

SURREY TABERNACLE PULPIT.

GOOD SIGNS.

A Sermon

PREACHED ON SUNDAY MORNING, MAY 4TH, 1862, BY

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AT THE SURREY TABERNACLE, BOROUGH ROAD.

“And speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.”—Acts i. 3.

THE Saviour, now in his risen state, was on the right side of death; he was on that side of death in which he could look at death as having passed away, and passed away for ever. We, at present, are on the wrong side of death; we have it to endure; but if one with his death, the time will come when we also shall be on the right side of death; yea, virtually, if one with him, we are already, because, by what he hath endured, the bitterness of death is past, the sting is taken away. He was on the right side of sin; before he died he was on the unconquered side of sin, he had to bear sin, to conquer sin, to be a sin-offering, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. But now he is on the right side of sin, he is on the conquered side now; he sees now sin is gone, and gone for ever; there is no more remembrance of sin, there shall be no more conscience of sin, no more offering for sin. He is now on the right side of the curse; for he was once on that side of the curse in which the heavens before him were clothed with sackcloth, and ready to break forth in all their terrible thunders and lightnings, culminating, concentrating in his wondrous person. But he has endured all that; he is now on the right side of the curse; the curse is gone, and he looks at the curse now as Samson looked at the lion after he had slain him: it is passed away and gone for ever, and there shall be no more curse. He is now on the right side, shall I say, of the powers of darkness. He once had the dragon to meet; he once had the head of the old serpent to bruise; but he has met the dragon, he has slain the dragon, he has bruised the serpent's head, and now he stands on the vantage ground of conquest complete, of victory entire, and of freedom eternal; his foes can never rise again. In human victories foes rise again and again; but not so in the victory he hath wrought: he hath so conquered what he hath conquered, that they shall rise no more for ever. He is now on the right side of tribulation. All his tribulations, sorrows, and griefs are now passed away, and they are passed away for ever. He can now see all these clouds gone off; and now there is a morning without clouds; now eternal sunshine settles on his head; now he sorrows no more; and, as saith the apostle, he dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him. Is it any wonder that the apostle Paul should desire to enjoy this blessedness of Christ's resurrection?—“That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection.” And mark what the Saviour saith upon this subject:—“Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me be with me where I am.” And when we are enabled to take our stand in oneness with him, and thus see death passed away, sin passed away, the curse passed away, the powers of darkness passed away, tribulations passed away, all tears virtually wiped away from off all faces, and nothing before us but fountains of living waters, the living God, the living Lamb in the midst of the throne, our souls

charmed with the shade, and leaves, and fruit of the tree of life, what a wondrous scene does it present! All we want is that described by the apostle, when he saith, "Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." And the more a poor, sensible, self-condemned, lost, helpless sinner, who is conscious of this his state, is enabled to meditate upon what Christ has done, the more sweet your meditations will be. Who then shall undertake to describe the gladness, the pleasure, the joy, with which the Saviour now spake of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God? He could never speak of them before as he spake of them now, because he always spake of them before mingled with sorrow, mingled with groans, mingled with tears, mingled with distress, mingled with castings down, as he himself exclaims, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful." But now all these, by his own atoning worth, are passed away, the kingdom is established, his people are saved; and this is that in which he will glory, and the people shall glory, and that for ever.

Our subject then, this morning, will be that of *the kingdom of God*; and though we have no lengthened account of the things the Saviour said pertaining to this eternal kingdom of God, yet there are some things which he said after his resurrection which we may notice as a kind of sample of the way in which he spake of this kingdom. I shall try, therefore, this morning, to set forth those things that pertain to the kingdom of God, that are indicated to us after his resurrection.

