

# SURREY TABERNACLE PULPIT.

THE WORK OF THE STONE CUT OUT OF THE MOUNTAIN.

## A Sermon

PREACHED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, MAY 15TH, 1859, BY

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AT THE SURREY TABERNACLE, BOROUGH ROAD.

“The stone that smote the image, became a great mountain.” Daniel ii. 35.

I AT once proceed to notice our subject this morning under a two-fold idea. First, *Christ smiting this image*; then secondly, *his prosperity, as indicated by his becoming a great mountain; in his exaltation, and the progress and extension of the gospel.*

We are not at all at a loss to know what the literal meaning of this image is; because it is set before us and explained as meaning four successive empires; the Babylonian, the Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman.

I. The first thing I shall take this image to represent is THE WORLD. And so Satan is spoken of as the god of this world; blinding the minds of them that believe not. Now, this image, as you see, was made up of a variety of metals—gold, silver, brass, and iron; and lastly, it was of clay; and these may very well represent the world. First, there is the gold, there is its first attraction; and then there is the silver, there is another attraction; and then there is something apparently very solid—the brass; and then there is something apparently very strong—the iron; then there is something very weak—namely, the clay. And so it is with the world; it begins with gold; goes on to silver; then to brass; then to iron; then to clay; so that this represents our state in the world. Now, when the Lord then (for this is the way I must begin,) takes hold of a poor sinner, and makes him feel what he is as a sinner, there is one feeling that sinner is led into, and it is this; he wants something better than silver and gold. He says, now I feel that I am a sinner; once the good things of this life were my hope; the honours, and pleasures, and advantages of this life were my hope; but now I am brought to feel that I am a sinner, a lost, helpless, ruined sinner. What am I to do? Where shall I meet with something that is better than silver and gold? Where shall I meet with something that can do for me what silver and gold cannot do? for it is said that this “stone so smote the image,” that the gold and the silver, as well as the other parts, became like the chaff of the summer threshing floor; and that the wind carried them away; and there was no place for them. And so you will find, that all those things so highly esteemed among men as the chaff, mere trash, mere nothing, in comparison of

what the soul needs. What then is to be done? We want something better than gold; better than silver. 'And the reason why the Lord breaks this gold and silver to pieces; the reason why the Lord turns the world into chaff, into dust, into that which is not worth possessing; the reason he does that, is because he has something better for you. And then, presently, you come to these words, "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold; from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." Ah, when the sinner is thus brought to the knowledge of Christ's redeeming blood, he says, that gold and silver that once appeared so important, that was once the god that I worshipped, the image that I bowed to, the treasure I sought, it may all go now to the moles and to the bats; it is a mere nothing; it is not worth a moment's consideration in comparison of this blessed truth, "Redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." And by that precious redemption we shall appear before God just as the Lord Jesus Christ is; as he is, without blemish, so his atoning blood brings us before God without blemish; as he is without spot, so his precious blood brings us before God without spot. And thus the Lord Jesus Christ, then, by his death, has brought in something that turns gold and silver into mere chaff; and shews us that that which is really solid, that which is really enriching, that which is really honourable, and that which is really worth having, can be had only by his eternal redemption. It cannot be said of lovers of silver and gold, that their sorrow and sighing shall flee away, and that everlasting joy shall be unto them; but it can be said, and is said, and will be made good to all that love Jesus Christ, that their sorrows and sighings shall flee away, and that everlasting joy shall be unto them. Thus, then, friends, how is this matter with us? I am not going to flatter you with any idea that gold is mere chaff to you, or that silver is mere chaff to you; for I am afraid all of us are more attached to these articles, these pieces of dust, than is good for us to be; but however, as we cannot deal in the abstract in this matter, we must put up with the covetousness of some of you, and put up with a great many other things, for after all we are all poor creatures; and therefore, we are to deal not so much in abstracts as in comparisons; and therefore, the question is this, with all your attachment to silver and gold, what do you say to it when set by the side of the atonement of Jesus Christ, the death of Jesus Christ, the eternal redemption of Jesus Christ? What say you in your closet, on your knees before God, in your silent and solemn meditation before God? Do you, and can you, look up and say, Lord, thou knowest that I do love silver and gold? Lord, I cannot deny that; but at the same time, I do hope, and trust, and believe, that if called upon so to do, I could freely part with it all, as nothing but chaff, rather than part with the blessed and wondrous testimony of what the dear Redeemer has done. Oh, then, if so, this image is smitten on thy behalf; and it can no longer hold thee in captivity against the Lord Jesus Christ; for "How hardly shall the

