

SURREY TABERNACLE PULPIT.

THE SAVED AND THE LOST.

A Sermon

PREACHED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, DECEMBER 23RD, 1860, BY

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AT THE SURREY TABERNACLE, BOROUGH ROAD.

“For a witness unto all nations.” Matthew xxiv. 14.

THIS, as you are aware, is said of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ ; and in trying to make that clear which the words here intend, I notice, first, *the testimony of the gospel in them that are saved* ; secondly, *the testimony of the gospel pertaining to them that are lost* ; thirdly and lastly, *the final contrast of the two*.

I. First, THE TESTIMONY OF THE GOSPEL IN THEM THAT ARE SAVED ; it is to be a witness unto all nations, Now we see in this chapter that there is a people to whom the testimony of the gospel shall be rendered effectual, according to that which is described in the 1st chapter of John, that “Christ came to his own,” to his own nationally ; “and his own received him not ; but to as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God ;” shewing that such persons received him by vital faith, they received him by conviction of their need of him ; they received him by the mind being enlightened to discover his suitability to their case as lost and helpless sinners ; and they received him after the order of his own eternal kingdom and priesthood. And hence, it goes on to say of such persons that “they were born, not of blood ;” it was not by virtue, we here see, of their being the children of Abraham, or the literal descendants of Abraham, nor of the will of the flesh ;” so that it was not any will of their own in the flesh considered ; “nor of the will of man,” not by the will of others, “but of God ;” they were born of God. Here is the explanation of the way in which they received the Lord Jesus Christ ; so that the testimony of the gospel was rendered to them effectual. And this is the first point I shall have this morning to enlarge upon, after I have just reminded you of that truth set before us in this chapter, that there is a people spoken of called the elect ; whom God hath chosen ; the world was created for their sakes, that is, they considered one with the Lord Jesus Christ ; all things were created for him and by him ; and being one with the Lord Jesus Christ, they are spoken of as all things being for them ; “whether the world, or life, or death, or Cephas, or Paul, or Apollos ; all are yours, and ye are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s.” This is a great and delightful truth ; it explains a thousand things we cannot understand without it. I say the main end of creating the world was the everlasting glory of God by the salvation and eternal welfare of the objects of his boundless, his everlasting love ; it is for their sakes that all things are ; so that this one truth of eternal election, I say, explains a great many things, it explains the reason of the difference between Cain and Abel ; the name of the one was in the Book of life, and the name of the other was not ; and therefore the name of the one being in the Book of life, he is brought by his more excellent sacri-

fice into justification before God. For election is not a mere abstract truth; it is a concrete or relative truth; it stands connected with salvation, and with sanctification, and glorification. People charge us with holding the doctrine of election as a mere abstract truth; it is not a mere abstract truth, for it is the being chosen to salvation, chosen in Christ, and chosen to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. So that it is not a mere abstract truth, but stands connected with the mediation of Christ, with the work of the Holy Spirit, and with the eternal welfare of the soul. Now I say this truth explains I was going to say, everything pertaining to the progress of the gospel. And if we pass by a great many things, and come down even to the Saviour's day, and if we ask this question, why did he omit going to Sidon and Tyre, Sodom and Gomorrah; and why were not those cities favoured with such a display of the Lord's presence and power; "for if the things that were done in Judea had been done in these;" heathen "cities, the people would have repented." Yet the Lord omits the cities that would have repented, and comes to a people that did not repent. How can we explain this? Why in this way, that while those cities would have repented, the repentance would not have been repentance unto salvation, but merely the repentance of reformation, like the Ninevites. And why did the Lord not go to those cities? Because he had not a people there. And why did he come to a nation that could witness his miracles; but so far from repenting and submitting to him, they were so enraged, and so carried forward by their blindness, their enmity, as to crucify Christ? Why did he come to such a nation as this? Because he had a people there, because he had an elect there; and let them be where they may, there he will come. And how is it the gospel has taken its stand in some nations, and passed by others? The secret of it is, God has a people there. Hence, the Lord said to Paul in Corinth, "I have much people in this city." And so you find the apostles were directed from one place to another, where they were to preach as well as where they were not to preach. Election explains the whole of it. And so with our calling, if you look back at the Lord meeting with you, election must explain it. "He hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." This great truth explains also the conversion of Saul of Tarsus; election took hold of him before the world was; he was a chosen vessel unto God, and therefore could not be lost. It explains, I say, a thousand things. And what will not the Lord do on behalf of such a people as this; he has constituted them one with Christ; and all the worth and worthiness of Christ is imputed unto them, and they are held as one with him; and if all things are for his sake, then all things also are for their sakes by him. If you and I could more clearly and more powerfully recognise our eternal election of God, we should rejoice in God ten thousand times more than we do. Do you not find the Old Testament saints rejoicing exceedingly in this discriminating mercy, that the Lord became their God while he passed by other nations, and left them to the gods of the nations, suffered them to walk in their own delusion? And do we not find the New Testament saints rejoicing in the same blessed truth? Do we not find the apostle saying, "We are bound to give thanks that God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation?" And so let us look at this great truth for a moment here of election in this chapter. Here are the Roman armies coming in upon the Jews; and in their progress, the state they were in then, they would have annihilated every Jew upon the surface of the globe. So that "except those days," saith the Saviour,

