

SURREY TABERNACLE PULPIT.

TRUE REST.

A Sermon

BY MR. JAMES WELLS,

PREACHED ON SUNDAY MORNING, 19TH JUNE, 1870.

"This is my rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it."—Psalm cxxxii. 14.

WE have in the beginning of the 12th verse of this Psalm an *if*; and if we can get rid of that *if*, lawfully get rid of it, then the whole Psalm will become positive. There are two ways in which that *if* is overcome. It stands as a condition of the continued reign of the literal posterity of David, when the promise was made to David, in relation to the Saviour,—“If thy children will keep my covenant and my testimony that I shall teach them, their children shall also sit upon thy throne for evermore.” I have in times past shown that the destruction of the Jewish nation was not essential to our welfare; that was brought about simply by the apostacy of the people. Now David’s children, therefore, did but partially keep God’s covenant and God’s testimony, and by and by they gave it up altogether, and then God gave them up altogether, and there was an end of it. Well then, we see what became of that *if* there. But let the Lord Jesus Christ come in, and he kept in perfection God’s covenant, he kept in perfection God’s testimony, and that removes the *if* out of the way, and makes that part positive pertaining to Christ. But there is another truth to be brought in by which this *if* is removed, and that is when we bring in the new covenant. “I will put my laws into their minds, and I will write them in their hearts, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more;” and these shall surely keep the covenant and the testimony divinely and savingly taught them. Thus we do, by Jesus Christ, and by the covenant to which he belongs, get rid of the *if*, and the whole Psalm then becomes positive; the language of our text then becomes gospel altogether. “The Lord hath chosen Zion: he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it.”

Our text lies before us in a threefold form. First, *everlasting rest*.—"This is my rest for ever." Secondly, *the perpetual presence of God*:—"here will I dwell." Thirdly, *all the reason we can desire why the Lord should do so*:—"for I have desired it."

First, *everlasting rest*. And I shall be careful to set this forth, because one great object of the gospel is to draw souls, immortal souls, poor, restless, miserable creatures, into that rest wherewith God himself resteth. The ultimate rest itself, or that which makes up the ultimate rest, is settled, unalterably settled, altogether immoveable; for there cannot be perfect and everlasting rest where there is anything moveable; but where everything is rendered immoveable, where everything is rendered unalterable, where everything is settled, there and there only is there rest. Hence then it is by the perfection of Christ that the kingdom cannot be destroyed, that the kingdom cannot be lost, that the kingdom shall not be given to other people, and that the kingdom cannot be moved. Now the Lord himself very much delights in this entire release; for the word *rest* always conveys two thoughts, without exception; the one that of release, and the other that of possession;—these are the two things that the word *rest* conveys. Now we find from the very beginning that when the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them, the Lord is pleased to make this a figure of the completeness of the work of Christ and the completeness of all the people. The people, as you are aware, are frequently called stars; and Moses refers to the stars when he saith, "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them." Just so by Jesus Christ. I would that I could enter more into this beautiful and delightful truth, that there everything is finished, there everything is completed, there everything is settled, it cannot be moved; so that here it is he reigns over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end. And what it is to enter into this rest I will try to describe presently. Now it is said the Lord rested on the Sabbath day; he rested as a type of that keeping of the Sabbath which is yet to come. "He rested from all his work;"—that is a remarkable expression; there was nothing more to do. And this language is used to make it more emphatically and more strikingly a type of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is God, and there he rests from all his work; because the people are by this work of Christ (for we must not lose sight of this, that the word *rest* means release) released from sin, released from every shape or form of guilt, released from every spot, wrinkle, blemish, or any such thing, released from every law demand, released from death, released from hell, released from the grave;—there is not a single thing from which they are