I shall notice this morning simply *the signs that accompany his kingdom, by which the subjects of that kingdom are distinguished from all other people*. And the signs which he hath presented to us we of course must take spiritually. I do not say that they have not in some cases a literal meaning; but our chief object will be this morning to take them spiritually; and in taking those signs spiritually, they do, as just indicated, distinguish the subjects of Christ's kingdom from all other people. And I think the longer we live the more we shall see the importance of looking well to the great matter of the Holy Spirit's work in the heart. We live in a day when people tell us that we should look to Christ, and go to Christ; but after all, we are met with the declaration, "Except a man be born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." Therefore, if our coming to Christ has not this at the root thereof, then we are not plants of God's right hand planting; and "Every plant which my Father hath not planted shall be rooted up." Now those signs the Saviour thus presents. He says, "They shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; and they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." These are the signs which the Saviour hath given. First, that they shall cast out devils. I have sometimes said, and I just repeat the observation now, that there are in the Greek language two different words translated by the one English word devil; and in the scripture I have just now mentioned, the original word there would be rendered more properly by the word *demon*; and these demons were the heathen gods of old;—their gods were called demons. So that to cast out devils has special reference to false religions. This is the idea there intended, then, as the very first thing. Hence we find that all those men in olden times that knew the Lord, they sided with the Lord, in contrast to all false gods. Let me just give an example or two, and that will show how it accords with that work of the Holy Spirit, that brings a sinner out of all delusions; for these false gods were a figure of false gospels. If I receive a false gospel, then I receive a false spirit; and if I receive a false spirit, then I receive a false Christ; and then my religion is false, and I am deceived; and instead of being saved, I shall be lost at last. Now, in the last chapter of the Book of Joshua, Joshua is there cautioning the people against false gods, showing what the Lord is, in contrast to

false gods; and there is that one name upon which I will not now enlarge, which is worthy of our attention as a name by which the Lord then stood so distinguished. So Joshua, when speaking of false gods, and showing the vanity of them, says, "As for me and my house, we will serve *Jehovah*." I thus render the original literally, because it throws a light upon it, "As for me and my house, we will serve *Jehovah*." Our fathers on the other side of the flood,—the other side of the Euphrates,—before the Lord called them by his grace, they worshipped other gods; and you see that nations worship other gods; but as for me and my house, we will worship *Jehovah*. Here is God in his eternity. Let us look now a little closely into this. What is the first thing, for instance, in the feeling of a convinced sinner, that distresses him? It is eternity. Here, he says, is eternity. I am a sinner, and I have eternity to meet. Eternity! What a fearful sound! If my sins are unatoned for, my soul unregenerate,—if I die unforgiven, unsanctified, unwashed, unjustified, then there I am lost, and lost for ever. So that, as eternity is one of the feelings of his mind, he wants some remedy that accords with eternity. In the Lord's own time is revealed unto such an one Christ's eternity; that there is in the redemption of Christ, eternity,—he hath obtained for us eternal redemption. That there is in the salvation of Christ eternity,—everlasting salvation. That there is in Christ's righteousness eternity,—everlasting righteousness. That there is in the victory which he hath achieved eternity. That there is in the love of God eternity,—"I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore in loving-kindness have I drawn thee." There is in the mercy of God eternity. Now, then, such an one, what does he do? Why, he casts out all demons or false gods. He casts out the doctrines of free-will and universal redemption. I myself, for a time, tried Wesleyanism, till I found that it was all delusion from beginning to end; and though the people are sincere, yet the religion itself is a delusion; and I felt that unless Christ's work was eternally perfect,—that unless God was eternal in his mercy, and immutable in his love,—there could be no hope for me. And then there is, in connection with this, an eternal covenant,—an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure. Now this is one of the signs that are to attend the progress of the Saviour's kingdom; that is, you are to receive the truth as it is in Christ Jesus, in the eternity of it; for all true religion must have eternity for its root, for its base, whether it be our religion as it is for us, or whether it be our religion as it is in us. If we look at our religion as it is for us, then it is to us eternally the same, revealing the immutability of his counsel; and then, if we speak of our religion as in us, then it is, "Ye are born again of an incorruptible seed, that liveth and abideth for ever." And thus you will cast out all false gospels, all gospels which do not accord with this perfection of Christ, this eternity of God's mercy, and immutability of his counsel. You will cast them all out; you will stand against them all, and with Joshua, say, "As for me, I will serve *Jehovah*." And so you will side with the everlasting gospel, you will side with that gospel that was the same yesterday as it is to-day, and will be the same for ever as it is now. Here, now, the scene is changed. You may not dread eternity now, but rejoice therein; you may not shrink back from eternity now, but press forward thereto; you may not tremble at its approach now, but look forward, for there lies your prize; you may not draw back now, but look forward and hasten unto the coming of the day of God; and though the heavens shall be on fire, and the earth and the works therein be burnt up, and all these things be dissolved, it is to make way for you to enter into the keeping of that eternal sabbath that remaineth unto the people of God. What say you, then, fellow-traveller to eternity? Art thou thus brought to know something of eternity being a dread to thee? and art thou brought into such a consciousness of thy state, that nothing but a remedy that is eternal could be of any use to you? You know your works are