rich man," the man that trusts in riches, "enter into the kingdom of God!" Oh, my hearer, if thou art brought thus far, to long for something better than silver and gold, that is, I was going to say, a great step towards the kingdom of heaven; thou art not far from the kingdom of God, if thou art brought to feel that that something better is the Lord Jesus Christ. So when I come to Calvary's cross, there he smote this image; and as he smote it there for us, he will smite it in our hearts, our souls, and affections, and down it shall fall; and as this stone was to take the place of that image, so Christ shall take the place of the world in our souls, become enthroned in our affections, and shall be the object of our love, the foundation of our hope, and the very glory of our souls.

And then, secondly, here is something very *durable*: namely, the brass. And so there is that powerful delusion within us, that this will endure, and that will endure. Oh, I won't think about death; my health is as firm as brass; my circumstances are all good; I shall undergo no particular reverses; I have good prospects; I shall do well; why, I have a lot of houses, a lot of lands; and it will all endure, and go on as firm as brass; I am right enough. Ah, but if the Lord take hold of thee, and dash all thy hope to pieces, and make thee feel that strong as these things are in appearance, after all there is that which is stronger; thou wilt feel thy need of something stronger; thou wilt feel there is a hell waiting for thee; and thou wilt feel thy need of something more durable. And what is that? Ah, it is the word of the Lord; "The word of the Lord endureth for ever." Ah, then, you will see how uncertain are these earthly hopes. I may please myself with the thought that this will last, and the other will last; but alas, I know not what a moment may bring forth. Every time your pulse beats, it is a question whether it shall beat again. Sixty times every minute, the question is asked in the very exercise of our system, whether we shall live any longer or not. If then we are brought to feel the delusion of resting our hope on this and on that, and taught to rest it on the word of the Lord, then the word of the Lord will endure for ever; that cannot give way; his promise is yea and amen, and never was forfeited yet. Let me lean upon the promise of God; that promise will endure for ever. It is astonishing what a small amount of real satisfaction any one has ever derived from worldly hopes; but when all these are broken to pieces, and you turn away from them all, all your worldly hopes become as mere chaff; and your hope in the Lord's mercy becomes everything; your hope in his salvation becomes everything; your hope in his loving-kindness becomes everything, your hope in his promises becomes everything. We thus see, then, here that there is something that will endure for ever. Then again, iron denotes strength; and men are brought to feel their need of something stronger than iron, something stronger than all the world can afford. The world in its varied attractions, its supposed durability and strength, all comes to nought; and that man who is so tried, so cast down, so convinced, as to find a substitute for the world and the things thereof, nowhere but in the Lord Jesus Christ, who came

to Calvary's precious cross; then, if this world pass away, there is another to take its place; if this life pass away, there is another life to take its place; if the kingdom in which I live pass away, which it must, there is another kingdom to take its place; and if the socialities of this world pass away, there is a better sociality, or better socialities, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and saints in everlasting light. I would take this image, then, as setting forth these four kingdoms, as a kind of figure of the world; and the stone smiting the image will mean, that when the Lord Jesus Christ takes a sinner in hand, the world that before was to that man gold and silver, and something durable, and something strong, now becomes nothing, and less than nothing; he is severed therefrom, feels his need of God's eternal mercy, Christ's eternal salvation, the Holy Spirit's eternal testimony; and he is thus brought to look away from the things that are seen unto the things that are not seen.