not released by this rest that is in Christ Jesus the Lord. He rested; and then he blessed the seventh day. And what is that mystical seventh day which God so blessed? There is a twofold sense in which the Lord blessed the seventh day—abstractedly and relatively;—that is, he himself blessed the day in a way of approbation, and then he made the day a blessing to the people. And in this it becomes a beautiful type of Christ. Our God hath blessed Christ, made him most blessed. And now what shall I say to the next thought,—that if God blessed the seventh day (and it simply means that he approved of and delighted in the seventh day, as he rested on that day),—then, if you take it in the relative sense, that he made the day a blessing to the people, just transfer that to the Saviour, and where shall we begin, and how shall we go on, and where shall we leave off enumerating the blessings which the Lord Jesus Christ is to us? If you and I had to answer the question, it would take us to eternity, and we should never get to the end of it, if we were called upon to describe what a blessing Jesus Christ is to us. Is there anything in the whole range of existence such a blessing to us as is Jesus Christ? Perhaps it is almost unwise in me to touch upon such a thought as this, because the thought itself is really too great to be managed by language at all. When we look at the depth of this blessing, the height of this blessing, the adaptability of this blessing, the certainty of this blessing, and the duration of this blessing,—it is nothing but blessing from first to last;—“having blessed you with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus the Lord.” And if we would walk with God, whatever our proud hearts may say, “it must be by the way that God hath opened, and Christ is that way; and if we would be pardoned, if we would be approved, if we would be accepted, if we would escape the wrath to come, if we would be found among them that are prepared for the eternal inheritance, then it must be by Christ Jesus, as saith the apostle, “We that believe do enter into rest;” we that believe receive this jubilee, this mystic jubilee, this year of release, by which we enter into rest. But then, of course, it is at present the rest of faith; it is by faith, the confidence we have in our God, that we are enabled there to rest in the completeness of the Saviour's work. And it is said that he sanctified it, set it apart, because in it he had rested from all his works which he created and made. So the Lord Jesus Christ, he is sanctified, or set apart, and by his being set apart he hath set the people apart for God. “Such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.” “This is my rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it.” We cannot have firm confidence in God in any way but this. I myself

should like to live a great deal more where the apostle lived when he said, "The life that I now live is by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Now the perfection of Christ releases us from everything that stands against us, and gives us possession of all that we can desire ; so that there cannot be any restlessness or dissatisfaction owing to the release not being complete, and there cannot be any dissatisfaction, owing to there being any deficiency in the possession that we are to have, for it is to be, in God's presence, a fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore. But I must not forget that it is at present a rest entered into by faith. Let us dwell upon this. There is not a Christian that has not his trials, internal and external, internal especially. The Christian's internal life is a life of martyrdom, a life of sighing, a life of groaning, a life of trembling ; and very few of the people of God speak out one half of the bitterness which they experience ; they do not speak out one half of the wretchedness which from time to time they feel ; and Satan and unbelief saith, What is the good of such a wretch as you looking to God ? There is no hope for you. Whereas that is the very man. "Come unto me." There is not a good quality named ; the only good quality named is a consciousness of our need. "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden." And what are they weary about ? Why, they are weary with self, and with the cares of the way ; and we must take it chiefly in the spiritual sense, that nothing but Christ can give them rest. "I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me ; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Now this is a rest by faith. But, say you, your text speaks of the Lord himself ; it is his rest. Well, friends, what is his rest is the rest wherewith the people are to rest, as will easily appear as we go on ; but I must not lose sight of the thought that it is the rest of faith. Let us look at the typical rest. First, they called Noah's name Noah, which signifies "rest ;" saying, "This same shall comfort us concerning our work and the toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed." Now Noah was to give rest ;—in what way was he to give rest ? Why, friends, only in a typical way. The words I have quoted you find at the end of Genesis v. ; then go on to the end of Genesis viii., and there you will find Noah's name fulfilled ; namely, "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease." You observe that that covenant of providence is positive, so that Noah was to comfort us in relation to fruitful seasons ; "the work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed ;" for the Lord had cursed the ground, therefore we needed a covenant of providence,