not eternal. You may look at your own doings,—there is no stamina in them. They are all excellent for temporal purposes, for benevolent, sympathetic, and adorning and testifying purposes, but they will never do for salvation purposes; they will never do for that. Let Jesus Christ occupy that position; let God be our salvation; let his mercy be the river that is full of water that will flow on to all eternity.

But, second, they shall speak with new tongues. What is this new tongue? for as the casting out of demons refers by reflex to the Old Testament saints, who cast out false gods, and abode by the truth, so every one of the signs bears an allusion to some Old Testament scripture or circumstance; and I will bring Old Testament scriptures to every one of the signs, to show to you that there is nothing new in these signs the Saviour hath here set before us.

Now, where shall we go, then, for the new tongues? Why, say you, that refers to the day of Pentecost. I have no objection to admit that; but that is a question more of gifts in the first place than of grace; and we are dealing this morning with vitalities, essentials. I go to the last chapter of Zephaniah, and there I get the new tongues. "Then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent." A praying heart is something new; it is a new tongue. "God be merciful to me a sinner," is something new. "Behold, I am vile," is something new. "If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean," is something new. Yes, when a sinner is thus brought into the spirit of grace and supplication, here is a new tongue; he speaks with a new tongue; he speaks of his sin, and of his state as a sinner, as he never spoke before. Here is something new. Go then, Ananias, to Saul of Tarsus, and you will see something new; and if you ask what that something new is, it is this; "Behold, he prayeth." He had, no doubt, said many prayers during his long pharisaic profession, but now he not merely said prayers, but, "Behold, he prayeth." It is something new. He prayeth now for mercy; he pleadeth now atoning blood; he pleadeth now justifying righteousness; he pleadeth now the exceeding great and precious promises of God. That is the pure language. Saith Job, "My prayer is pure." I am not praying from any formal, hypocritical, worldly purpose, show, or display—like the Pharisee, making long prayers that he might be seen of men; but I am praying to the Lord, that he might have mercy upon me, with all sincerity and all simplicity, with the simple object of obtaining mercy; and, saith such an one, I am glad to find it written, that "he that calleth upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Again, I am glad to find it written, that one saith, "I love the Lord, because he hath heard the voice of my supplication." Ah, what was your state, and what was your supplication? Why, "the sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me; I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the Lord; O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul." That is the new tongue. Knowest thou anything of this new language? They shall speak with new tongues.

Ah, see the swearer, see the profligate, see the hardened wretch. Look at him now, trembling, brought on the knee of prayer, and, ere long, shall be brought into the pure liberty of the gospel, and rejoice in atoning and sin-cleansing blood; for a praying heart is certainly a prelude to a singing one; for, "Blessed are they that mourn, they shall be comforted." Your sorrow shall be turned into joy. "And that they may serve me with one consent;" there is no hesitation about it; they all agree to admit the truth of God, and the Christ of God, and the counsel of God, and the honour and glory of God.

But we have not done yet with this new tongue. Not only does this new tongue signify this spirit of grace and supplication, and willingness to serve the Lord. I like that expression, "They shall serve him with one consent;" not a mere outward consent, but the real consent of the heart:

as saith the apostle, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus Christ, and believe in thine heart"—let us have the heart make the confession, and then let us see whether the heart is in it—"and believe in thine heart," really so, "that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." But this new tongue also means a clear knowledge of mediation. This is that which men do not possess naturally; 11th chapter of Isaiah, "The Lord shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea;" that was a tongue of bondage; they were slaves; "and with his mighty wind"—there is the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came from heaven as a mighty rushing wind—"shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dry shod."