"should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved;" that is no Jewish flesh; for the Jews are the theme of this chapter, the all nations here mean all the tribes that inhabited that land. We gather it from Josephus that the slave markets were so full of Jews that thirty Jews were sold for a penny; the slave market was so full that no man could be found to buy a Jew; and that fulfilled the apparent paradox of Moses, "Ye shall be sold into all nations, and no man shall buy you." But then the Lord shortened those days of affliction; and why did he shorten them? For his elect's sake, whom he had chosen, he shortened the days. He had a people among the Jews; and during that forty years of respite from the Saviour's death to the destruction of Jerusalem these elect must be gathered up; for their sakes he shortened the days of affliction. Some people have a great deal to say against election; I am sure we who know the sweetness and blessedness of that truth, and who know also that if election absolute be not true, then salvation cannot be of grace; we may well say of those persons who speak against it, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." There are others that hold it so cold heartedly, that I hardly know which I am most disgusted with; the man that fights openly against it; or the man that professes to hold it; and yet holds it in that cold, easy, fleshly spirit, always asking some questions that have a tendency to make election look little, and to make it look of no importance; and that it ought not much to be preached. I hardly know which I am most disgusted with—the man who fights directly against it, or the man that holds it in that cold-hearted, hypocritical way. I don't know that I wouldn't rather meet a determined enemy than these soft, whining hypocrites; for I can call them nothing else. Election is not a cold doctrine: it is a living truth; it is an expression of God's free love, of the greatness of his love, and the certainty of his love. Why, to be chosen in Christ, to be chosen to life, to be chosen to salvation, to be chosen to heirship, to be chosen to eternal glory, to be chosen from sin, from the law, from the curse, from wrath, from hell, from damnation, from an eternity of woe; and put into an eternal oneness with Christ, and made an heir of God, a joint heir with Christ.—Yes, (say some) I believe it, but think it ought not much to be preached. Ah, that spirit is not the spirit of God. No holy prophet would ever thus speak of the discriminating grace of God; no holy apostle would speak in this cold-hearted way of the amazing grace of God; that amazing transaction, eternal election, making us one with Christ; and God does everything for his people on this very ground. Now the gospel comes unto such; and such are led into a knowledge of God's salvation, and led into a knowledge of the great truth of eternal election to that salvation. Yea, if you are taught of God you will never find rest even in Christ, you will never find perfect rest even in salvation until you find out election; because things are not complete without it. If there is something left for you to do, then all the time you are under that notion, if you know what you really are as a sinner, if you know what a poor creature you are; all the time you are under a notion there is something you can do, why, there is an uncertainty about it. Jesus Christ can't be much to you; you may talk about a precious Christ, and God's precious love, and God's dear name; you may talk, but it is all mere talk; because you know all the time you think there is something you can do; and there is an uncertainty about it. You know in your inmost thoughts you reflect thus; well, God, with all his love, he will not care if I am damned if I don't do my part; Christ, with all his love, and all he has done, he does not care if I am damned if I don't do my part; the Holy Spirit, with all that is said about him, if I don't do my part I