And I have sometimes thought this image also to be a figure of sin, as well as of the world. Christ brought the world in the minds of his saints to nought; "Fear not, I have overcome the world." And so he has, not only for his people, but also in his people; he overcomes the world in his people. But then, say you, you have passed over the part connected with the iron—the clay; the weak part. Yes, friends, so the world has its weak part; and it must give way; it may seem to do very well for years, but the weak part must come; death must come, must overtake us. And, oh! when life thus gives way, when the weak part comes, how happy that man who can say, "My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." Again, I have said, this image may represent sin; and the Lord Jesus Christ smote that. Gold and silver may represent the gilded forms of sin; brass may represent the hardening power of sin, or the hardness of sin; the iron may represent the strength of sin; and I am sure it has these three qualities; and we shall presently shew wherein the weak part of sin lies. Now it has in it something gilded, something attractive, something very hard, and something very strong; and yet, when the Saviour died, sin was broken to pieces, and became as mere chaff on the summer threshing floor. What a delightful truth is it, oh believer! that thy original sin, and that thy heart sins, thy lip sins, and practical sins, while they would have been as iron and brass to fetter thy soul to all eternity, yet through what Jesus Christ has done, they are all mere chaff, they are all as mere dust; and the wind, the Holy Ghost, who is spoken of as the heavenly wind, blowing where he listeth, he shall come and breathe in a Saviour's name, and all thy sins shall pass away. Why, what a view it gives of Christ! Oh, how it endears the Saviour! My sins any longer reigning over me? No. The golden parts of them, those I liked, will become as chaff; the silver parts those I liked, will become as chaff; the brass, the hardened parts of them, will become as chaff; the iron, the strong parts of them, will become as chaff. Christ fell upon my sins, and ground them to powder. If then, we take the image to mean sin, then Christ smote that for us, and we become delivered from it, and are now in sweet oneness with the Lord Jesus Christ. That is all I want, the Holy Ghost to give me vital faith, sweet exercise, in oneness with the Lord Jesus Christ. Nothing else will do. My sins are iron and brass; and lions, and tigers, and vipers; but when Christ's name comes in, it crushes the whole to powder; and I am peaceful, happy, comfortable; and rejoice that this God is my God for ever and for ever; and that he will be my guide even unto the end. Don't think you can get rid of sin in any other way. I will tell you one thing; if you can ever get rid of any one sin in any way but by the atonement of Jesus Christ, you may depend upon it that sin will come back to you again; you will see it another day. But if it is got rid of by his atonement, it cannot come back again. The Pharisees of old got rid of their sins by human traditions, and they appeared righteous in their own

eyes and before men; but the Saviour, in Matthew xxiii., brought back all their sins again, and there recorded the woes due, and that belong to those sins. But did the Saviour mention any of the faults of the Old Testament saints? He had plenty of opportunity; he referred to Noah, didn't name his faults; referred to David, didn't name his faults; referred to Solomon, didn't mention his faults. No. Oh, what a Jesus Christ is ours! What a God is ours! He has smitten the world; delivers us from it; gives us something infinitely better; he has smitten sin, it is ground to powder, gone, and gone for ever; our triumph will be indescribable; our exultation infinite!

I take this image also to represent *delusion*, that has tyrannised over the soul; and oh, how he has ground that to powder. Popery cannot tyrannise over us now, we see it is delusion; free-willism cannot tyrannise over us, we see it is delusion; duty-faith cannot tyrannise over us, we see it is delusion; we come forth of them all, and take our stand upon what the Saviour has done; and when I find any deficiency in the Saviour, then I may go somewhere else, but not before. But I had forgotten to name that sin has its weak part; there was the clay. And wherein had sin its weak part? Why, in this; that it had no right to exist; it was an intruder; it came in upon us; it had no right to come; and there was the weak part of sin; and the Saviour has taken it away. He would never take that away that had a right to exist. The law of God had a right, the law of God was right; Christ did not take it away, he magnified and established it. But sin had its weak part, and it was its having no right to exist; and Christ has taken it away. But this image, I say, represents delusion as well. It is a great mercy to be delivered from delusion. It is one thing, friends, to have the doctrines of grace, it is another thing to have the *spirit* of those doctrines. There are two opposite spirits, that it is very difficult to avoid. The doctrines of grace were held, and are held too, in a spirit of Phariseeism; and such generally embody a duty-faith; and those who do not hold that duty faith are, and have been publicly called Antinomians; that answers their purpose; their object in so doing is twofold; to exalt themselves, and degrade others. Therefore it is one thing to hold the doctrines in the letter, to hold them in a Pharisaic way, and another thing to be brought down as a poor sinner to feel your need of them, and to receive the truth in the spirit of it, as a matter of necessity; and to feel that you can have a union of soul to none but by the living truth of God, and therefore where that truth is not in its living power, as far as you can judge, received, there you cannot receive the person. Then on the other hand, there is a great danger of holding the truth presumptuously, in unrighteousness; and I don't know anything under heaven that grieves me more than such a thing as that, when I see it. When I look at the liberty of the gospel, and yet see men indulging in a presumptuous spirit, despising all doubts and fears, all Godly jealousy, all solemn exercise, get into a downright Antinomian spirit; the Apostle might well say of such, that "their damnation is just." So then, my hearers, there is a great variety of ways in which Satan labours to deceive the souls of men; not only by gross Popery, not only by Arminianism, not only by genteel duty-faithism, but also by arrogance, by presumption; I have never seen a death-bed yet made happy by such a spirit; it is not the spirit of the Gospel, not the spirit of Christ, not the spirit of the living God.