Now, here is the tongue of bondage destroyed, the yoke of bondage destroyed, the spirit of bondage destroyed; the Holy Spirit thus comes. And what were these seven streams of the ancient Nile of Egypt but a type of those streams of sin, and death, and the curse, that rolled between us and God? but by what the Saviour hath done these are all dried up—"make men go over dry shod." They shall go over as though there was no water there—there is none; and so you shall have access to God, as though there was no sin, so completely is sin dried up; have access to God, as though there was no curse, so completely is the curse dried up; have access to God, as though there was no wrath, so completely is the wrath dried up; have access to God, as though there was no death, so completely shall death be dried up. Ah, what a new language this will be! this will be a new state of things; this will be a new tongue. Ah, say you, I never thought of living to see such a day as this; what a day is this! this is, indeed, as David saith,—“He hath put a new song into my mouth;” he hath opened up a new and living way; old things are passed away, all things are become new; and they are become new to remain new; they will never grow old. If it be said of the Israelites that their raiment waxed not old upon them, neither did their shoes wax old upon their feet, nor their feet swell,—if that be said temporally, literally, of the Israelites, how much more will the doctrine contained in those words apply to the real Christian, whose raiment is immortal, and whose shoes shall be as iron and brass? As his day is, so shall his strength be.

Here, then, demons are cast out, a new language acquired, old things pass away, and all things become new. I could say a great deal about the old tongue polished up in a new fashion; but I will not. There is a great deal of old-Adam gospel in our day. Poor old Adam, he is brushed up, and trimmed up, and propped up, and dressed up, and painted up, and worked up, and nursed up, and held up, and preached up, and prayed up, and cried up, and it is but an old-Adam concern when they have done. The leprosy is in soul, and body, and garments, and all. Down with the whole of it; let it all pass away. As the apostle says, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." We must have everything new; none of the old materials will do. Why, our very bodies, in order to be bodies in the right sense of the word, must come to the dust, and from the dust they shall rise in immortality, in incorruptibility; and then, with immortal souls, immortal bodies,

"In a song for ever new,
This glorious theme we'll still pursue,
Throughout the azure sky"

Again, they shall take up serpents. The apostle did this literally on one occasion, when the viper fastened upon his hand, and he shook the beast off into the fire, and felt no harm. Every Christian knows something of this, especially ministers; there are plenty of vipers to fasten upon a minister's hand; he shakes one off, and shakes another off, and he feels no harm. I should think the viper felt rather uncomfortable there; depend upon it, he was pretty well roasted; and if he had got out, I am sure he would not have fastened upon Paul's hand again; he would rather

have run a thousand miles another way. And so it is, when a man is tempted to injure a minister of God, or a child of God, or the cause of God, he knows not what he does; it is not the mighty fortress against which you are coming that will be injured, but it is yourself that will be broken to pieces, and not the corner-stone at which you are stumbling. But passing by the letter, and taking it mystically, we may go to the Old Testament to get an explanation of this taking up of serpents. Taking up of serpents means they shall overcome their wily, cunning foes. The serpent is a very cunning thing, and a great many cunning men lie in wait to deceive, and, if it were possible, should deceive the very—What a pity the next word is there! Well, I didn't put it there. You see what honour is put upon that despised word, upon that hated word, that terrible word, that dangerous word, that narrow-minded word, that wonderful word; what honour put upon it,—“if it were possible, they should deceive even the very *elect*.” But that they cannot do; they are brought into God's eternity, and brought into this new kingdom, to speak with new tongues, and to understand this new language, and none can deceive them. “The wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein.” But the taking up of serpents means to overcome them,” 91st Psalm; “Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder; the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.” Who is the man that shall do this? The man that loves a covenant God; hence the following words: “Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him.” Look into thine heart, Christian, and see, dost thou love Jesus? dost thou love a covenant God? dost thou love his blessed gospel? hast thou this spirit of grace and supplication? If so, then he will deliver thee; and thou wilt need deliverances all thy days, thou wilt need deliverance in a dying hour, thou wilt need deliverance at the last great rising day. “Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him; I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.” Here, then, as the Saviour saith, “Ye shall tread on serpents and on scorpions; and I give you power over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.” So, then, this is sign the third that is to attend the progress of this kingdom; you are to cast out false gods or demons; you are to speak in the language of prayer and mediation—new tongue; you are to overcome all the cunning, and power, and forces of the adversary, and stand fast in the truth against all the wiles of the devil, and having done all, to stand.