may be damned to eternity for aught he cares, you know, you free willer, you have these inward thoughts, and these are the blasphemies of your heart. Whereas when a sinner has found out, by divine teaching, his helplessness, and led into the knowledge of the certainty of God's truth, these blasphemous thoughts are banished; and such an one says, Jesus let me be lost! Never. The Holy Spirit not perfect that which concerneth me? To hell, from whence it came, he will say, let such a thought be driven. My Bible assures me that he who began the good work will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ. What, God my Father leave something for me to do that will make my salvation uncertain; whereas he is immutable in his council, eternal in his love, immoveable in his position in saying, "In blessing I will bless thee; and blessed is he that blesseth thee; and cursed is he that curseth thee." The reason men do not rejoice more in electing grace is because they do not know it. It is impossible for you to have right thoughts of God all the time you are ignorant of electing grace; but when you are led thus far into the truth, all mean thoughts of God are banished; and you know, conscientiously know, you cannot then think too highly of him. Ah, you say, here is my poor body must come to the grave; and heaven knows even what my circumstances may come to before I die; I know not with what I may be surrounded; but one thing I do know, that the love of God will be always the same, the Christ of God will be always the same; the Spirit of God will be always the same; the promise of God will be the same; the mercy of God will be the same; my interest in God will be the same, my oneness with Christ will be the same; my possession of the kingdom will be the same; my glory will be the same; so that however other things may alter or pass away, here I have eternal certainty, that defies all the powers of earth and the powers of hell; and enables me to rejoice, that though the earth be removed and carried into the midst of the sea, yet will we not fear, for the Lord of hosts is our refuge, a very [present help in trouble." For the elect's sake, then, those days were to be shortened; it does not say for free-will's sake, nor for duty-faith's sake, but for the *elect's* sake. And shall Sodom and Gomorrah be spared? Yes, if ten elect souls can be found there; they that stand one with Christ, and consequently righteous; for the elect's sake he hath shortened the days. Now this great truth of eternal election, then, is made effectual to all the chosen. There was not in the Old Testament dispensation one truth next to the very existence of God himself, more prominent than that of election; that is, that God had chosen that one nation, and left other nations. Was there one truth more prominent than that? Why, the Israelite after the flesh—though I know that was not eternal election, still it was a shadow of it, and an illustration of it; the Israelite after the flesh could say, Well, God chose our father Abraham; and then not Ishmael but Isaac; then not Esau, but Jacob; and he hath chosen us as a people; he hath left all other nations, but he hath chosen us. There was not one truth that stood more prominent than that of election. And you may depend upon it, my hearer, when you meet assembled worlds at the last day, there will not in the final judgment of all men be one truth, no, not even the mediation of Christ, that will appear more prominent than that of election; for whosoever's names were not found, which shall be made manifest to all worlds at the last great day, and shall be proclaimed in a way that shall echo from the highest arches of heaven, and resound from the deepest caverns of hell, that "whosoever's names were not found written in the book of life were cast into the lake of fire." Ah, ye despisers of eternal election, ye know not what ye do; if you live and die in enmity to that, it will

prove that you live and die in enmity to God, and you will be lost, and lost for ever, without help or hope. Listen not to men who tell you it ought not to be preached much; come to the Bible, pay no attention to great men or little men, to public men or obscure men; but come to the word, and read for yourselves; and there you find this great truth of election set forth. Again, in the same chapter this same people, not only are afflictions mitigated on their account, but they are delivered from delusion; they are brought into the bosom of eternal election; and carrying that truth with them into the teaching of the Holy Ghost, carrying that truth with them into all the covenant plan, and all the various departments of that plan, in which they are eternally saved; it is a wonderful safeguard against delusion. "There shall arise false Christ's, that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." Can't deceive them; no; the man that has election in his soul is a man that feels his misery as a sinner; and his soul cries day and night unto God; there is a secret cry; there is a sighing, a groaning, before God; "O wretched man that I am;" and that man's daily experience demonstrates to him if there be not perfection in Christ, if there be not eternal certainty in the promise, and if electing grace hath not made him one with Christ, that man feels that he must be lost; and whatever is contrary to this, that man rejects, despises, treads down under his feet, abhors, turns his back upon it, flees from it, cleaves to the liberty of the gospel. Deceive such men if you can. God is their teacher; and in spite of all the delusions that are abroad, they are guided into all truth, all essential truth; and there they stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. We have nothing to do with what men may think; we have to do with the word of the Lord. If the gospel is rendered effectual unto us, then it recognises us as friends. Abraham, when he was brought to believe; Abraham, when he was brought into that secret—and that includes every secret;—"Now unto him that worketh not, but believeth in him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness;" when Abraham was brought thus far he was called the friend of God. And when the Gospel is rendered effectual to you, so that you receive Christ Jesus in the divinity of his person, in the order of his priesthood, in the order of his salvation, being all of grace; here then this gospel is rendered effectual to the people of God; the truth lays hold of them, and they lay hold of it; they are quickened by it, enlightened by it; and the everlasting God—is revealed to them, Father, Word and Holy Ghost. And furthermore it is said "he shall send his angels," which he did, the apostles in that age with a great sound of a trumpet; and they shall gather together his elect;" the elect are mentioned three times in this chapter; first that in order that they should not be destroyed, afflictions are shortened; second, that they should not be deceived, God is their teacher; third, with a great sound of a trumpet gathered them all together; it is only one trumpet, as the trumpet of Jubilee; when the Jubilee year came, the great trumpet was to be blown; there was the great atonement to take away their sin; and by that atonement they entered into their possession of the inheritance which God had given; for "they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them; "but thy right hand," that is Christ Jesus; Christ is God's right hand, "and thine arm," that is Christ Jesus, for Christ is the power of God; "and the light of thy countenance," God's presence, nothing without him; and then comes the reason, "because thou hadst a favour unto them." Thus then this great trumpet of jubilee shall be blown. Here is the Israelite in slavery, and poverty, and ready to perish; presently the trumpet of jubilee sounds;