in order to assure us of fruitful seasons. This, then, is a covenant of providence; we know from after scriptures that it shadows forth the everlasting covenant, but it is exceedingly sweet as it is, because it is a ground of confidence. God hath promised that seedtime and harvest shall continue. Oh, some of you to-day that may be anxious about your temporal affairs, and perhaps will think more about them than about what I am saying,—and this I attribute to your infirmity; you cannot help it, I am quite aware of that; it is no use to scold you about it, for you would gladly get above it if you could, but then the flesh is weak while the spirit may be willing; still, at the same time, if you can look at this covenant of providence, and can see in it the full assurance, taking the words not only to refer to seedtime and harvest in the general sense, but bring it home to individual experience, that the Lord will bless you with seedtime—he will teach you to sow, that is, he will teach you to use the means, and he will bless those means, and he will supply your need; it cannot fail, you see it is positive. The word Noah signifies “rest,” and that makes Noah and his name a beautiful type of Christ;—Christ is the rest. And does not the Lord Jesus Christ give us rest upon this matter, when he says, “Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things;” and if he feed the fowls of the air, and clothe the lily, how much more will he feed you and clothe you, O ye of little faith? Oh, there is much sweetness and rest to be obtained by being enabled to leave what we cannot alter. We may look at that wood, and say, What a thorny wood that is; how shall I get through it? and we may look at that mountain, and say, What a lofty and dreadful mountain; how shall I get over it? we may look at that bog or that gulf, and say, How shall I get through it? But the Lord hath said, “Even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you; I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.” There stands the declaration. So, then, this is God’s rest; he will never deviate from that, but will abide by it; his faithfulness is infallible. The Lord enable us more and more to enter into rest in this matter. Oh, how many children of God have I known very anxious about how matters shall be with them in a temporal point of view! Presently the tidings come that God has taken them away, and the stone is rolled away before they reach the sepulchre; the Lord himself, instead of taking the troubles away just as they would wish, takes them away from the troubles. It is a good resting-place, to be enabled to rest in full assurance in the Lord.

It is the rest of faith. Now if we believe in the perfection of Christ, if we believe in the entirety of the release that he has wrought, if we believe that he will bring in his followers to possess for ever the promised land; if we believe this, and couple with it

the covenant of providence, then we may rest in the Lord. It does not matter a rush about our seeing which way it will be done; it will be done, God hath his way, and we know not now what he doth, but we shall know hereafter.

" His providence unfolds the book,
And makes his counsels shine; "

and by and by, when he shall have finished all, we shall be perfectly satisfied, and enter into rest.

Then, again, not only by the perfection of Christ, and by the covenant of providence that comes in by Jesus Christ, but also whatever may come against us. Oh! it is a good thing when anything comes very powerfully, and mightily, and terribly against us, to be enabled to rest in the Lord. There are so many instances of this in the Holy Scriptures that one hardly knows which scripture to take, but I will take here for conciseness' sake only one;—2 Chron. xiv. You find there a million—and that is a great many—Ethiopians came against Asa and a few Israelites, and what did they do? Why, they entered into this rest, and rested in God, and we see what the consequence was. Asa cried unto the Lord; here is his confidence in the Lord;—he was enabled to leave the matter with the Lord; he cried unto the Lord, and acknowledged what the Saviour in his day called for,—“Believest thou that I am able to do this?”—he cried unto the Lord and said, “Lord, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power; help us, O Lord our God; for we rest on thee”—there it is, —“and in thy name we go against this multitude;” and the Lord destroyed them all before them; they obtained a very easy victory. See what a great thing it is to stand still, and to know that he is God; to stand still and see the salvation of God; to stand still and look on while the angel of the Lord doeth wondrously. This is God's rest, where the weary are to rest, where his people are to rest. But at the same time there is another thing, and upon that I must be a little emphatic for a few moments; and that is this, in order for us to rest in the Lord, and to be satisfied with that release which Jesus hath wrought, and to be satisfied with that provision which he hath made, there must be great spirituality of mind. Oh, how much of our restlessness arises from carnality of mind! We want this worldly favour, and the other worldly comfort, and we want this worldly advantage, and the other worldly advantage;—that is where it is; we are as restless as we can be. But, oh! when the Lord blesses us with spirituality of mind, and we are enabled to look to him, and find our satisfaction in spiritual, divine, eternal things, then we are at rest. While the foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests, the Son of man had not where to lay his head:

but that did not disturb him; none of the poverty he experienced disturbed him; he still rested in God, because he was the quickening Spirit; he was filled with the Spirit of God. And therefore what we want is spirituality of mind, to enable us to rest in the Lord. I am quite aware that the Lord does mar a thousand of the comforts of his people;—as Mr. Newton says, he blasts our gourds, and lays us low, to break our schemes of earthly joy, that we may seek our all in him. And though it is hard work to be rooted up, to be broken down, and thrown down; though it is hard work to be destroyed in many of our cherished confidences and anticipations; yet when once we are down, and the soul planted in the likeness of Christ's death, and built up in that peace that passeth all understanding, and made to rejoice in Christ,—when this is accomplished, ah! we look back then at the rooting up, and the breaking down, and at the destruction of many things we should like to preserve, and we bless God for all that he has done, and see that nothing else could bring our souls into the enjoyment of that rest that remaineth to the people of God. Therefore it is, then, the rest of faith; we are to rest in God's promise by the perfection of the Lord Jesus Christ; and it doth require spirituality of mind, that is, a love to God as a covenant God, a love to those spiritual blessings which were treasured up in Christ before the world was. This, then, is God's rest—that is to say, Jesus Christ; he answers to everything that is said in a way of release and in a way of possession. "This is my rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it."

I must now notice, in the second place, *the perpetual presence of God*—"here will I dwell." After what manner doth the Lord dwell with the people, and who are the people that he dwelleth with? This Psalm, in the beginning of it, is a beautiful manifestation of the character of those that are the inhabitants of Zion, and with whom the Lord dwells. You will perceive that there is in the beginning of this Psalm a great restlessness, a very great uneasiness, and a very great concern for the Lord to dwell with the people. Hence David said, "Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed; I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, until I find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob." I like the feeling there expressed. You see the idea there is, it is no use if I have all the world on my side; if God is not with me I am but a wretch undone; if I have all the gold, and silver, and wisdom, and everything else in the world on my side, if I have not the Lord on my side I am but a wretch undone. Therefore he would not rest without finding the Lord, and without doing that by which he should express his sincere desire that the Lord would dwell with him. And besides,

here is the promise, "There will I dwell;" and so David well knew that the Lord dwelt with the people by an everlasting covenant. There can be no doubt but the ark was a type, a shadow, a representation of God's covenant; it is called the ark of his covenant, and the ark of his strength; and David would bring this ark in. And there appear to have been some people in that day, just as we have now, who said, It doesn't matter after what manner; if you are religious, never mind doctrine, never mind this, never mind that, never mind the other; and so, if we bring the ark in, never mind how it is brought in. I suppose it was the proposition of the people, and David did not seem to be exactly upon his guard just then, and so he suffered the people to take the ark from where the Lord had ordered it—the shoulders of the priests, and put it upon a new cart. There was nothing more sacred to the Lord than the ark, and there is nothing more sacred to him than that sworn and eternal covenant which is confirmed by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ; and we see how the Lord manifested there his displeasure, how Uzzah was smitten, and how David himself was astounded, and stumbled, and hardly knew what to do; but still the restlessness was kept up until the Lord convinced him of where the error was;—"We sought him not after the due order." And then, again, if you look at it that this ark was to rest upon the shoulders of the priests—just to teach us this truth of infinite preciousness and eternal value, that every item of the everlasting covenant, every promise, every blessing, everything, is to rest upon the eternal priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Ah, what a foundation is that! If the promises, and the blessings, and everything, rest there, then,

"How can we sink with such a prop,
That bears the earth and its huge columns up."

So that God would dwell with them by the ark of the covenant, and he dwells with us now by this new covenant order—by Christ Jesus; and Jesus hath said, "If any man love me, he shall be beloved of my Father, and we will come unto him, and will make our abode with him." There is a shorter way of describing this, but I thought I would bring in those scriptures, because they are so expressive. "Arise, O Lord, into thy rest, thou and the ark of thy strength." So if God would not rest where the typical ark was not, how much less will he rest where the new covenant is not; and if the soul that is taught of God cannot rest where the new covenant is not, so the Lord will not. Where the Lord doth not rest, there the saved soul cannot rest; "for he that hath entered into his rest"—that is, Christ Jesus—"hath ceased from his own works," by completing them, "as God did from his;" and this is the way that God dwells with men. But this is only one representation;—let us come to the