The fourth is, that if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them. Deadly things, and that is this: you will have a great many deadly things to drink. All our afflictions may be looked upon as deadly things. The Lord puts a cup into your hand of affliction, you must drink it. Ah! say you, it will kill me. No, it wont. It is grievous, I know it is; it is a cup of trembling, a cup of affliction, a cup of distress. Ah! you sip, and sip, and drink no more than you are forced to do; but we must all have our share of affliction, one kind and another, losses, and crosses, and bereavements; and when in our right mind we shall say, “The cup which my heavenly Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?” It is his will I should be thus afflicted; it is his will I should have this loss; it is his will I should undergo this bereavement; it is his will I should be subjected to this distress; it is his hand that puts the cup into my hand. Ah! it kills my earthly comforts, my natural pleasures, it kills a great many of my earthly hopes; ah, Lord, it is a bitter cup; but, as good John Bunyan says, “it will make the sweet the sweeter when the sweet shall come.” And, besides, when Lazarus has had all the cups of bitters which he hath to drink, it will be only in this life; after that, there is no more bitter; Lazarus hath received all his cups of bitters on this side the grave, and now he is comforted on every side, and now there is nothing for him but the cup of salvation, the cup of conso-

lution, the cup of eternal delight. Where is there a Christian that has not this cup of bitters? And yet, mark the Lord's words, "it shall not hurt you." Does not this accord with other scriptures, which say that all things work for good; and with another scripture, where it saith that these afflictions "shall work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." It shall not do us any ultimate harm. The Lord knows how much and how many bitters we need; he knows what intensity of bitterness to give, and he knows how to mitigate that bitterness as shall seem good in his sight. Hence, one of old, when she had drank the bitter cup—lost her husband and her two sons—came home lamenting, and said, "Call me no more Naomi," that which is pleasant, for things have been anything but pleasant with me; I have had a bitter cup for these ten years to drink; call me Mara"—bitter; for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me;" therefore, call me not Naomi. But the Lord turned her captivity, took that cup of bitters out of her hand, put into her hand the cup of salvation. It is a great thing to have grace to say, "Father, thy will be done;" for, after all, if he guide the sparrow's flight, and if the hairs of the head of his people be numbered, then none of these things come by chance, they are all ordered by his hand. And hence it was, Job, when he was called upon to drink that bitter cup, he recognized the hand that put it into his hand; "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." And when Job's wife spake as she did, he said, "Shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil?" Will this cup of bitters hurt me? No; it seems to hurt me now, it afflicts me now, it makes me curse the day of my birth now, makes my spirit bitter, embitters everything, embitters my very existence, but the Lord can sweeten it all; and so he did; he turned the captivity,—he took from him the cup of bitters, put into his hand the cup of consolation, and the sweetness was twice as strong in sweetness as the bitter was in bitterness; the one prepares for the other.

Alas, alas! unhappy mortals, we are so perverted by sin and the legal bias, and other evils of our nature, that without some of these cups of bitters put into our hands we should not love the Lord; we should not thirst for him, and we should not recognize his mercies in the way we do. He knows, therefore, in all these things how to deal with us. And there is a great beauty, if you look at it, there is a great beauty in the order of these signs; not only in these signs taken singly, but to my mind there is a great beauty in the order of them. First, here are demons cast out, and the man is brought to side with the true God; secondly, here he is brought into a new language, a new experience, a spirit of grace and supplication, and a knowledge of mediation; third, being thus brought to side with the true God, and brought into this new language, he is now prepared to stand against the delusions of the enemy; he is now prepared, by what he knows of the Lord, to tread under foot the serpent, the scorpion, and the power of the enemy; he is now prepared for the deadly thing; he is now prepared for tribulation; he is now prepared to be tried; and this is the way in which the Lord will try his people, in order that they might know what is in their hearts, and be more rooted and grounded in the truth as it is in Jesus. There is a beauty, therefore, in my estimation at least, in the order of these signs.