he comes out of his slavery into freedom, out of his poverty into plenty. So the sinner now; he is made to feel that without Christ, and without the grace of God he must perish; but by this glorious sound of the great trumpet of the gospel, he is thus brought into the liberty of the gospel. "Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound; they shall walk, O Lord," not where they walked before, in darkness, and blindness, and enmity; but "they shall walk in the light of thy countenance; in thy name shall they rejoice all the day long, and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted;" and if their exaltation is to be according to his righteousness, they will be carried up far above all heavens. Thus then the gospel is a witness; a savour of life unto life to the saved; a savour of death unto them that are lost.

Now, after thus glancing at the truth of election, the glory of election, and that the gospel is rendered so effectual unto those that shall be saved, as to bring them down to need this electing grace, and to need that salvation that is after the order of electing grace; the next point we have to attend to is, in what way is the gospel a witness unto the lost? In a three-fold way. First, descriptively; second, exclusively; and third, finally. First descriptively; it describes them as unbelievers; that is, being unbelievers they are destitute of the faith of God's elect. "He that believeth not shall be damned." Ah then, say people, if we just bring them to believe, that will do; only believe, only believe. Ah, that's true, but it depends upon the kind of faith. Ah well, I don't trouble myself about doctrine; if I believe in Jesus Christ, that's enough. Then, sir, if you don't trouble yourself about doctrine, if you believe in a Jesus Christ apart from doctrine, you don't know what kind of a Jesus Christ you believe in; and in vain do you worship God by the traditions and precepts of men; for I say that perversions of scripture are nothing better than these. If we can get people to believe in the Bible, they say, that will do. But then, friends, there is such a thing as a dead faith; and there is such a faith as devil's faith, for devils believe, firmly believe; they never doubt the scriptures, they are under too much wrath to call in question the reality of the scriptures; no infidels in hell! Ah well, I do believe. But does your faith work by love? What love?—the love of the truth? Ah, now you can't stand it. The duty-faith man holds election with a very slight hand, and blends free-will with it; free-will in his heart is mightier than that. Do you want to have an extra congregation? It must be a funeral sermon, or lecture upon some nonsense or another, which those who call themselves Christians ought to be ashamed to run after; all sorts of plans in our day; just shews where people are. The gospel, then, bears testimony unto all descriptively, "He that believeth not shall be damned." Ah, say you, what! damned for not believing? I will leave that with your judgment, after I have said a word or two upon it. First, I take Hagar and Ishmael—I ask you what was Hagar cast out for? Was she cast out because she would not be Sarah? Was she cast out because she would not be a free woman? Why was she cast out? Why, simply because she was a bond woman, belonged to the law, and not to the gospel; second, because she despised the free woman; for her mistress was despised in her eyes. Ishmael was cast out—what was he cast out for? Was he cast out for not being Isaac? Was he cast out because he would not accept the promise? Was the promise ever offered to him? Was he cast out because he *would not* stand in the genealogy of the saved? Had the register of heaven ever been shewn to Ishmael—and did the great Creator say to him, There, Ishmael, will you have your name there or not? And because he would not be a free son was he cast out? No! say you, I can't admit that. That is just duty-faith; I am just now stripping duty-faith stark naked; and that's just what it is; it is a lie from the