Now this stone then broke the image to pieces; first, the world; second, sin; third, delusion. It is most desirable, my hearer, to be kept in a right spirit. It must be the prayer of every Christian, "Renew within me a right spirit." The spirit that is within us is the wrong spirit; and therefore we want the Lord's Spirit to overcome that spirit.



· II. But I must not dwell any longer upon this part ; I therefore hasten to notice, in the next place, that this stone became a great mountain ; that is, a great kingdom, from apparently small beginnings. I say, *apparently* small ; the beginning was small only in appearance ; for myself I cannot admit that the beginning was small beyond appearance. What, say you, not when Christ lay in the manger, was not that a small beginning ? Only in appearance, for when Christ lay in the manger, what was the fact ? What was the truth ? The truth was that it was God manifest in the flesh ; the eternal God, the everlasting God, was there. As to manhood, there appears a smallness there ; but if we look into the real mystery as set before us, it was God manifest in the flesh. And then as to his death, his death was a small beginning only in appearance. It did appear somewhat conspicuous to those around ; but still the greatness of Christ's death did not consist in the outward signs that attended it ; the greatness of that circumstance consisted in what he did—namely, putting away our sins, enduring the curse, bringing mercy and truth together, righteousness and peace to kiss each other ; working out eternal perfection ; therein lay the greatness of his death. Now his becoming a great mountain will mean he becomes a great kingdom. He is represented, or his kingdom is represented, as a mountain, higher than other mountains. "The mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills." The meaning is the superiority of his kingdom to all other kingdoms. A person standing on the summit of a mountain that is higher than all other mountains, would look down upon all the rest, and see them all beneath him. So the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ is above all other kingdoms ; his kingdom ruleth over all. The Lord has given us a word upon this concerning the king of Israel, that "His king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted." So that I see not the slightest difficulty here myself in understanding this matter ; that the mountain means a kingdom, called a mountain because of its exaltation. Let us come to experience again here. What is there that so raises up the poor sinner as the name of Christ, when delivered from the powers of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son ? "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sin." Why, what dignity is here ! it brings us where the apostle beautifully shews, in Ephesians ii., to set together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus ; heirs of the kingdom, an everlasting kingdom, a kingdom that ruleth over all ; ruleth over hell ; ruleth over sin, over the world, over death, over tribulation, over everything. A great mountain ; a glorious kingdom. That is what I understand by his becoming a great mountain, raising his people up into this sweet acquaintance with eternal things. And then, again, the higher a man is, the farther he can see. And so, if a man is raised up into the kingdom of Christ, raised up into the knowledge of the order of that kingdom, why he can see all the farther. A man that is brought up into the knowledge of the order of Christ's kingdom, that he shall rule over the house of Jacob for ever, that of his kingdom there is no end ; why, he says, I can see back into eternity ; that this kingdom has been planned from eternity ; that the people that were to people this kingdom were given to Christ from eternity ; that he received them from eternity ; that they were constituted one with him from eternity ; that their sins were imputed to him in the counsels of God from eternity ; and that his work was imputed to them in the counsels of God from eternity, I can look back and see here it is the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting ; here it is his goings forth have been of old, even from everlasting. Now, free-will does not go up high enough to see this ; the duty-faith man may pretend to see this, but it is only pretence. Then also he (the real Christian) can see forward ; the Christian looks forward ;