And then, the last is, they, the prophets and apostles, we might embrace the whole, shall lay their hands on the sick, and they shall recover them. Now, they did that, the apostles did, literally; but the literal was nothing a comparison with the spiritual. You know what the Saviour says about the literal and the spiritual. "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these, because I go to my Father." Greater works? Yes. Take it thus; the Saviour heals that man of his leprosy; Ananias is sent to instrumentally minister par-

doing mercy, cleansing morey, to Saul of Tarsus. Now, which was the greater work of the two? that which cleansed and healed the soul of Saul of Tarsus, or that which healed the body of the leper? So, when the Saviour opened the blind eyes, that was a great work; but when a minister is sent to open the eyes of a blind sinner, and to bring him to a saving knowledge of the truth, that is a greater work still. The Saviour fed the multitude with loaves and fishes; that was a great work; but for a man to feed a multitude of souls with the bread of eternal life, and to be the means of leading them into the straight way of truth, by the rivers of water, where they shall drink of the water of eternal life, is a greater work still; because the one is temporal,—passes away; the other is eternal. This is what I understand, then, by the Saviour saying that “the works that I do shall they do also, and greater works than these.” The spiritual is greater than the temporal, because the spiritual pertains to the soul, and is eternal. And yet, our nature just turns things upside down. We run to all the physicians in the metropolis to get rid of any bodily affliction; but the soul, let it be in what state it may, if God does not make us conscious of it, and stir us up to cry to the Great Physician, we care nought for the soul. I had almost said, and make no apology for saying it, that even with real Christians, if the Lord cared no more for our souls than we care for them ourselves, we should come badly off. So that, really, if we are preserved, and if we get safe at last, I am sure, in that department, as well as every other department, we must say, “Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name be all the glory.” He watereth it every moment. Do we watch every moment? I confess I do not. He keeps it night and day. Am I always upon the alert? I confess I am not. I love a watchful spirit, and I pray for a watchful spirit, because I know it is a scriptural spirit, and a profitable and a good spirit. I don’t like a chapter to pass by me without teaching me something; and I don’t like a sermon to pass by me without bringing me something; nor you either, when at all in your right mind. Hence, every minister wishes his hearers to watch him as narrowly as possible, in order to see if there is any word from the throne of God. The minister knows not precisely the state of the people; but if he is led so to speak as to come just where they are, describe what they are, and point out the remedy, so that they say, Ah, I can see this; I can trace these things out; I can see that the Lord has brought me to side with himself; I can see he has given me this pure language of prayer; I can see he has given me this language of mediation; I can see he has given me power over the enemy,—the enemy has not been able to sever me from the truth; I can see that although I have drank many deadly things, many bitter things, yet I can already testify that many of those things have done me good; they have brought me, it is true, into the house of mourning, and it has been trying for the time; but it has made me pray more earnestly; it was with the Lord of all as with his members; he, being in agony, prayed the more earnestly. And so, when the Lord is pleased to afflict us, he thereby,—by those things,—increases in intensity in our souls the spirit of grace and of supplication.

The last sign is, recovery from sickness. I think that is a nice winding up, is it not? It is a lovely representation. What is the ultimate object of the gospel? To heal all diseases, to make up the breach; there shall not be a wound, a scar, a spot, a wrinkle left. Poor Job saith, “He hath filled me with wrinkles.” A very good thing too. He has filled you with wrinkles; he has made an ugly old man of you. And so, when God convinces a sinner of what he is as a sinner, Ah, he says, what an old sinner I am; why, I am as old in my sinnership as Adam; I became a sinner when he sinned; I am a poor, wrinkled, withered old sinner; that is what I am. Well, Job, here is your remedy. “He loved the church, and gave himself for it.”