bottomless pit, a deceiver of the souls of men. If an angel from heaven came and preached duty-faith, let him be accursed. I contend, therefore, that Hagar and Ishmael were not cast out because they would not be free; but they were cast out by virtue of being under the law; and by virtue of their enmity against the free woman, and against the free born son. Just so the gospel bears testimony to the natural man; you are under the law, sir; you are condemned, not because you would not be free, but because condemnation belongs to you as a sinner in Adam; and condemnation belongs to you as a personal sinner. How do I know that? The man does not believe, not savingly faith is the only way of escape; and if a man does not possess that faith, for faith is the confidence of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen; and if a man does not possess that faith, that is a proof he is under the law. Thus then as Sarah bore testimony that Hagar was an enemy, and Ishmael an enemy; so the gospel bears testimony to the ungodly, that they never were friends, that they are enemies; and they are cast out, not because they would not be children of promise, not because they would not have salvation, as lying prophets tell us. No! they were cast out because it was their portion; they were never otherwise than under the law, they were never otherwise than under sin; and the gospel leaves them where it found them. But it does not leave the people of God where it found them. Secondly, the gospel also bears testimony that they will not, "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life;" "A work shall be done in that day which ye will not believe;" that is the witness; whereas, the Lord makes his people willing in the day of his power. Now they are not cast out because of their unwillingness to receive the love of the truth; but their unwillingness is a proof they are still under the law. The gospel was never offered to any one, eternal life is not the *offer* of God, but the *gift* of God, ministered in eternal certainty; it is the gift of the Father, the ministration of the Saviour, and the work of the Eternal Spirit. Eternal life is the gift of the Father; it is the ministration of the Saviour; he gives eternal life to as many as the Father has given him; and it is the work of the Spirit, who quickens the soul with incorruptible seed, that liveth and abideth for ever. Then third, the gospel bears a *shall not* testimony. First you do not believe; you have not the faith of God's elect. I know that the gospel does not say, I condemn you for not having it; it was never intended for you; but you not having that faith proves you are still where original sin left you. Listen to me for a moment, my hearer, upon this most solemn part of our subject;—there are the graceless virgins; they knock; "Open unto us:" saith the gospel, I know you not, you are graceless, you are not believers in the order of the wedding. So now how many thousands there are profess to be Christians who are utterly ignorant of that eternal and indissoluble relation existing between the Bridegroom and the bride, Christ and the church; and if you dwell upon that eternal union, they hate you for it. And yet they would like to go to heaven. Ah, when you come to heaven's door by and bye, then thou wilt hear the gospel bear witness against thee, "I know you not;" you never entered into the order of the marriage, you were never called to the marriage supper of the Lamb; you never entered into these things, "Depart from me;" "I know you not;" and the door is shut. Then comes another with his one talent; he would not trade with this talent, the truth; that man was not a believer. So the men that had the five and the two talents, the Lord said, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant;" they were each of them believing men; I know a man may have intellectual faith without being a faithful man; but you cannot be a faithful man without being a believing man. So the men with the five talents and the two talents were believing men; but the man with the one talent, and I take that to mean the mere letter of the word, that man did not believe in the

utility of God's truth, and therefore he was not a believing man; he came with his mouth full of lies. "I knew thou wast an hard man." Thou wicked and slothful servant; you professed to be my servant, but did not believe in my truth. Well, I believed it, Lord, but I hid it in a napkin; I was afraid people would take advantage of it; I was afraid they would turn prodigals if they got fast hold of it; and so I hid it. Well then, you mean to say the truth is no use to you. Well, it has often been in my way, and so I took it out of the way. Very well. "Take the talent from him. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." He was cast out, because he proved by his conduct he was still under the law. Then comes the man that had not the wedding garment; and thereby proves his ignorance also of the order of the marriage—coming in his own righteousness; no wedding garment has ever been offered or presented to him; he came in the wrong way; he did not come through the wardrobe; if he had come through the wardrobe the gospel would have stopped him, and said, Where are you going? To the wedding. What! in that harlequine garb! that is not the wedding garment; not going in there. Thus, then, the gospel is a saving witness to the people of God, to the elect of God, takes hold of them and brings them into life; the others also would go to heaven, but the gospel steps in, and says, no, I bear witness that you are not a believer; I bear witness you are not wise unto salvation; you are a graceless professor, that you hid the truth; I bear witness that you tried to get to heaven without a wedding garment, contrary to the order of the marriage; and thus the gospel steps in as a witness.

In conclusion, the Gospel will also bear witness to the contrastive practices at the last day. "I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not" Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and thirsty, and did not do these things unto thee? We have done wonderful things. "Inasmuch as ye did it not to the least of these my brethren, ye did it not unto me." The righteous love the truth, and they love those that love the truth, and minister freely to their necessities, according to their ability; and yet they think nothing of it. Now you that love the truth will give this morning at our collection for the poor; and mind, those of you that hate the truth, I don't want you to give a farthing. But you that love the truth, you will give something with all your hearts; and so ready are you to give, that some of you have given five pounds each before the service began, for fear you should forget it at the end. What will the Lord say to his own? "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." And then he tells them what they have done. Ah, Lord, they say, we have done nothing, nothing but sin. "Inasmuch as ye done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."