dear Saviour's day, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; and of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." Now our text says, "This is my rest for ever; here will I dwell." This rest, then, being by the perfection of Christ, we must now have two or three scriptures to set forth the eternity and certainty of this. Ezekiel xxxix. 29,—“Neither will I hide my face any more from them; for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God.” “Neither will I hide my face any more from them;”—now how can we reconcile that with many of the experiences we have? because we often do seem to walk very much without the Lord's presence, and yet he there saith, “I will hide my face no more from them.” We must understand that, of course, in the penal sense. The Lord hiding his face from the Jews means more than may at first sight appear; it means he would not look at them, he would not act for them, he would not interpose for them, he would not care for them, but let their adversaries do whatever they liked with them. Therefore when he saith, “I will not hide my face any more from them,” the meaning is that as they stand in Christ, there they are approved, there they are accepted, there they are saved, and there it is he never ceases to love them and to care for them.

But I notice four or five more ties by which the Lord dwells with the people. He dwells with them also by a truly wonderful tie—the infinity and eternity of his love. He rests in his love; he holds you in his love with infinite delight. Let us hear what the prophet saith upon this:—“The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with singing; he will rest in his love.” Here then he holds the people in an infinity, an eternity, and an immutability of love. Now when we look at what the people are in and by Jesus Christ, and how they are brought into reconciliation to God by Jesus Christ, how exceedingly pleasant such a dwelling must be. “How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights.” Then take the other side; if we do not dwell with God in love, why, our religion is not worth having. If you ask me why I so cleave to God the Father in his sworn promise, in the eternity and immutability thereof, my answer is, because I love him; and if I am asked why I love him, my answer is, because he first loved me. And if I am asked why I so cleave to Jesus Christ that I feel I could not leave him—I should be as the branch severed from the vine if I were to leave him,—if I am asked why I so prize and cleave to his perfection, have such confidence in him, and speak so highly of him, and have such affection to him,—why, the answer is, it is because I love him, for the love of God constraineth me. If I am asked why I so dwell with the Holy Comforter, the Holy Spirit of

God, the answer is, because I love him. And if I am asked why I so cleave to the truth, my answer is, because I love it. As to all those doctrines of men that would throw conditionalities into the gospel of God, and make that uncertain that God has made certain, and make that a scene of confusion, yea and nay, which God hath made yea and amen, I despise all such doctrines, and as Watts says, bind the gospel to my heart. Therefore God dwells with the people because he loves them with this intense love, and we dwell with him because we love him. Hence you see, those that were victorious; the first thing was the release;—"They overcame by the blood of the Lamb;" there they became released from all that stood against them; "and by the word of their testimony," and by their holding fast the truth, they thereby overcame delusion; by the blood of the Lamb they overcame all their guilt, and sin, and fear, and false confidence; and by the word of their testimony they overcame all delusions; for it was by the word of their testimony they were instructed as to what the truth is; and then comes the other feeling,—“and they loved not their lives unto the death.” Oh, my hearers, none of us can be at a loss for an object to love;—God is loveable, Christ is loveable, the Holy Spirit is loveable, the gospel is loveable; the ways of the Lord are loveable. “I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.”

Now what is said of the people? Why, it is said of them (and I think we are on the way to it), that they are to be perfect in love, that they are to be blameless before him in love, and that unto them God is love. If it were the Lord's will to let us a little more into these truths,—namely, the perfection of Christ, the certainty of the covenant, and the love with which he dwells with us, and will never leave nor forsake us; I am sure we should have more confidence in him. The very things that seem sometimes to frighten us, and as it were drive us from him, when rightly viewed would only make us prize him the more. So, then, the Lord keep us in these things,—the perfection of Christ, the covenant, and the everlasting love of God. He rests in his love: Is it any wonder that the same prophet who saith that God rests in his love should say, “Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all thy heart, O daughter of Jerusalem”? Why? “The Lord hath taken away thy judgments.” If you see your need of Christ's perfection, and desire to know it in the love of it, and then are led on to see the everlasting covenant (for the Lord will show his own people his covenant,) and then to see that all this is a matter of free grace and eternal love,—if your eyes are thus opened, then the gospel is not hidden from you, and the judgments are taken away. You may fear them, and think they are not taken

