earthly government. It is called a "congregation," meaning all the people; "the congregation of the righteous," one is as righteous as another as they stand in Christ; "the congregation of the upright," they are upright in the faith; "the congregation of the Lord," because they all belong to the Lord; and "the great congregation," because in the aggregate they are a great congregation. They have no earthly government. I am your humble servant; but then you make me your servant, you choose me. I cannot say to you, You must obey me; and you cannot say to me, I must obey you. We are not united upon such principles as that. Why, the apostle Paul said, "We have no dominion over your faith, but are helpers together of your joy." So, then the church of God is a congregational church, and her ministers are of herself, or of themselves; her deacons are of themselves; they choose their ministers and their deacons; and the ministers and deacons pretend to no authority whatever over the conscience of any man or woman. We all say to each other, "Do you, brother, believe in God's truth; do you believe in Jesus Christ and thus we all stand upon a complete level, — sinners saved by grace. Let us hear how the apostle describes the church. "Ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born." I almost regret that our translators put the word "church" there; it would have been better rendered thus, for the Greek word *ecclesia* there translated "church" is in most places rendered "assembly," answering to the Old Testament word "congregation" "Ye are come to the general assembly and the assembly of the first-born." We ought to have had a repetition of the word "assembly;" first, "general assembly" then another thought is added, — "the assembly of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all and so the apostle goes on. Thus, then the true church of the blessed God is a congregational church; it has no earthly government. "Call no man on earth master; one is your master, even Christ." And how so many millions of people can receive Popery, and bow to it, God mighty alone knows; I cannot account for it, any further than God's own solemn word, — "He shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." Ah, my hearer, what a mercy to know the perfection of Christ, to know what it is to keep gospel commandments, to live a life of faith, to walk in the ways of the Lord, and to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free; to reject all human commandments, and to feel that there is no one but God himself that has any authority over us in these things.

Lastly, they hold the testimony of Christ in scriptural order. Now the commandments of God, that is the authoritative testimonies of God, and the testimony of Christ, are here put together, to show that we are to keep the testimony of Christ by the commandments or authoritative testimonies of God. I will make my meaning clear. Noah, build an ark; — there is the command; the command was that he was to build an ark. And how is he to build the ark? Does he call in this wise man and that, and say, Well, the world will be drowned, and God has commanded me to build an ark; what do you think as to the shape? what do you think as to the form, and so on? No; he must build the ark by the testimony of God? God showed him

after what manner the ark was to be built: he held fast the testimony that there was but one way of escape, and he held fast that testimony by the commandments of God. When Moses went to Egypt everything he did was after the order that God commanded, so when he built the tabernacle; so of Solomon's temple; —he not only built the temple, but he carried it out to completion by the commands and testimonies of the great God. Just so with the temple of Zerubbabel. What shall I say to the Savior? I say this, —that when Jesus Christ came into the world he came into the world not merely to live and to die, but he came to live and to die according to the scriptures, and he was buried according to the scriptures, and he rose again from the dead according to the scriptures; he ascended up on high according to the scriptures, he reigns according to the scriptures, and he saves east, west, north, and south, a number that no man can number, according to the scriptures. So that he not only came, to live and to die, but he came to live and to die exactly as it was described, and prescribed, and prewritten. Thus he, in that lofty sense, kept the commandments of God; and he not only held the testimony of God, but held it in all its details by the Lord's own direction. Just so, if you and I hold the testimony of Christ, we must hold it not by the word of man, but by the word of God, the commandment of God, just as he himself has set it forth. If I hold the testimony of Christ by the traditions of men, instead of holding it by the truths of the gospel, I thereby set aside God's truth, and it ceases to be God's Christ that I hold.