and he asks what is to rule this kingdom. The foundations of the kingdom are safe, for they are everlasting foundations; the testimonies of God, that endure for ever; if his new covenant testimonies be destroyed, then what shall the righteous do? But these testimonies cannot be destroyed. Therefore, we look forward, and see that this kingdom never can be injured; it never was injured yet; and not one of its subjects can be injured. Therefore, I think there is no difficulty in understanding this stone becoming a great mountain. Now, in accordance with this elevation is everything belonging to this kingdom. There is no kingdom like it for provision; you find no such provision elsewhere. There is no kingdom like it for enlightenment, there are no other people enlightened as they are. There is no other kingdom for prosperity to equal it; there is no other kingdom for strength to equal it; there is no other kingdom for prospect to equal it. How beautifully the prophet sets all this forth, when he speaks of this mountain in the last days. And the last days have already begun; the last days began when Christ rose from the dead. The first days were the antediluvian, the patriarchal, and the levitical; and then when Christ died, his death, his atonement, is the final day; his gospel is the final day; there are no days after that, Christ has no successor. Some tell us that the last days are yet to come, forgetting that the last days have already commenced; they commenced with Christ's resurrection; he rose from the dead, entered into an everlasting day. Is that day terminated? And if we speak in the plural, days, these are the last days in which we live. "It shall come to pass in the last days;" meaning the gospel dispensation, called the last days, because they have no succession. Well, say you, but the day of glory shall succeed the day of grace; well, but that is only perfecting grace; it is the same kingdom; the kingdom has no successor; the kingdom shall not be given to another people. "In this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people"—that is, all people that are brought into this kingdom of Christ by regeneration;—"a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined;" these fat things of course mean the blessings of the Gospel. I need not remind you of what the Saviour says upon this; that he is the bread of eternal life. When he instituted the Supper, he said, "This cup is my blood of the New Testament;" therefore here is that provision that lasts to all eternity. And there are no people enlightened as this people are; for "he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people;" and that face of the covering is sin; and that has put a bad face upon everything. If you look to God, you look with a sinful face, with a sinful heart, with a sinful soul, full of wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores, loathsome in his sight, infinitely hateful to him. But Jesus Christ has destroyed that face of the covering, and put another face upon it; put holiness, and righteousness, and fragrance, and preciousness. Oh, how great the change! I can hardly myself imagine—I cannot of course imagine in the sight of the holy God—the difference between the Pharisee and the Publican. The Pharisee comes in his own name, apart from Christ; there he stands before infinite purity, justice and integrity; with nothing about him, but that which was infinitely loathsome to God; the Pharisee, of course, did not know this. The Publican comes in a Saviour's name; pleads mediation. Ah, there he looks upon us by a Saviour's blood, as free from sin as that blood can make us, as free from condemnation, or of anything wrong, as that righteousness can make us; as free from error, as his truth can make us. He has destroyed the face of the covering. This made Paul say, "We with open face beholding as in a glass." Ah, where can we see the Lord with open face? Where this covering is destroyed; and that is in Christ Jesus. Oh, the sweet name of Jesus, my hearer; thou wilt never

plead his name in vain, if thou ask in the perfection of his name; God will listen to no other plea but the perfection of his name. If you go to God in the name of a Jesus Christ that died for some now in hell, God will not hear the prayer in such a name as that. If you go to God in the name of a duty-faith Christ, he will not hear the prayer in such a name as that; that's not my Son; that's not the Shield I have prepared; that's not mine Anointed; for "This is the will of the Father, that all men honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." You must go, therefore, on the ground of equity, on the ground of eternal perfection; plead that blessed name. "He will destroy the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations;" the veil of ignorance rent from top to bottom. Let me again quote the words, "Beholding with open face, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord." This stone becomes a great mountain, a great kingdom, a glorious kingdom in itself, and in the estimation of his people. And so it is; there is no kingdom like it, there is no prosperity like it. It swallows up death in victory. "And God shall wipe away all tears from all eyes." It swallows up death in victory; it was this made David call death a shadow. "God shall wipe away all tears;" meaning, of course, all griefs; and they are a great many. What poor uneasy creatures we are, apart from the Lord; at least I am. I am as restless as the sea, as restless as the wind, as restless as the earth, that is never quiet; nothing can calm me, but fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Again, for I must close, there is no kingdom like it for strength. "In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; we have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks." Nineveh's walls, Babylon's walls, Jerusalem's walls, were broken down; but the walls of salvation, who shall break down? What then is to be done? "Open ye the gates, (the gates of truth,) that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth, may enter in;" literally translated, it would be, "Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the *amens* may enter in; and I should prefer that rendering, and I will have it too. Why, say you, you can't have it. But I will have it. It's not in English. Then I will have it in Hebrew. I like it, because all the truths of the gospel are *amens*. "I have loved thee; I have chosen thee;" settled the matter; "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." These are the people that shall enter into glory, them that keep the *amens*. And there is no prospect like the prospect of this kingdom. "Trust ye in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah, is everlasting strength."

Thus then, it will appear that the Lord Jesus Christ in his death, overcame the world; and if the world is turned into chaff to us, that is a proof of it. He overcame sin; and if we are delivered from it, and united to him, that is a proof of it. And it thus appears, that this stone is become a great kingdom; there is no kingdom like unto it; all other kingdoms must perish, come to nought, no place be found for them; but this kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and it is that which shall not be destroyed.