away, but if the Lord had meant to destroy you he never would have shown you these beautiful things, he would never have made himself so attractive in your eyes. "The Lord hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy; the King of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of thee; thou shalt not see evil any more." "This is my rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it." He dwells with us from free choice. You see the Lord always chooses with infinite knowledge; he always knows what he does, and therefore is never disappointed, never was and never will be. I have been amazingly disappointed myself since the Lord has chosen me. When I was first called by grace, or rather when first brought into the liberty of the gospel, my soul was made like the chariots of Amminadab; I thought to myself I should be all grace, and all heaven, and all spirituality, and all joy, and all delight. What did I care about the world? Why, I had to work hard at the time for my living, and my master—my heart used to ache for him, for he used to sit up on Saturday night, as the boy says, till one and two o'clock in the morning, looking over his bad debts in his books, and so on; and how in the world he had paid his men that day he didn't know, and he couldn't tell how he should pay them next Saturday. I thought, poor man! I am very glad I have (like the prophet) only got a table, and a stool, and a candlestick, and only got a bit of bread and a glass of water, and nobody expects me to be a gentleman;—and I didn't care. I used to pity my poor master, and think I would not be a rich man for all the world; I was happy to be just what I was. Now the Lord, then, dwells with the people by free choice; he chose you freely; he did not choose you under any necessity. That is not the case with us, you know, it is generally to choose that or none. Well, you say, I must have this house or none; or this and the other,—I should like a better one than this. So that a great many of our choosings are choosings of necessity. Not so our God; he chose freely, and according to an infinity of knowledge; and therefore you are just as good as he anticipated you would be; you are no worse than he knew you would be, and you are no better; he knew just as much about you as he knows now; and if he meant ever to leave you or forsake you he would not have taken you up by such a choice. You are no worse than he foresaw you would be. And therefore he dwells with his people by this free choice, for the Lord hath chosen Zion, and loves the very gates of Zion. Election is indeed a truth divine; it is a treasure unspeakable for the blessed God to choose us;—"Elect according to his foreknowledge of God;"—to choose us in the infinity of his knowledge; not to choose us of necessity, but to choose us freely, of his sovereign choice. If you are at a loss to know where to find the

Lord's sovereignty, why, there are two sources;—the one is his word, and the other is your own personal experience. There are many of your fellow-creatures, you tell out to them your experience, they can no more understand it than the dry bones in Ezekiel's vision could understand what was said by the prophet till God gave life to them. You tell out to the natural man some of these mysteries, he cannot understand it. Ah, then, "who is it that hath thus made thee to differ, and what hast thou that thou hast not received?" Well might the Lord say, "This is my rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it." Before I go to the last part, let us ask whether we could part with any one of these truths. Give up the perfection of Christ? I know what I would do;—I feel as though, if that was not a reigning truth in the Holy Scriptures—the perfection of Christ—if I had to sweep the streets for my living I would rather do anything and be anything than make a profession of religion; the Bible would be no more use to me than the fiery law of God; the Bible would be no more use to me than hell itself, if the perfection of Christ were not a reigning truth in the Bible. His perfection is the only way in which he is a hiding place from the wind; it is the only way in which he is a covert from the storm; it is the only way in which he is as rivers of water in a dry place; it is the only way in which he is as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. Then can you part with the sworn covenant? If the devil should ever be permitted to get that away from me, I never should be able to put anything else in its place;—if he should ever get that away from me, that room will remain empty, for not a bit of furniture can he get into it. No, the room shall remain empty; if I cannot have that, I will have nothing else. And then his love, and then his choice. This is the way in which the Lord dwells with us, and brings us to dwell with him. It is a most unpleasant thing when you have to dwell with people, and they are always finding fault with you, and having four or five quarrels pretty well every day; I should look out for a new lodging pretty soon;—miserable work that. The Lord does not dwell with his people like that; he dwells with them as a God of peace;—he is a God of peace, and his children are as olive plants around about his table. I have lived with the Lord now upwards of forty years, and never quarrelled with him once in the spiritual sense. I have quarrelled with him in a providential sense in a great many things;—I do not like his taking my toys away at all, because I am a little child still, and like to look at my playthings; but he does take them away sometimes; and after all, when I see it is the Lord that does it, that reconciles me to it.